

SELF ESTEEM IN RELATION TO INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT: *This study aimed to examine the relationship of self-esteem and internet addiction among adolescents. Internet addiction is an addiction adopted by adolescents as a form of self expression, entertainment, school work, relationships and so on. Self Esteem is an essential component of adolescents' personality. The sample of the study consisted of 200 adolescents who consisted of male and female adolescents from Govt. Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh and its adjoining areas. Internet Addiction Test by Dr. Kimberly S. Young (1998) and Stanley Coopersmith's (1987) Self- Esteem inventory were used as data collection instruments. Obtained data were analyzed through Pearson's Product-Moment correlation coefficient. The findings showed that Self-Esteem of adolescents' was significantly and negatively correlated with Internet Addiction for total sample (N=200). Furthermore, Self-Esteem of male and female adolescents was also significantly and negatively correlated with Internet Addiction. These results were discussed and some conclusions were made.*

Key Words: : *Internet addiction, Self-Esteem, Adolescents, Gender*

Introduction

One of the most important features of modern society is the growing impact of online communication tools, especially internet on people (Cuceloglu, 2007). This impact can also be felt on adolescents because younger generation these days are adopting new digital technologies as quickly as they are being introduced. Lukoff (2004) in his research identified certain factors that increase adolescents' tendency towards internet. These are the desires like to be free, to communicate easily, to create an identity easily and to develop meaningful personal relationships. These and other factors increase adolescents' internet use rate day by day. Increased use brings some problems with it. Perhaps, the most important of these is the "Internet Addiction". Excessive Internet use is seen in different cultures (Cao & Su, 2007) and it is stated that adolescents group is at highest risk (Mossbarger, 2008). Adolescents' beliefs and perceptions about themselves reflect in their behavioural characteristics when using the Internet. At this point, emerges the importance of self-esteem. Self-esteem briefly means an individual's perception about himself. In other words, it's about how an individual evaluate her/his self concept (Burger, 2006). It is thought that existence of a relationship between self-esteem and Internet addiction is likely. In many studies it has been revealed that adolescents tend to appear different from what they are when expressing themselves in dating sites, social networking sites and many more sites (Madell & Muncer, 2006; Sheeks & Birchmeier, 2006; Voluse, Korkel & Sobell, 2007). In addition, there has been studies in which the relationship between addiction and self-esteem is revealed (Greenberg, Lewis & Dodd, 1999; Sobell, 2007). In these studies, it is stated that varying self-esteem lead to self-distrust, addicted personality, sense of loss of control and increased anxiety when offline. Therefore, it is thought that individuals' self-esteem may be in a significant relationship with internet addiction.

The above mentioned research studies have witnessed the causes of internet addiction and its demerits and so on. So the undertaken study was planned to identify the relationship of self esteem and internet addiction of adolescents studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh by concentrating on demographic variables- Gender (Boys & Girls) and Type of Schools (Govt. & Private).

Reviewing the change of behaviours among adolescents, it was decided to conduct the study on adolescents under the following objectives;

- a) To identify the relationship of self esteem and internet addiction among adolescents.
- b) To study gender differences in relationship of self esteem and internet addiction among adolescents studying in Govt. Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh.

Adolescents are the students who are in the age group of 15 to 18 years and are studying in classes ranging from X to XII. Internet addiction is regarded as behavioural dependency related to internet as a disorder associated to physical, financial, familial, social and mental losses. Self Esteem for the undertaken study was

conceived as an individual attitude which a person holds towards self and is reflected in his judgement of self worth.

Literature Review:

Shotton (1991) conducted research to estimate costs and benefits of internet addiction and its relationship with self esteem. His research findings revealed that lower self esteem triggers the extensive internet use among individuals. He further described that tendency of high internet addiction goes with lower self esteem.

Griffith (2000) conducted research to study the relationship between self esteem and internet addiction. He further linked individuals' satisfaction with internet addiction by emphasizing that when individuals evaluate themselves in a negative way they perceives internet as a way for compensation of these negations which turn in to a dependent relationship.

Ko, Yen and Chen (2005) conducted research on internet addiction among adolescents residing in Turkey. The findings of the study suggested that greater use of internet is associated with social and psychological variables such as; decline in the size of social circle, depression, loneliness and lower self esteem.

Murli and George (2007) conducted research to investigate relationship between internet addiction and self esteem. Their research findings revealed that individuals with low self esteem are more prone to addiction with internet.

Nader, Abdullah, Aizan, Sharir and Kumar (2009) conducted research on 580 under graduate students to study the effect of gender on self esteem. Their research findings highlighted that gender has significant and positive influence on self esteem.

Aydin and Sari (2011) conducted research to examine the role of self esteem on adolescents' internet addiction. The study was conducted on 324 adolescents residing at Trabzon (Turkey). The researchers further emphasized that social self esteem and home family self esteem were found to be significant predictors of internet addiction.

Agaj (2013) investigated the relationship between internet addiction and self esteem among adolescents in Albania on a sample of 140 adolescents aged between 15-17 years led to the findings that there exist a negative relationship between internet addiction and self esteem by emphasizing lower the self esteem higher the internet addiction.

In this study, self-esteem's relationship was examined with internet addiction among Chandigarh adolescents. It is thought that the results of the study will contribute significantly to personality-related research on self esteem and internet addiction among adolescents.

Title of the study:

“SELF ESTEEM IN RELATION TO INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS”

Objectives:

1. To study the relationship of self esteem and internet addiction among adolescents.
2. To work out gender differences among adolescents for the relationship of self esteem and internet addiction.

Methodology:

Participants and Procedure

200 students participated in this study. All of the participants were senior secondary school students' age ranging from 15 to 18 years. Scores taken from self esteem inventory and internet addiction test were analysed. Of these participants, 100 were male and 100 female adolescents. Prior to administration of scales, purpose of the study was explained to all participants.

Instruments

Self- Esteem Inventory (SEI) by Stanley Coopersmith (1987)

Self esteem inventory(Adult form) prepared by Coopersmith was used to measure self esteem of students. This scale was adapted from the School Short Form of Coopersmith developed in the year 1987 with reliability 0.82; to measure self esteem of adolescents aged above fifteen years. As the sample representatives of the study constitutes, adolescents in the age group of 15 to 18 years, so it was considered appropriate to use for the present study. The chosen scale comprised of twenty five items, developed under two response options 'Like Me' and 'Unlike Me'. These items were related to measure evaluative attitudes towards the 'Self'.

Internet Addiction Test

The study used the internet addiction test prepared by Dr. Kimberley Young (1998). 20 questions were used to determine internet addiction of adolescents. The reliability for the test was determined by employing Cronbach's Alpha method which comes out to be 0.899. All the responses on 20 statements were collected under five point Likert's scale which stands (1- Rarely, 2- Occasionally, 3- Frequently, 4- Often and 5- Always).

Data Analysis

The obtained data analyzed through SPSS 17.0 software. Firstly, relationship between adolescents' self-esteem and Internet addiction was investigated through Pearson-Product -Moment correlation coefficient for total sample (N=200). Then, relationship was separately analysed on the basis of gender for male (N=100) and female (N=100) adolescents separately.

Findings

Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation method was computed to ascertain connectedness and relatedness among different variables viz; self esteem and internet addiction considered under study. All the analysis under this section is reported in the form of correlation matrices.

The data about the relationship between self-esteem and internet addiction is presented in tables from 1 to 3 below:

Table-1: Correlation of Self Esteem with Internet Addiction for Total Sample of Adolescents (N=200)

Variables	Internet Addiction
Self Esteem	-.499**

*significant at the 0.05 level

**significant at the 0.01 level

Examination of Table-1 shows that self esteem and internet addiction were negatively associated with each other. The value of 'r' was $-.499^{**}$; which was significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means addiction to internet hampers the self esteem of adolescents by engaging more and more in usage of internet. In other words, it can be interpreted that internet addiction disintegrates self esteem of adolescents by involving more and more into an activity which has no feedback.

Table-2: Correlation of Self Esteem with Internet Addiction for Total Sample of Male Adolescents (N=100)

Variables	Internet Addiction
Self Esteem	-.161*

*significant at the 0.05 level

**significant at the 0.01 level

Examination of table-2 shows that coefficient of correlation between self esteem and internet addiction is 'r' = $-.161^*$, which is negative and significant at 0.05 level. This means self esteem of male adolescents is negatively correlated to internet addiction.

So, it can be interpreted that addiction to internet hampers the self esteem of male adolescents by engaging them in more usage of internet.

Table 3: Correlation of Self Esteem with Internet Addiction for Total Sample of Female Adolescents (N=100)

Variables	Internet Addiction
Self Esteem	-.441**

*significant at the 0.05 level

**Significant at the 0.01 level

The value of 'r' = $-.441^{**}$ for self esteem and internet addiction is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means self esteem of female adolescents is negatively affected by addiction of internet. In other words, we can interpret that self esteem of female adolescents is negatively influenced by excess usage of internet. This negative significant correlation infers that with increase in self esteem, the access to usage of internet decreases.

Discussion and Conclusion

In term of adolescents, the undertaken study showed that self-esteem was significantly and negatively correlated with Internet addiction among adolescents. Furthermore, same results were followed by the sample for male and female adolescents.

In the literature, it can be seen that many studies have been examined the association between self-esteem and internet use (Armstrong, Phillips & Salling, 2000; Griffiths & Banyard, 2005; Kim & Davis, 2009). Based on the results of these studies, we can conclude that a negative relationship exists between these two variables. Griffiths's (2000) research provides important findings in disclosing this relationship. He states that the participants' use of internet is highly associated with its perception as a way of a compensation of some deficiencies such as low self-esteem. Further, when individuals evaluate themselves in a negative way, they may perceive the Internet as a way for the compensation of these negations and increasing internet use may turn into a dependent relationship.

This is revealed from many studies that adolescents are regarded as the suitable candidates for being addicted to Internet (Mossbarger, 2008; Yen et al., 2007). Therefore, specific issues associated with their usage of Internet must be addressed. Self-esteem is considered as an important determinant of individuals' behaviors and activities. Internet addiction is one of them and with a sense of diminishing self-control, it may cause a further reduction in self-esteem. The general inference is that self-esteem has an influential role on adolescents' development. Thus, adolescents need to gain the belief that they are worthy. Within the school environment, presenting a large number of social and sporting opportunities for adolescents to test and develop their abilities may also be very helpful. As a final recommendation, it is thought that counselors should organize informative and preventive group activities about the proper use of internet and the results of excessive use.

In conclusion, this study is an effort to examine the relationship between self-esteem and internet addiction among adolescents. From the results of this study, experimental studies aimed at promoting self-esteem on adolescents addicted to internet would be done.

Delimitations and suggestions for further studies

The present study is delimited to adolescents studying in senior secondary schools of Chandigarh and its surrounding areas. For the generalization of results more studies and research work can be conducted to other regions, colleges and universities.

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