



IJMIRD 2015; 2(3): 453-456
www.allsubjectjournal.com
Impact factor: 3.672
Received: 01-03-2015
Accepted: 17-03-2015
E-ISSN: 2349-4182
P-ISSN: 2349-5979

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Internet addiction among school going adolescents

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Abstract

Internet addiction is one of the problems emerged with the development of technology. The aim of this study is to examine Internet addiction in adolescence in terms of gender. The sample of the study consisted of 200 school students (100 boys and 100 girls) studying in class Xth of Ranchi town. A total of 200 students using internet for at least since last 12 months were selected by simple random sampling. Young's Internet addiction scale (1998) was administered to the selected sample to assess their internet addiction. The data so collected was analyzed statistically by employing mean, SD and t-test. The study revealed there were significant differences between the boys and girls group in their internet addiction. Result showed boys were more addicted to the internet than girls.

Keywords: Internet addiction, adolescence and problem.

1. Introduction

The internet is a new tool that is evolving into an essential part of everyday life all over the world and its use increases especially among young people. Internet addiction is a broad concept. Internet addiction is a very serious problem for adolescents. The Internet is a modern communication tool, which basically can change and makes easier the ways of communication between people, it eliminates geographical barriers and shortens real distances. The internet is a new tool that is evolving into an essential part of everyday life all over the world (Nalwa & Anand, 2003) and its use increases especially among young people. It is an obvious fact that the means of communication have reached masses of people at an incredibly fast rate. As regards the time period that different types of means have covered to meet 50 million audiences, it is 38 years for radio, 13 years for television while it is only 5 years for the Internet. The rapid introduction and spread of computers in all areas of life and its ubiquity even in cell phones, access to all kind of information became easier and more information started to be shared on-line.

The use of the Internet on school campuses and in society has increased dramatically in recent years. Whereas the academic use of the Internet is primarily intended for learning and research, the Internet has also become an important part of student life. However, from time to time, cases of over-involvement with the Internet have been observed on different campuses. The concept of internet addiction refers to the excessive use of internet which in turn causes various problems in individual, social and professional aspects. In spite of the widely perceived merits of this tool, psychologists and educators have been aware of the negative impacts of its use, especially the over or misuse and the related physical and psychological problems (Greenfield, 2000). One of the most common of these problems is internet addiction (Murali & George, 2007; Shapira et.al, 1998). In present time most of the youth, adolescents as well as children are internet addict. They spend their most of the precious time on internet for entertainment, shopping, chatting etc. The concept of internet addiction, which was first used by Goldberg in 1995, has recently turned out to be a phenomena, which is tried to be defined through various terms such as "net addiction", "internet addiction", "on-line addiction", "internet addiction disorder", "pathologic internet use" and "cyber disorder" (Eichenberg & Ott, 1999).

The rapid development in world sciences has resulted in paying the cost of internet for educational purposes by many families. In some cases, internet is used to establish quick connections around the world. Many applications in science and technology and attractiveness of the internet usage have led to considering the emergence of internet addiction in recent years. Internet addiction results in personal, family, academic, financial, and occupational problems that are characteristic of other addictions. The concept of internet addiction refers to the excessive use of internet which in turn causes various problems in individual, social and professional aspects. Internet addiction recently began to be analyzed as a psychological problem in association with various psychological problems in the academic world. Particularly educators, psychological counselors, psychologists and psychiatrists tended to carry out various researches on internet addiction. 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.

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Men more than women seemed to enjoy interactive on-line games which draw upon power and dominance. These on-line games differ from video games in that characters interact with one another allowing all the players to recognize each other's rank. A character's rank is formed as a player gains more strength and power through continued play time. Women more often than men commented on how they sought out support, acceptance, and comfort through on-line relationships formed in chat rooms. Virtual communities gave women a sense of belonging and the ability to share the company of others in a non-threatening environment. Nowadays, a high internet addiction percentage has been reported among users of various sciences which it could be considered as one type of behavioral addiction. In fact, based on the results of worldwide studies, internet addiction has become a global problem. Internet addiction in young people is especially recognised as a social problem. Whereas this generation depends heavily on the internet for learning, social activities and leisure, people of a younger age appear to be less self-regulative and more susceptible to media influences.

2. Review of Literature

Several studies have reported gender differences in internet usage. Studies indicate that the use of computers and the internet differs between men and women. Weiser (2000) gave an extensive review and executed a study on gender differences in internet use patterns and internet application preferences in a sample of 1190 surveys. He concluded that there were numerous gender differences in preferences for specific Internet applications. Results had shown that men use the internet mainly for purposes related to entertainment and leisure, whereas women use it primarily for interpersonal communication and educational assistance. Male students are generally considered more experienced in programming and computer games than females and report having had more encouragement from parents and friends previously, in contrast to women who might have been discouraged from using modern technologies (Busch, 1995).

Papastergiou and Solomonidou (2005) mention that boys have more opportunities to access the Internet and use the Internet for entertainment and web page creation than girls do, with no other differences in other activities. Scherer (1997) suggested that dependent internet users included a large proportion of men as compared to women. Similar results were reported by Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) that males were more likely to be pathological internet users than females. As expected, male adolescents were found to have higher levels of internet addiction as than their female counterpart. This provides support to the findings of Mazalin and Moore (2004), Chen and Fu (2009), Sato (2009), Beutel (2011), and Kennedy, Wellman, and Klement (2003) utilizing teenage population for the comparison on gender difference on internet addiction.

In this study, adolescent male's use the internet as a social mean or as a ground for interpersonal relations. When Internet connection levels were compared in terms of gender, it was found that males are highly addicted to the Internet than females. This result is in parallel with the results of some studies (Bayraktar, 2001; Ozcan, 2004; Chou et al., 2005; Bayraktar & Gun, 2007 and Iklar, 2012)

3. Hypothesis

There will be significant difference between boys and girls adolescents

4. Method

Sample

The present study comprised of 200 adolescents (100 males and 100 females) in the age range of 14 – 16 years studying in class IXth and Xth selected from Ranchi town. All of these belong to middle socio-economic status.

5. Instrument

The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) is the first valid and reliable measurement of internet addiction. This 20-item questionnaire was designed by Kimberley Young (1998). It measures internet addiction in mild, moderate and severe levels. Each answer is scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. In a way that, score 1= rarely, 2= occasionally, 3= frequently, 4= often, and 5= always. The final score is obtained by summing the scores of all questions. The higher score represents a greater level of addiction. The total score between 20 and 49 represents a mild addiction, 50-79 represents moderate addiction, and 80-100 represents severe addiction. The internal consistency coefficient was .89 and the test-retest reliability coefficient was .83.

6. Procedure

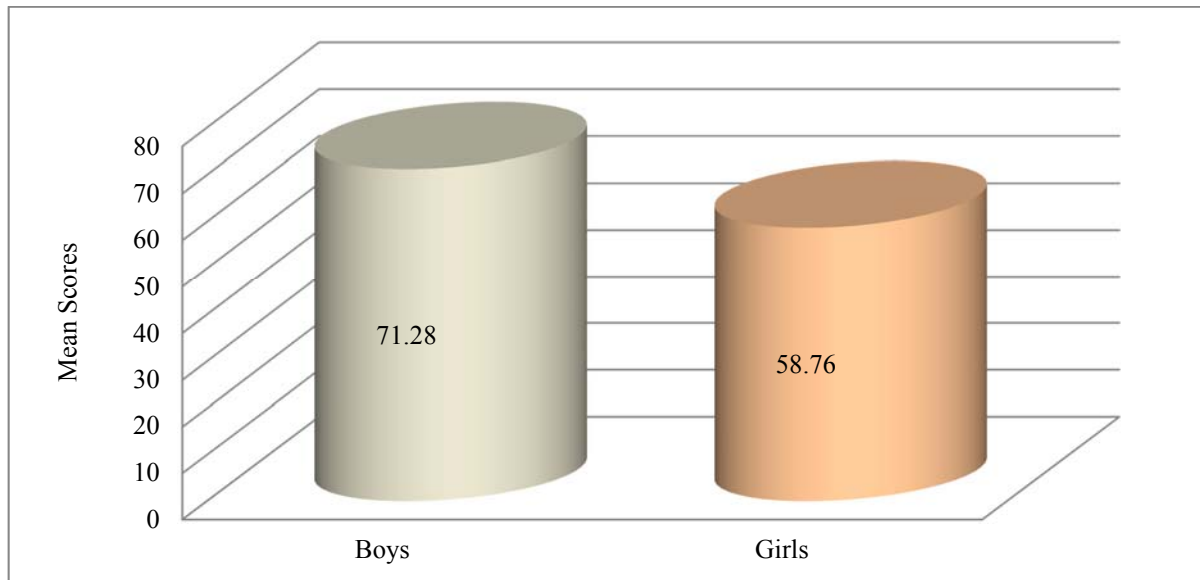
The internet addiction test was administered to both groups with instructions to complete all questions honestly and not to discuss the questions with fellow students. Scoring was done according to the respective scoring keys. In order to fulfill the hypothesis of the study the score obtained were analyzed with mean scores, standard deviation and t values.

7. Result and Discussion

The data were analysed by Means, SDs and t test. Tables present the result.

Table 1. Means, SDs and t-value of boys and girls group on internet addiction test

Groups	N	Mean	SDs	MD	t	P value
Boys	100	71.28	18.62	12.52	5.05	0.01
Girls	100	58.76	16.48			

Fig 1: Mean scores of boys and girls group on internet addiction

It was evident from the result given in table and figure that:

There was significant difference in the internet addiction test of the boys and girls student. Boys student showed significantly higher internet addiction as compared to girls student. The present result finds its support from the earlier findings of Iklar, (2012).

8. Conclusion

- Boys were found more internet addicted than their girls counterparts.

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