

INTERNET ADDICTION ON AGGRESSION AMONG SCHOOL GOING ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

The aim of the present research is to study the relationship between internet addiction and aggression among school going adolescents. Ex-Post facto research design was used. The sample consisted of 120 adolescents of which 60 boys and 60 girls will be selected using convenience sampling technique whose age ranges from 13-15. The Internet Addiction test (Kimberly Young, 1998) and Aggression scale (Buss&Perry,1992) were the tools used. The results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between internet addiction and dimensions of anger and regression analysis showed that internet addiction was a significant predictor of aggression. There were gender differences only in the anger dimension of aggression.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Aggression, Adolescents.*

Introduction

There has been a lot of conjecture worldwide for what has been labeled as “Internet Addiction on which a wide range of adolescents were addicted to and such a phenomenon could almost pose a serious threat and hinder the normal functioning of these individuals. It has been observed that there has been a drastic spurt of internet users worldwide and amongst those the adolescent population are increasing in number. Internet Addiction refers to “excessive or poorly controlled obsessions, impulses and behaviours associated with internet usage which propel distress or impairment” (Shaw and Black,2008). Though it is seen that there are a lot of benefits associated with internet use there are a lot of negative consequences associated with the same. For instance, the more an adolescent is found to be addicted to the cyber space, the more it is related to abnormalities in brain development, lack of identity formation, difficulty in socializing with others, emotional dysregulation and academic underachievement. These result in the development of anxiety, depression and exhibition of hostile behaviors in the adolescent. With over five hundred and sixty million internet users, India stands second with regard to the online market behind China. It was estimated that by 2023 there would be six hundred and fifty million internet users in the country. There has been a consistent increase in the internet accessibility rates compared to that which

was five years ago when the internet penetration rate was around twenty even percent.

Another main variable of this study is aggression. Aggression refers to acts of physical, emotional as well as sexual violence” (Bandura, 1973; Volavka, 2002). According to Anderson and Bushman (200) aggression is a behaviour that is intended to directly harm another individual”. With the internet that is seen as the most contributing factor that influences to a great extent in shaping the behaviour of the adolescent since most of the time is spent there, this could have a direct effect on the adolescent in the development of an aggressive personality. The social learning theory of aggression (Bandura, 1973) addressed that imitative learning is one of the most contributing factors that forces aggressive behavior. Furthermore, several studies documented a significant relationship between internet dependency and aggressive behavior. Nevertheless, it is vague why aggressive behavior may be associated with and contributed by internet addiction. So, empirical evidence is needed to describe this association. While there is a very extensive literature on aggression and several different definitions, there is no consensus on a single definition of aggression which poses a huge negative impact on the individual with regard to family relations, interpersonal skills etc. Similarly, Yen et al (2007) reported a high correlation between aggressive behaviors and internet

dependence. There is limited research to indicate that an increased number of hours on social media correlated directly with aggressive behavior, but there is literature that connects certain types of internet use to increased aggressive behavior. Agbaria (2020) documented that personal characteristics namely positive or negative affect and self-control that may elucidate why internet addition is related to aggression. In addition, the general aggression model addressed that both individual characteristics, as well as situational factors, influence aggressive behavior (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

Need for the study

In India, though underestimated, use of internet is humongous, especially within the young population. Hence, it had been found necessary to review the pattern of internet usage in adolescents and its relationship with aggressive behavior. It is also seen that those adolescents who were seen spending a lot of time online had tended to expose themselves to playing games that were violent in nature and most of the games were designed in a way wherein the adolescents were forced to look competitive and resort to extreme behaviours in order to win the game. It was also seen that most of the adolescents found the online space more comforting and hence it was seen that this had taken a toll on their grades in academics too. Excessive undisciplined usage of the internet by certain individuals has led to the emergence of the concept of internet addiction and it was alarming to note that those aged between fifteen to twenty four years were found to be more vulnerable to becoming internet addicts than older users. The possible reasons for this could be that students these days have a lot of time in their hands which is wasted, schools and colleges they study in give them unlimited access to the internet which is also for free, there is a lack of parental monitoring and there is no one who can keep a check on what is done online, some of them seek the shelter in cyber space when they have interpersonal issues with their friends and when they have difficulty adjusting and lastly when students feel they are under stress or as a way to escape from their academic pressures they seek support of the cyber space. However, there was a lacuna in research evidence pertaining to the Indian context therefore the present study aims to assess Internet addiction among adolescents and how it relates to displaying aggressive acts as a result of emotional imbalance. This study would be helpful in designing an efficient training program on developing conscious internet use, aggression reduction, anger regulation programs and efficient use of one's time over internet addiction tendencies in

school going adolescents. This study would also be beneficial to teachers and school counselors to identify those children who behave in an aggressive manner very early and curb their aggression by the use of different intervention modules so that they could grow up into morally right citizens.

Aim

To determine the relationship between internet addiction and aggression among school going adolescents.

Objectives

1. To determine the relation between internet addiction and aggression in school going adolescents.
2. To find out the influence of internet addiction on aggression in school going adolescents.
3. To find the gender differences in internet addiction and aggression among school going adolescents.

Hypotheses

Based on the trends observed in earlier research work the following hypotheses were framed:

Hypothesis 1: Internet Addiction would have a positive relation with aggression and its dimensions among male school going adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: Internet Addiction would have a positive relation with aggression and its dimensions among female school going adolescents.

Hypothesis 3: Internet addiction would influence aggression and its dimensions among male school going adolescents.

Hypothesis 4: Internet addiction would influence aggression and its dimensions among female school going adolescents.

Hypothesis 5: There would be significant differences between males and females on internet addiction and the dimensions of aggression among school going adolescents.

Method

Sample and Research Design

The sample consisted of school going adolescents from various private schools in Chennai City. One hundred and twenty four school going adolescents (N=120) of which 60 were males and 60 were females have participated in the study whose age ranged between 13 to 15 years. Convenience sampling technique was adopted. Ex Post Facto research design was adopted for the present study.

Procedure for data collection

The researcher had approached different schools and after getting the permission to conduct data from the concerned school authorities the questionnaires were distributed to the students. Before participation in the study their consent to participate in the study was obtained and they were

also given the option to opt out of the study if they wished to. Confidentiality of the responses were ensured and they were also told that their personal information would not be revealed and the responses would be used strictly only for research purposes. Twenty minutes was given to the students to complete both the questionnaires.

Instruments

The following psychological assessment tools were used for data collection:

- (1) To measure the level of Internet addiction, Young's IAT (1998) was used. It consists of 20 different questions and based on the five-point Likert scale ranging from “ does not apply to always”. The scale had good

internal consistency reliability and concurrent validity.

(2) Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire

The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ; Buss & Perry, 1992) is one of the most widely used aggression scales. BAQ is a self-report scale consisting of 29 items answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic of me) to 5 (extremely characteristic of me). The scale has good internal and test retest reliability and construct validity.

Statistical Analysis

Pearson Product moment correlation, linear regression and independent samples t test were used for analysis of the data.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Means and Standard deviations of the variables

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
INTERNET ADDICTION	MALE	60	39.8667	19.84812	2.56238
	FEMALE	60	40.2656	19.91190	2.48899
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	MALE	60	16.0667	9.26972	1.19672
	FEMALE	60	14.8438	8.67073	1.08384
VERBAL AGGRESSION	MALE	60	10.7000	4.53349	.58527
	FEMALE	60	10.3594	4.09555	.51194
ANGER	MALE	60	9.4833	3.65686	.47210
	FEMALE	60	10.4531	5.19746	.64968
HOSTILITY	MALE	60	9.1333	4.32363	.55818
	FEMALE	60	8.9219	2.80195	.35024
TOTAL	MALE	60	45.3833	15.68449	2.02486
	FEMALE	60	44.5781	15.31656	1.91457

Table 2 Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Internet addiction and dimensions of aggression among male school going adolescents.

	DIMENSIONS OF N	'r'
INTERNET ADDICTION	PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	0.785**
	VERBAL AGGRESSION	0.443**
	ANGER	0.521**
	HOSTILITY	0.139
	TOTAL	0.879**

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

Table 2 shows the significant relation between internet addiction and aggression among males and the results obtained indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between internet addiction and dimensions of aggression namely physical aggression, verbal aggression and anger stating that the hypotheses was accepted. The hostility dimension of aggression did not have a relationship with aggression resulting in the rejection of the hypotheses. The correlation was significant at the 0.01 level. This conforms to the findings of Kim et al. (2002), citing that preoccupation with the use of internet results in increased tendencies to display aggression and impulsivity leading to the intention of hurting someone physically or do the actual commission of the action. As with verbal aggression, this conforms to the findings of Kim et al (2002), citing that preoccupation with the use of online media results to higher tendencies of aggression

and impulsive behaviors leading to the intention of hurting someone physically or do the actual commission of the action. There was a positive relationship between internet addiction and anger which was supported with the results of the study of Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010), who also claims that excessive access to social media can cause too much problem when it simply becomes more compulsive and the daily life activities are interfered and when a person cannot control it anymore. As with internet addiction and hostility, there was no significant relationship which was supported by the findings of Zuckerman (2007), who found out that risk of addiction in social media does not relate to feelings of hostility. This result thereby shows that hostile behaviors will be displayed in a person not solely because they are very active online.

Table 3 Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Internet addiction and dimensions of aggression among female school going adolescents.

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

	DIMENSIONS OF N	'r'
INTERNET ADDICTION	PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	0.796**
	VERBAL AGGRESSION	0.448**
	ANGER	0.514**
	HOSTILITY	0.474**
	TOTAL	0.831**

Table 3 shows the significant relationship between internet addiction and aggression among female school going adolescents. The results obtained indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between internet addiction and dimensions of aggression and hence the

hypotheses was accepted. The correlation was significant at 0.01 level. Internet addiction was found to be significantly and positively related with the four forms of aggression: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. This implies that the more addicted

adolescents are in using the internet, the more they exhibit physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostile behaviours. The internet has also become a source of information for students which has become a medium through which adolescents find information about anything that they need. However, on the

contrary, it has become a breeding ground of misunderstanding, quarrel and arguments, due to lack of personal appeal and blatant disinhibition of students in interaction with others. When these happen, students blatantly use social media sites as a medium wherein they can display aggressive behavior.

Table 4 *Linear regression analysis predicting aggression among male school going adolescents*

VARIABLES	t	Beta	F	P (Sig)	R Square
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	9.651	0.785	93.141	.000	0.616
VERBAL AGGRESSION	3.532	0.421	12.475	.001	0.177
ANGER	5.032	0.551	25.326	.000	0.304
TOTAL	8.469	0.744	71.719	.000	0.553

Table 4 shows the regression analysis and the influence of internet addiction on the various sub dimensions of aggression. The R square value of internet addiction on the various dimensions of aggression are shown. It was seen that the r squared value of the regression analysis showing the influence of internet addiction on physical aggression was 0.616 , verbal aggression was

0.177 , anger was 0.304 and total aggression was 0.553. Hostility dimension was not included as it did not have a significant relationship with internet addiction. Therefore internet addiction can be used to predict the dimensions of aggression namely physical and verbal aggression , anger and overall aggression upto 61.6 % , 17.7 % 30. 4% and 55.3 % respectively.

Table 5 *Linear regression analysis predicting aggression among female school going adolescents*

VARIABLES	t	Beta	F	P (Sig)	R Square
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	10.347	0.796	107.057	.000	0.6333
VERBAL AGGRESSION	3.950	0.448	15.606	.000	0.201
ANGER	4.716	0.514	22.244	.000	0.264
HOSTILITY	4.236	0.474	17.946	.000	0.224
TOTAL	11.783	0.831	138.838	.000	0.691

Table 5 shows the regression analysis and the influence of internet addiction on the various sub dimensions of aggression. The R square value of internet addiction on the various dimensions of aggression are shown. It was seen that the r squared value of the regression analysis showing the influence of internet addiction on physical aggression was 0.6333 , verbal aggression was 0.201 , anger was 0.264, hostility was 0.224 and

total aggression was 0.691. Therefore internet addiction can be used to predict the dimensions of aggression namely physical and verbal aggression , anger, hostility and overall aggression upto 63 % , 20 % 26%, 22% and 55.3 % respectively.

Table 6 *Independent Sample t-test Value Indicating the Difference Between Means of Males and Females on internet addiction and aggression*

VARIABLES	GENDER	N	MEAN	STD Deviation	t	Sig
INTERNET ADDICTION	MALE	60	39.8667	19.84812	.112	.819
	FEMALE	64	40.2656	19.91190	.112	
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	MALE	60	16.0667	9.26972	.759	.430
	FEMALE	64	14.8438	8.67073	.757	
VERBAL AGGRESSION	MALE	60	10.7000	4.53349	.440	.240
	FEMALE	64	10.3594	4.09555	.438	
ANGER	MALE	60	9.4833	3.65686	1.194	.031
	FEMALE	64	10.4531	5.19746	1.208	
HOSTILITY	MALE	60	9.1333	4.32363	.325	.310
	FEMALE	64	8.9219	2.80195	.321	
TOTAL	MALE	60	45.3833	15.68449	.289	.946
	FEMALE	64	44.5781	15.31656	.289	

Table 6 shows the results of independent sample t test which explains the differences in internet addiction and dimensions of aggression between boys and girls. The results revealed that males and females differ from each other only on the anger dimension of aggression indicating that females were relatively higher on their anger suppression scores when compared to males. Hence, the hypothesis stating that there would be a significant differences between males and females on internet addiction stating that there will be significant differences between males and females on Internet addiction and anger among school going adolescents was accepted. The other dimensions of aggression and internet addiction did not differ among males and females. It was concluded that, if anger was not clearly expressed, it may cause internet addiction in the form of a coping mechanism. In addition, expression and perception of anger may differ with cultural differences in different populations. Anger suppression contributes to an unhealthy lifestyle (Musante & Treiber 2000). Similarly, unexpressed anger may cause harmful and unhealthy, excessive use of internet and it therefore becomes an unhealthy way of coping in order to relieve the stress caused through external circumstances. On the other hand, there were no significant differences found between males and females on the physical, verbal and hostility dimensions which may be because both individuals might have been exposed to a similar

environment which is related to machismo, hostility and violence.

CONCLUSION

Findings of the study

1. Internet addiction was positively related to physical, verbal and anger dimensions of aggression in male school going adolescents.
2. Internet addiction was positively related to physical, verbal, anger and hostility dimensions of aggression in female school going adolescents.
3. Internet addiction predicted the dimensions of aggression namely physical and verbal aggression, anger and overall aggression upto 61.6 %, 17.7 %, 30.4% and 55.3 % respectively in males.
4. Internet addiction predicts the dimensions of aggression namely physical and verbal aggression, anger, hostility and overall aggression upto 63 %, 20 %, 26%, 22% and 55.3 %
5. Gender differences were found on the anger dimension of aggression while other dimensions had no difference on internet addiction.

Limitations

1. The study used convenience sampling
2. The sample size could have

- been even bigger
3. This study could have included some more demographic variables like socio-economic status, family type etc.
 4. Open ended questions could have been used to get depth of understanding

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Implications of the study

Intervention modules could be designed to reduce internet addiction
 Aggression replacement training
 Forgiveness interventions
 Counselling

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