



# **Psychological Correlates of Internet Addiction in Senior Secondary School Students DISSERTATION**

**Master of Arts**

**IN**

**PSYCHOLOGY**

**BY**

**MANOJ KUMAR**

**Under the Supervision of**

**DR. MOHAMMAD AMIN WANI**

**(Assistant Professor)**

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I Manoj Kumar I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my teachers who gave me the golden opportunity to do this wonderful dissertation. Which also helped me in doing a lot of research and I came to know about so many new things about psychology I am really thankful to them.

## **ABSTRACT**

One of the problem that the internet has created is a virtual addiction or addiction to the global we world, causing adverse psychological behavioural effects on the uses. The aim is to investigate the psychological correlates of internet addiction in senior secondary school students. It can cause multiple harms to the person, including mental health, family relationships and increase the distance between the family members and education. Gender variable can be used to discuss are these. There is a correlation between internet addiction and depression in high school students.

Key Words: Internet addiction, stress, depression and anxiety.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the study:**

One of the problems that the internet has created is a virtual addiction or addiction to the global web world, causing adverse psychological behavioural effects on the users. One of the groups at higher risk for internet addiction is teenagers, and since internet addiction will lead to academic failure in students, evaluating it among them and its relationship with signs of mental disorders seem necessary.

The internet is a means of communication that brings important contribution to human life by enabling people to access all kinds of information at a very short time and to communicate with other people in an expedite manner. Today, the use of this communication tool has increased at an incredible rate. While the development of the internet has affected the human life in a positive way, it has simultaneously brought about some problems. Some users are able to use the internet in a way that will delay/postpone the activity of the user for a long period of time or for everyday life. These users are increasingly experiencing more problems and psychological impairments in their lives due to unhealthy/problematic internet use behavior. This situation can affect the individuals who use the Internet in a widespread manner. Therefore, when the Internet cannot be used in a proper way, it has the potential to affect human life in a negative way and create dependency.

The excessive use of the Internet and its negative consequences first determined by Young (1996) and also used the term "Internet Addiction". She claimed that some users become addicted to the Internet in the same way as other. Addictive to alcohol or drugs, and cause them to experience these situation problems in your life. There is another popular term "Problematic use of the Internet". It is concerned about the excessive concern about the use of the Internet that results in psychosocial irregularities, academic difficulties and physical health problems for

included individuals. From addiction to behaviour perspective, the Internet's dependence can be defined as the behaviour of the internet that it produces short-term awards, such as self-help or mood regulation, which continue to stand out their negative consequences or attempts to control them.

**The aim of the present study** is to investigate the *Psychological Correlates of Internet addiction in Senior Secondary School Students*. We have a reasonable understanding of the etiology of internet addiction, stress and anxiety, but little is known about the Psychological Correlates of Internet addiction in Senior Secondary School Students.

In recent years, the internet has become the most important recreational and academic tool for adolescents and adults, particularly in the times of covid-19 when social distancing measures are being advocated and publicized to protect one from contracting the infection. The internet enables us to access information sources from around the world, giving ability to conduct the researches and carrying various types of other activities like online buying, chatting trade etc. Although use of internet have provided better opportunities for communication, information, and social interaction but excessive undisciplined use by some individuals has led to the emergence of the concept of internet addiction. In fact, younger internet users, particular those who are adolescents are more at risk of becoming internet addicts than older users. The reasons can be multi folds like using internet for the academic purposes particularly in present times when lots of online educational platforms are available.

Teachers also promote the use of searching recent information available with regards to the topic of discussion. Students try to escape the stresses resulting from their obligations to pass examinations and doing assignments using internet platforms. Various types of communication applications make online chatting seem to be better option for students than personal meeting.

Last but not the least covid-19 has restricted the personal meetings and made online platform better available option.

Research suggests that problematic internet use is associated with decline in the size of social circle, depression, loneliness, lower self-esteem and life satisfaction, sensation seeking, poor mental health, and low family function. Internet Addiction, Internet Addiction Disorder, Compulsive Internet Use, Computer Addiction, Internet Dependence and Problematic Internet Use.

### **Internet Addiction**

Today, many issues are concerned through this new communication environment. Apart from the many advantages that arise from the fact that the Internet is a network that surrounds the world, there are also problems that arise from the fact that it is open to everyone's use. Some of them are information differentiation in the Internet environment, overloading information, serving unreliable information, and these days the most prominent internet addiction.

With the use of the Internet, it is necessary because it facilitates life, increases interpersonal communication thanks to advanced systems and allows access to the movie, video, games, etc. Platforms, the negative with which it is monitored is a problem that is much underlined. This interest is increasing in some societies and families so that the negativeness of this situation can be neglected or the problems that may arise cannot be realized. The concept of "Internet addiction" was first used by Dr. Goldberg in 1995. Internet addiction, which may affect the ability of users to access online access to potential relational, professional and social problems, is defined as a new and generally unknown clinical disorder. Based on this result, Internet dependency can be defined as a form of impulse control disorder that is not related to substance use, such as pathological gambling (Young, 2007).

## **Models that Constitute the Etiologic of Internet Addiction**

In order to develop effective interventions in the treatment of Internet addiction, there are some models that are proposed to work on the etiologic of this addiction.

### **a) Cognitive Behavioral Model:**

One of the most comprehensive of the studies on etiologic is the cognitive behavioural pattern created by Davis. Whereas previous research on internet addiction has emphasized the extent of behaviour and the negative consequences of this behavior on daily life, Davis' model focuses on harmful perceptions and adaptive cognition is at the centre of pathological internet use. The healthy use of the internet with this model is defined as a clear purpose for a period that can be considered reasonable within the conditions of the individual, by using real communication and discrimination based on the difference of communication over the internet and without using a different identity.

In order to explain the cognitive theory of pathological internet use, we need to understand some of the basic concepts Davis uses. The factors that drive behaviour are called 'necessary', 'adequate' and 'contributory'. The necessary factor is the etiologic effect that must be present for the manifestation, but it does not necessarily mean that it will form a symptom. In other words, pathology is necessary but not sufficient. The adequate factor is the etiologic effect which guarantees that the symptoms occur. The contributory factor is the reason that greatly increases the formation of various indications.

### **b) Conceptual Internet Addiction Model**

According to this model recommended by Douglas (2008) Internet overuse is determined by the internal needs and motivation of the individual, such as the ability to hide identity, reduce distress and comfort, meet social needs, and so on. The conceptual internet addiction model is the driving force behind the perceived attractiveness of the media, such as accessing addictive applications such as gambling, chatting on the Internet, easy access through internet and internet

facilitating social interaction and exchange of ideas, it indicates that the adverse effects of Internet overuse mitigate the relationship between the severities. Apart from physical effects such as negative effects of internet addiction, academic, social, economic, occupational and sleep hours' changes, it may also include various normal deviated behaviors (online porn, online stock exchange, virtual sex instead of normal relationship, social activities for those with heavy withdrawal) (Douglas, 2008).

Physical effects of internet addiction:

Adolescents with Internet dependence have irregular eating habits, sedentary behavior, and lack of physical activity, self-evaluation and interpersonal communication disorder. All of this can lead to obesity. Obesity also brings secondary risks such as hyperinsulinemia, hyperlipidemia, and hypertension. There are very few studies on the relationship between internet addiction and obesity in adolescents.

At the beginning of the physical problems that long-term computer uses causes in children; eye disturbances, negative effects of radiation, posture and skeletal structure. Keeping muscle groups under constant repetitive movements leads to problems like carpal tunnel syndrome

### **Psychosocial Effects of Internet Addiction**

There is a linear relationship between problematic internet use and social isolation, loneliness and reduced home-school-work performance.

Similar to depression, the concept of loneliness can be considered both a cause and a consequence of internet addiction. In other words, it can be considered that the individual can use the internet excessively because of being alone in the society and that he may stay away from the society due to excessive internet usage. As a result, it is thought that the level of internet dependency of the people is increased, and the loneliness is also increased .

## **Cognitive Effects of Internet Addiction**

Computer games, virtual conversation, and internet addiction can cause academic success to fall as an obstacle to studying. In a study conducted with university students, it was found that internet use was twice as high in the students with low academic success. Another cognitive problem caused by long-term computer use is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder symptom.

## **Social Media and Internet Addiction**

Social Network Sites (SNS) is a virtual community where users create individual public profiles, interact with friends in real life, and meet other people based on common interests. Over the last few years, they have become a "global consumer phenomenon" with an exponential increase. However, contemporary scientific literature dealing with the addictive qualities of social networks on the Internet is scarce.

## **Review of Literature**

Internet addiction in students is associated with problems such as loss of interpersonal communication, anger, aggression and irritability. It can also cause multiple harms to the person, including mental health (anxiety, depression, and loneliness), physical (sleep disorders, nutrition), familial (reduction of family relationships and increasing the distance between family members), job (reduced work effectiveness, dismissal from work) and education (school grades drop).

Internet addiction in students is concomitant with depression and insomnia, suicidal thought, hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), social phobia and hostility, drug abuse and problematic alcohol consumption. A total of 78% of German students who were addicted to the Internet had depression and impulsivity disorder.

As the Internet increasingly becomes part of our lives, Internet addiction disorder has received much attention. Internet addicts may withdraw from social and interpersonal interactions other than those on the Internet. Their family relationships and academic or occupational

functioning may deteriorate. Several withdrawal symptoms have been identified, including nervousness, agitation, and aggression, as well as an addiction syndrome that includes the presence of withdrawal symptoms, increasing tolerance, and loss of control. A high rate of comorbid mental disorders has also been reported, especially depressive symptoms and social impairment.

Internet addiction is a behavioural addiction and not a substance addiction and is not necessarily regarded with the same amount of seriousness. Because of the previously held belief that only a foreign substance could create chemical changes and dependencies in the brain, substance addiction has been considered far more harmful than behavioural addiction. However, both substance and behavioural addictions have the power to create behavioural, neurobiological and psychological changes in the individual, making all types of addictions detrimental.

Boys' addiction was significantly higher than girls; network use frequency and anxiety score values were positively correlated; never use the network of depression score significantly higher than the normal users of the networks. It was concluded that the use of the network is very common in secondary schools, most students can use the network normally; internet addiction that may have a tendency to develop in younger age, should be strengthened first-year students in junior high school education and to strengthen network psychological intervention; excessive use of the network will lead to illness and depression and anxiety. Secondary school students such as the occurrence of mental disorder, should students of early psychological intervention; network use of the mental health of middle school students have a positive effect, suppressing the demand for secondary school students will increase the online incidence of depression. Therefore, the method cannot restrict access to reduce the incidence of addiction should be a reasonable guide for students to use the Internet.



## METHODOLOGY

### Objectives:

**For the present research following are the objectives:**

1. To examine prevalence of internet addiction among high secondary school students.
2. To study depression, anxiety and stress among high secondary school students.
3. To study the relationship between internet addiction and depression among high secondary school students.
4. To study the relationship between internet addiction and anxiety among high secondary school students.
5. To study the relationship between internet addiction and stress among high secondary school students.
6. To examine gender differences in internet addiction, depression, anxiety and stress among high secondary school students.

**Objective no 3, 4, and 5 may be written as**

- To study the relationship of internet addiction with depression, anxiety, and stress among high secondary school students.

### Hypotheses

**Following hypotheses have been formulated from the review of literature**

*H1*: Internet addiction will be prevalent among high secondary school students.

*H2*: There will be a significant positive relationship of internet addiction with depression, anxiety and stress among high secondary school students.

*H3*: Male and female students will not differ on internet addiction, anxiety, depression and stress.

1. It is expected that there is positive relationship between internet addiction and anxiety among high secondary school students.
2. It is expected that there is positive relationship between internet addiction and stress among high secondary school students.

### **SAMPLE**

Study population- 100 students studying in class 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> from different streams and meeting inclusion and exclusion criteria is enrolled in the study. Data is collected from trinity.

### **INCLUSION CRITERIA**

1. Age more than 16 years
2. Both the gender
3. Studying in high school class 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>
4. Informed consent from parents

### **EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

1. Already suffering from psychological disorder and taking treatment for that.

### **TOOLS USED:**

#### **1. Young's Internet Addiction Test (1998)**

It is a 20 item, 5-point liker scale which is used to measure the severity of internet addiction. It encompasses the extent to which internet use affects a subject's thoughts, feelings, behaviours, sleep patterns and functioning. Scores vary from 20 to 100 with 20–49 depicting an average online user who has complete control over his/her usage, 50–79 connoting a user having frequent problems due to internet usage and 80–100 signifying a user having a serious impact of internet on his life.

The threshold used for defining internet addiction in this study was a score of 50 and above. In a recent study on internet addiction in Greek high school students, a score of 51 on IAT was proposed as the optimal cut-off point combining high sensitivity and specificity.

## 2. Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS- 1995)

The depression anxiety stress scale (DASS). Depression, anxiety, and stress were measured by using a Turkish version of the DASS (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Turkish adaptation of the DASS had been done by Akin and Çetin (2007). The DASS is a 42 item self-report inventory that provides scores on three subscales: Depression (14-items), anxiety (14-items), and stress (14-items).

## PROCEDURE

Permission for participation of students was obtained from related chief departments and students voluntarily participated in the research. Completion of the questionnaires was anonymous and there was a guarantee of confidentiality. Measurement items were administered to the students in groups in the classrooms. Prior to administration of measures, all participants were told about purposes of the study. In this research, Pearson correlation coefficient was utilized to determine the relationships between internet addiction and depression, anxiety, and stress.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

1. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the data, mean values with standard deviations.
2. Pearson's Correlation coefficient between internet addiction, depression, anxiety and stress scores

## RESULTS

**Table 1**

**Descriptive Statistics of Internet Addiction, Depression, Anxiety and Stress among high secondary school students (N = 100)**

S.No	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Internet Addiction	100	33.97	14.77
2	Depression	100	5.46	4.57
3	Anxiety	100	5.42	3.82
4	Stress	100	6.17	3.91

Table values showing the mean and SD of the measured variables. The mean and SD value of the internet addiction comes out to be  $33.97 \pm 14.77$ , for the depression values are  $5.46 \pm 4.57$ , for the anxiety mean and SD values are  $5.42 \pm 3.82$  and for the stress the mean  $\pm$  SD are  $6.17 \pm 3.91$ .

**Table 2**

**Correlation between Internet Addiction, Depression, Anxiety and Stress among high secondary school students**

Variables		Internet Addiction	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Internet Addiction	Pearson Correlation	1	.237**	.100	.202*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003	.212	.011
	N	100	100	100	100
Depression	Pearson Correlation	.237**	1	.361**	.468**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.100	.361**	1	.684**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.212	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Stress	Pearson Correlation	.202*	.468**	.684**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

Table 2 depicts the correlation between internet addiction, depression, anxiety and stress. Values depict significant positive correlation between internet addiction and depression ( $r = .237$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). It means as the uses of internet increases the person will more depressed. It was also shows that there is significant positive correlation between internet addiction and stress ( $r = .202$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). It revealed that when person spend more time with internet he/she detached from significant others, when one has no sound relationships with significant others, therefore he/she will more prone to become stressed.

Whereas the result of table 2 also revealed that there is no significant correlation between internet addiction and anxiety ( $r = .100$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore *H2i.e., There will be a significant positive relationship of internet addiction with depression, anxiety and stress among high secondary school students* is partially supported.

### Table 3

#### Gender wise descriptive statistics among high secondary school students

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Internet Addiction	Male	50	34.77	15.270	1.825
	Female	50	33.32	14.420	1.546
Depression	Male	50	5.37	4.489	.537
	Female	50	5.54	4.673	.501
Anxiety	Male	50	5.17	3.901	.466
	Female	50	5.62	3.770	.404
Stress	Male	50	5.79	4.064	.486
	Female	50	6.48	3.775	.405

In the above Table 3 the mean value of the male in internet addiction was 34.77 and for the females it was 33.32 and the SD value was 15.27 for the males and for the females it was 14.42. For the depression the mean and SD values found to be  $5.37 \pm 4.48$  for the males and for females it was  $5.54 \pm 4.67$ . For the anxiety among males the mean and SD value was  $5.17 \pm 3.90$  and for the females it was  $5.62 \pm 3.77$ . In the last dimension of the DAS that is stress the mean and SD for males was  $5.79 \pm 4.06$  and for the females the values were  $6.48 \pm 3.77$ .

**Table 4****Gender Differences in terms of t value in internet addiction, depression, anxiety and stress among high secondary school students**

Variables	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Internet Addiction	1.280	.204	3.814	2.98	-2.100	9.729
Depression	.248	.805	.224	.905	-1.571	2.019
Anxiety	.519	.605	-.404	.778	-1.948	1.140
Stress	1.023	.309	-.798	.780	-2.347	.751

The above table showed the gender differences in all the measured variables viz. Internet addiction, depression, anxiety and stress. The value of t in the internet addiction comes out to be ( $t=1.28$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and it is not significant. For the variable depression the ( $t=.248$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), for the variable anxiety ( $t=.519$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and for stress ( $t=1.023$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). The above result revealed that male and female students were not differed on measured variables viz. Internet addiction, depression, anxiety and stress. Therefore *H3* i.e., *Male and female students will not differ on internet addiction, anxiety and stress among high secondary school students* is supported.

**CONCLUSION:****It was concluded from the present research that**

1. There is significant positive correlation between internet addiction and depression among high secondary school students.
2. There is significant positive correlation between internet addiction and stress among high secondary school students.
3. There is significant positive correlation between internet addiction and anxiety among high secondary school students.
3. Male and female students (gender difference) were not differed on internet addiction, depression, anxiety and stress among high secondary school students.