Internet Addiction and Social Interaction Anxiety Among Adolescents

Helan V Binu

Department of Psychology, Don Bosco College, Affiliated to the University of Calicut

ABSTRACT

The aim the study is to find relation between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety in adolescents. The tools used in this study are Internet addiction test developed by Young, S.K. in 1998 and social interaction anxiety scale by Mattick R.P., & Clarke J.C. in 1998. These variables were measured in 200 adolescents. The participants were selected using convenience sampling method. The statistical procedure used is Karl Pearson's correlation co-efficient. The result of the study shows a highly significant positive correlation between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety.

Keywords: Internet addiction, social interaction anxiety, Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, rapid technological advancement and internet accessibility have reshaped how people especially youth interact and live. Traditional face-to-face social activities are increasingly replaced by indoor, screen-based interactions. This shift has led to a rise in internet use and a decline in direct social engagement, making real-life interactions less familiar and more challenging for many children and adolescents. Research links excessive internet use to higher social anxiety, suggesting significant psychological and social effects of digital immersion.

Adolescents, defined by the WHO as individuals aged 10–19, make up about 360 million people roughly 20% of the population in South-East Asia. This stage marks a major transition marked by simultaneous physical, sexual, psychological, and social changes. While it offers opportunities for growth, it also presents risks to health and wellbeing. Despite the common belief that adolescents are generally healthy, they face several public health challenges.

Internet Addiction

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), internet addiction is characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupation with, urges for, or behaviors related to computer use and internet access, leading to impairment or distress. It can manifest as a need for increasing amounts of online time, withdrawal symptoms when unable to go online, using the internet to cope with negative feelings, spending significant time on internet-related activities, neglecting other areas of life, and being willing to lose important things for internet use.

Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Interaction Anxiety)

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), social anxiety disorder, also known as social phobia, is characterized by a persistent, intense fear or anxiety about social situations where the individual may be exposed to possible

scrutiny by others. This fear can involve a concern about being embarrassed, humiliated, rejected, or looked down upon.

Rationale of the study

The rationale for studying internet addiction and social interaction anxiety is multifaceted and significant for several reasons; wide spread and excessive internet use, with the rise of smart phones and easy access to the internet, its impact on individual's social life. Which leads to reduced face to face social interaction and this result in social interaction anxiety and also individuals may feel uncomfortable or anxious in real-world social situations. This can also lead to psychological problems like depression, loneliness, and low self-esteem. Excessive internet use can also hinder academic or work performance. Studying internet addiction and social interaction anxiety is vital to comprehending their impact on individuals' mental health, relationships, and overall well-being. This research can guide interventions and policy measures aimed at mitigating the negative consequences associated with these issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Weinstein, A.& et.al (2015). Evaluated a study about the internet addiction and associated with social anxiety in young adults, this study aimed to examine the Problematic Internet use (PIU) or excessive Internet use is characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges, or behaviors regarding computer use, and Internet access that leads to impairment or distress. Cross-sectional studies on samples of patients reported high co morbidity of Internet addiction with psychiatric disorders, especially affective disorders (including depression), anxiety disorders (generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder), and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. The samples consisted of 120 university students 60 females and 60 males. The tools used in the study were Young's Internet Addiction Test [IAT], and Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale. The

statistical procedure was Pearson's correlation method. The result of the study indicates the co-occurrence of internet addiction and social anxiety.

Paul, et.al (2022). Conducted a study on cyber addition and the role of social anxiety disorders among college going students of the central Kashmir in the year of 2022. Samples of 220 undergraduate students were chosen using convenience sampling method. The tools used were social interaction anxiety scale and Young's internet addition test. The statistical procedure used was Chi-square test "t" test, standard deviation and Person's correlation. The result shows a positive correlation between cyber addiction and social anxiety.

Jaiswal, A., & et.al (2020). Conducted a study on burden of internet addition; social anxiety and social phobia among university students in the year of 2020.A sample of 307 undergraduate students were tested. Social interaction anxiety scale (SIAS) &Young's internet addition test was the tool used. The result found that there is a relation between social interaction anxiety and internet addition.

Lyvers, et.al. (2022). Examined-the compared levels of internet and social media addiction symptoms in relation to 3 traits previously linked to other form of excessive behaviour - alexithymia, narcissism and social anxiety. This study involved 217 young adult social media and internet users who completed an online questionnaire battery, including demographic questions and well-validated measures of narcissism, alexithymia, and social anxiety. Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient is the statistical procedure used in this study. Results suggest that the association of alexithymia with internet addiction symptoms does not extend to excessive use of social media, supporting the contention that the concept of internet addiction may be overly broad.

Kumar et al (2023). Evaluated internet addiction and its association with psychological morbidity and psychological wellbeing in a larger sample size. In

addition, to examine the factors those are associated with Internet addiction. The sample consisted a total of 1287 young students. The tools used were Internet Addiction Test (IAT), Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7), and Psychological Well-Being Index-22. The statistical procedure was descriptive analysis was used to calculate the continuous variables' mean and standard deviation, and for discontinuous variables, frequency and percentage were calculated by the descriptive analysis. Comparisons among the groups were made using the t-test or Mann–Whitney, and Chi-square test. To determine the association between the Internet addiction and independent variables, logistic regression analysis was performed at the bivariate and multivariate levels. The result of the study internet addiction is highly prevalent among college students and has a significant association with anxiety, depression, and poor psychological wellbeing.

MATERIALS & METHODS
Aim
To study the internet addiction and social interaction anxiety among adolescents.

Objective
To understand the relationship between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety among adolescents.

Hypothesis
There is a significant relationship between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety among adolescents.

Sample
A sample is a smaller set of data that a researcher chooses or selects from a larger population using a pre-defined selection bias method. Non probability sampling method was used in a sample of 200 adolescents. Consent was taken from the participant and confidentiality of the responses was assured.

Research Design
To accomplish the objective of the study, correlation research design was adopted.

PROCEDURE
The study was conducted online by generating Google forms, related in the measures for the active participation the purpose of the study will be explained in the beginning. Then the consent was taken from the participant and confidentiality of responses was assured. The instructions will be clearly specified.
Firstly, the demographic data is collected then the scales were administered. After 200 responses successfully accomplish the scoring and interpretation is done with the help of a standardized manual. The obtained data is then analyzed with the help of SPSS. The findings were then interpreted, discussed and compared in the light of previous studies.

TOOLS USED
Internet Addiction Test
Internet addiction test was developed by Young in 1998. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions with five options 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 is the scoring pattern.

Social Interaction Anxiety
Social interaction anxiety scale was developed by Mattick, R. P., & Clarke, J.C. in 1998. The questionnaire consists 20 questions with five options 0, 1, 2, 3, 4.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS
Karl Pearson's Co- efficient of Correlation

RESULT

Table 1. shows the correlation between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety among adolescents.

	Social Interaction Anxiety	Internet Addiction
Internet addiction	.835	.000
Social Interaction Anxiety	.000	.835

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The hypothesis stating, there is a significant relationship between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety among adolescents was tested employing Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation. The study indicated highly significant relationship between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety among adolescents at 0.000 level. This implies that, individuals who exhibit higher levels of internet addiction are also likely to experience higher level of social interaction anxiety and vice versa.

DISCUSSION

This correlation study aimed to investigate the relationship between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety in a large sample of 200 adolescents. And the correlation coefficient of this study shows a highly significant positive relationship between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety. H1 is accepted here because here when internet addiction increases social interaction anxiety also increases, it implies that H1 is relevant and it states the relation between the both variables.

Widespread and limitless use of internet has led to lack of social interactions and social gatherings mainly in modern society and upcoming generation and it seem to be mainly affected in adolescent because, majority of the outdoor activities has been shifted to indoors availability of mobile phones and internet enabled devices rise the tendency to spend more time on this other than engaging in socio-cultural activities. Covid pandemic scenario can also be a considered factor in the shifting of the whole lifestyle. When the situation of lock down arisen all the daily basis activities include schooling and other job and all was compelled to continue as through internet enabled devices and a new concept of remote learning was entered into people's mind. Study conducted by Çakiroglu & et al. 2022 reported that 54% of the participants of their study spent more time with digital games during the pandemic than before the pandemic. Luo et al. 2023 showed that the prevalence of social media addiction was 6.8% and that weekly social media usage increased significantly during the pandemic (from 17.2 hours to 21.4 hours), and Teng et al. found that internet gaming disorder, IGD and video gaming increased among adolescents during the pandemic. Moreover, a systematic meta-analysis reported that the prevalence of behavioural addictions was 30.7% for smart phone addiction, 15.1% for social media addiction, 10.6% for internet addiction, and 5.3% for gaming addiction; the prevalence of gaming and social media addiction was also higher during lockdown periods, so covid pandemic may can be a relevant factor for increasing internet addiction.

Adolescent is the age period which children tend to develop relation with peers and their surroundings and because of this unexpected emergency situation life style gone in a different way so may be this also can be a reason for increased usage of internet in adolescents. At the same time using of social media platforms have its own benefits but the issues arise because of the excessive use. Social media helps us to connect with our beloved ones that all around the universe irrespective of boundaries and distance and also it helps in gathering information, to know about things that which are happening around. Excessive and uncontrollable use social media may lead to lacking of responsibilities, day today activities and it may lead to addiction that which make similar impact of such addiction of substance and all. It seems like above 95% of peoples are living with

trauma and pain in this era so that at least for temporary wellness feel people tend to overuse social media platforms and in present scenario and this tendency is mainly seen in adolescents to avoid external pressures they tend to live in digital world. And this may arise a high chance of social withdrawal as a result of making comfort zones behind screens and social media platforms other than socializing this is mainly visible in individuals of adolescent. According to DSM manual and it is mentioned that adolescent boys are more addicted than girls. As per the criteria's there may occur higher chance for the consequences of internet gaming disorder led to psychological issues in individuals, and social anxiety is one among the factor social anxiety is a situation where individual's face excessive fear while involving in social gatherings or social settings. This occurs as a result of fear of judgement, fear of being noticed, also physical appearance is also may become the reason, insecurities like, feeling of helpless, guilt all are been suppressed and diverted to internet gaming or social media and this may can arise a chance of developing social anxiety and this led to lack of social interactions and connections. Social interaction anxiety may lead to struggle in initiating conversations or managing social events. Children who had faces severe teasing and bulling in their childhood may tend to have social discomfort and anxiety in their life, and because of this trauma peoples tend to stay behind comfort zones and internet and social media spaces gives much comfort recently this can be also a factor for increasing internet addiction. And also nowadays internet and social media platforms give plenty of opportunities than in social situations this may led to the over using of internet and avoidance of social settings, this is becoming a trend nowadays and adolescents are mainly influenced by this because their age is so. Individuals with social anxiety have a high tendency to isolate to reduce anxiety, but it makes negative impact on people. Individuals with social anxiety have a higher possibility of mental health disturbances like depression. There occurs a chance of increasing unhealed intra-personal issues which knowingly or unknowingly affect inter personal relations for the most part it is seen in adolescents.

Internet addiction has an inevitable role in increasing social interaction anxiety. It is may be because of the comfort-ness that is receiving from the social media and the discomforts occurs in the social scenario. And here increased internet addiction results in increased social interaction anxiety and it is clear that excess use of internet made negative impact on people's life and the study conducted by Weinstein, A.&et.al.2015 in young adults is supporting evidence for this study, the study conducted by Kumar, et.al. 2022 in the impact of internet addiction during covid-19 on anxiety and sleep quality also shows a positive relation and also study conducted by Paul, et.al.2022 in college going students is the latest study which shows the positive relation. And these previous studies also indicate the relevance of this study.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to study the relationship between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety in adolescents. The tools used in the study was internet addiction test developed by Young, S.K. in 1998, and social interaction anxiety scale developed by Mattick, R. P., & Clarke, J. C. in 1998. Internet addiction is a behavioral addiction in which a person becomes dependent on the Internet or other online devices as a maladaptive way of coping with life's stresses. Social anxiety disorder sometimes known as social phobia; is a type of anxiety disorder that causes anxiety or fear in social settings. Someone with this disorder has trouble talking with people, meeting new people, and attending social gatherings. They may feel anxious about others judging or scrutinizing them. They may understand their fears are irrational but feel powerless to overcome them. The

sample consists of 200 adolescents which were selected using convenient sampling method. Karl Pearson's correlation co-efficient is the statistical procedure used to analyse the study.

From this study we can conclude that there is a positive relation between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety.

Major findings

There is a highly significant positive relation between internet addiction and social interaction anxiety in adolescents.

Implications

- The study helps to understand the impact of internet addiction on social interaction anxiety.
- The study is very relevant in this technology emerging scenario for a betterment of social living.
- The study helps to understand how increased use of internet affects social skills of adolescents.

Limitations, scope, and suggestions for further research

1. Data was collected using Google forms bias like social desirability may occur.
2. Samples were chosen according to the convenience.
3. The sample size was small, only 200 samples were selected
4. This study can be used in educational settings, where better strategies can be established to reduce internet addiction among adolescents.
5. Future studies can be conducted around a large area under large population.
6. Data collection method can be switched to interview method.

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