

Internet Addiction: A Child's Delusion to Restore Psychosocial Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

'Wellbeing' is a construct; 'it' talks about the total happiness of a person defined via three major perspectives which are: by absence of negative emotions, presence of positivity and life satisfaction, According to WHO, emotional and physical stimulation is a part of psychosocial wellbeing, which should be taken care of after meeting nutritional deficiencies of a child. Ryff talks about six dimensions of psychological wellbeing which are representation of eudemonic (meaning of life), that represents subjective happiness cannot be equated with wellbeing.

Internet is a vast repository of knowledge; leading to positive and negative effects. This medium of information and various social platforms are not just for lazing, entertaining, learning but also addictive in nature; they tend to give a social satisfaction to children but may lead to psychological damage that they may be unaware of. Internet identity and usage is something that cannot be denied or restricted in this era and so their effects on generations. Children become a part of this syndrome due to social influence and hence misinterpret it as a part of social image.

In recent times, there occurs a gap to satisfy these six dimensions in factual existence thus, a search is initiated and children turn towards the virtual dimension to abridge this space and establish the satisfaction that they are seeking. It seems to be successful at some level but not literally. The objective of this paper is to find the existence of internet addiction, patterns of usage of internet and reasons of usage on a school child and understanding Ryff's six dimension model in context to their responses. It's a qualitative paper which employed the data collection from 15 private school students on the basis of random purposive sampling from the demographics age 14-17 years by asking open ended questions related to

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their use of internet. Ethical oral consent was sought and the person was informed. Its main aim is towards social constructivism. Responses were then compared to Ryff model to seek association. The results show that Internet contributes towards the concept of wellbeing to a certain extent and a relational pattern is studied and observed between Ryff Model and reasons of student's usage of internet.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Ryff Model, Psychosocial Well-Being, Internet Dependency*

INTRODUCTION

The internet has made significant changes in life of a person and ever since the emergence of internet; it has only become a crucial and more vital part of our lives. It started as a need to accept new technology and has transformed into an utmost necessity without which we cannot imagine to function in our daily lives. From businesses to gathering information, from social media to staying connected with people across the globe, there are a lot of advantages of the internet.

Now, the necessity has tuned into dependency. There exist no strata or age group of people to whom access of this vast repository can be denied. From a very young, the technology gets embedded into our lives and a child also responds more towards it, since it shows audio, visual and other medium of information that look more interesting and entertaining.

With the advantages, there can't be a denial towards the ill effects of the use of internet, despite of various issues of security, sharing of information, frauds and falling prey online, the dependency towards the internet soon turns into obsession and addiction.

Millennium kids have busy lives and want to be classified as 'cool kids', which refers to being a person who is more popular over social media and showcases an interesting life. Even due to various stress and instances happening in their lives, people do not turn towards real interactions and depend more upon virtual interface to cope with their problems as it seems that internet has all the answers to the problems of the world. They tend to settle in this short term satisfaction which they confuse with psychological wellbeing of a peaceful state of mind. This leads to more frustration and effects of stress, anxiety and depression only grow more but the child is unable to identify as he has been seeking help by means of internet by diverting his mind into other tasks. Hence, the core problem remains unattended which is camouflaged even more.

Children become more closed as they spend a substantial amount of time on these apps and increase their aloofness and loneliness. Abstaining/restricting them from use of internet as a measure or punishment, exhibit more aggressive and restless behaviour which is quite similar to substance abuse and withdrawal reactions.

Internet tends to create an illusion of being surrounded by people and a delusion of mental satisfaction to a great extent but does it contribute towards the actual psychological wellbeing of a person?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Addiction is defined by Webster Dictionary as a “*Compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance characterized by tolerance and by well-defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal; broadly: persistent compulsive use of a substance known by the user to be harmful*”.

Dr. Ivan K. Goldberg, in 1995 proposed a theory which was initially propounded in a form of a satirically hoax and as a parody on the American Psychiatric Association when he declared to have found a new disorder namely Internet Addiction Disorder [IAD]. To support it with evidence and research he listed seven major criteria's and symptoms which would let a person identify if he was suffering from this syndrome. This immediately caught attention and popularity and people started associating with the symptoms of excessive internet usage. Somehow this became more than a hoax and emerged as a serious research as there was a start towards a new addiction which was quite similar to the substance addiction that has been studied in Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders.

There started a debate that it didn't deemed fit with substance addiction and using psychiatric nomenclature was unsuitable in this regard, but within two years, in 1997, many researchers worked on this subject and supported that this was an emerging issue and not a hoax which was the actual intention of it getting started. Despite of predominance of drug based addictions, internet and its activities were regarded as a psychoactive drug which was leading to addictive behaviour.

Pathological Internet use [PIU] was a new term which was used by Goldberg and Davis (2001). There are also various terms used parallel to IAD, such as Compulsive Internet Use [CIU], Pathological Computer Use [PCU], or Internet Gaming Disorder [IGD].

Griffith (2000), gave six components of addiction and considered IAD as a subset of behaviour addiction. Various components listed were, mood

modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, salience and relapse. Davis (2001), gave the cognitive behavioural model for PIU and refrained from using the term IAD, he insisted that it was not a relative substance disorder and hence preferred to name it as Pathological Internet Use [PIU]. Davis model was tested by Caplan in 2006, and he suggested through his findings that there was an involvement of behavioural symptoms due to social isolation than the presence of psychopathology, hence, a name change was suggested to 'Problematic Internet use' over 'Pathological internet use'.

Scherer (1997), conducted a study on college students which spoke about different motives of internet addiction and over 14% to fall into the category of IAD, who agreed to have felt the interference of internet in their daily lives. Greenfield (1999), conducted a study to understand the use and abuse of internet through an online survey of more than 17,000 students who answered a 36 item questionnaire and found that 6% of the people who answered met the criteria for Internet Addiction Disorder.

Internet addiction was different was substance addiction which was stated under DSM IV, in 2013, AMA published DSM V, which gave new sections of further research about maladaptive, addictive, excessive usage of internet as a termed disorder. Measurement of IAD is a challenge as it must involve certain conditions to establish the disorder like hardware and software. Goldberg (1995) had given the IAD scale initially. Further Brenner (1997) developed a dichotomous true false scale called (IRABI) Internet Related Addictive Behaviour Inventory consisting of 32 questions. Young (1998) developed Internet addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire of 8 items which were based on DSM IV, later in 2000, she added 12 new items and termed it as Internet addiction test (IAT). Widyanto and McMurran (2004) tested IAT and found it to be a valid and reliable instrument in use of Internet Addiction.

RYFF MODEL

Well being is classified in three categories. Evaluative, which talks about life satisfaction, Hedonic, which deals with wellbeing of emotions and third being Eudemonic which focuses on meaning of life. Eudaimonic Approaches focus on an individual's meaningful engagement in life and their self-realization (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2008). He gave six core dimensions of this model.

Autonomy, about freedom and independence of an individual, against traditional aforesaid matters; *Environmental Mastery*, capability to

manage daily life and fulfil personal needs and values; *Personal Growth*, development of an individual over a period of time, recognizing one's own potential; *Positive relations with others*, interpersonal well-being; *Purpose in life*, having a goal and path in life; *Self-acceptance* which identifies strengths and weaknesses of a person and build a positive self-image.

Various studies have been done on effects of wellbeing. Pressman & Cohen, (2005) predicted reduction in pain and improvement in health as an effect of positive wellbeing. Further researches by Cohen (2003) and Polk (2005) in same regard, showed higher levels of immunity and antibodies.

However, the main aim was to see if people who lack a positive self-concept can be helped. People suffering from recurrent depression or anxiety disorders (Fava, 1996; Fava, Rafanelli, Grandi, Conti, & Bellardo, 1998; Fava, & Ruini, 2003) involve "Wellbeing therapy", based on Ryff's model. A research was carried out for 6 years assessing 40 patients, with recurrent depression and anxiety. Patients were given modifications based in cognitive, life-style, behavioural and clinical segments, which showed a lower relapse rate.

OBJECTIVE

This paper will talk about the effects of internet addiction on school child and Ryff's six-dimension model in context to internet.

METHODOLOGY

Sample: It's a qualitative paper which employed the data collection from 15 private school students on the basis of random purposive sampling from the demographics age 14-17 years asking open ended questions related to their use of internet and their habits related to it. Ethical oral consent was sought and the person was informed about the research objective. Its basic aim is towards social constructivism. Responses were then compared to Ryff model to seek association.

Method: The approach sought is Phenomenological approach where the information is sought from the participant and then studied how their experience makes sense towards the research. The Philosophical paradigm here talks about social constructivism which speaks of a collaborative effort between the participant and the researcher to develop realities by

interaction, co-create realities and then finally share the attitudes and beliefs.

The essence of the study is to make them aware of the addictive and excessive usage of internet which is delusional source of wellbeing.

As we had studied that DSM V stated that it a pre-requisite of hardware and software is required for the study to be done, 15 students of privates schools who possess a high end smart phone who had the technical know-how of using smart applications were selected to study the internet disorder. They represent a significantly larger group as people in their network were similar.

Open ended questions were asked to seek and insight about the preferences and habits of these youngsters to assess the comparison.

RESULTS

Case 1

Uday (name changed), owns an iPhone X which he has recently bought and has more than 45 installed apps in his phone. Upon asking his frequent apps used he said that it gives him a mode of connectivity to a large number of people and makes him popular. He has more than 200 followers and feels confident.

I have a lot of friends, I am popular, and everyone is doing this, me not doing this will make me backward. It's hard to meet everyone and this is the best method.

Uday was focussed that everything he uploaded got much attention and likes on the internet so that his popularity was not subdued, he spends a lot of time taking various types of photos and even owns a SLR camera to have high quality pictures, he visits distinct places and tries to explore stuff that may catch attention of people in his social circle.

80% of the people said that they spent more than 4 hours on their mobile and it was the first thing to check in the morning. 60% responded that it was the best medium to stay connected with people and in order to follow the trend sometimes they had to join a few apps that they didn't wanted to.

Each student has his own preference of apps but there were a lot of common apps found on the phones of these students.

Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter were the top six apps that were found on mobiles of all 15 students.

Case 2

Average time they spent while doing 'nothing', whilst 'nothing' here meant when they had no particular work to do or had less important work to do, Divya (name changed) gave a response,

I tend to forget the work if I find something interesting on the internet, YouTube for instance, leads to binge watching of videos and also Netflix, I run episode marathons.

Divya said that there was 'nothing' to do in whole day after school so she mostly stays on mobile 'exploring' and 'learning'. She spends 6 hours straight in watching episodes of series and gets agitated when interrupted.

Here Netflix is another app that is addictive in nature, other student's preferred online sites such as Hotstar, Voot, Amazon originals etc.

None of the student's could keep away their mobile for a period of 1 hour and only left it when they were asleep. 50% of the students own a personal laptop and other gaming consoles and 5 students spend more than 3 hours on gaming everyday, they played via a remote network with neighbourhood people or online gamers.

When asked that if they felt they were addicted to internet 50% agreed saying that they could not stay without internet as it was now a major necessity and consumed every part of their life, they sought every information which they didn't know and it was the most feasible option.

When asked what was the need for uploading selfies and getting likes 10 students responded that they it helped them build a positive self-image about themselves and makes them appear more sociable and accepted by other people.

Case 3

When asked 'how has internet helped you?', Krishna (name changed) said

It has helped me learn even the smallest things which I didn't know, I can clarify my doubts and learn the tasks without depending on anyone else, just a tutorial video and I know a skill.

DISCUSSION

A pseudo-relational pattern is studied and observed between Ryff Model and reasons of student's usage of internet. As per my perspective, students have spoken to achieve learning which is environmental mastery to achieve skills, being more social by more number of friends which creates

positive relations with other people, getting accepted by people of their own age by following trends of the generation that allows them to be a part of the group. The respondents talked about building self-concept due to acceptance that they get from the internet. These all tends to give a fair resemblance between the Ryff's dimension of wellbeing and actions of student's in present scenario, but it is does not leads to actual wellbeing of the student which can lead to a positive or a happy life in longevity. When asked about stress, all the students under the study were facing stress in some form or the other whether it was fear of examination, school failure, family discord, personality issues etc. but they tend to make it secondary by turning towards the world of internet as a means of diversion.

We know that Internet is a vast repository which has both positive and negative effects on people. Though it leads to learning it also leads to information overloading and addiction which a person does not realizes. According to the research done the most used apps on phones of this age group found were YouTube, Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter. Other trending apps found were Musically, Smule, Candy Crush, Quora, Pinterest, Photo editor apps, Google duo, Skype, Saavn, Gaana.com, Fitness apps, Amazon, Myntra, Flipkart, Club factory, Amazon originals, Voot, Hotstar. The students also showed tendencies for Selfies, Gaming, Trolling, Catfishing, Facebook like disorder etc justifying as free expression which is net compulsive behaviour and internet addiction.

CONCLUSION

'Net Compulsions', 'Computer Gaming', 'Information and research', 'Cyber relationships' are few of the categories which were explained by Young (1999). These relate to the broader terminology of Internet addiction. The addictive stimulus is also a reinforcing stimulus which is generated via the internet in circular argument which is different from mere exposure to the internet. All such behaviours are noted by the students which they tend to justify as 'learning and research' but is proven to be addictive in cited terminologies.

There are different stimuli affecting different people which get them addicted; this includes shopping, gaming, communication, trolling, anonymity, entertainment. It is said that internet tends to intensify the addictions of people by providing them a larger medium.

Tolerance, Guidance, Surveillance and Communication is needed to control these impulses which are quite similar to substance disorder in

DSM IV, so that people devote considerable time in real atmosphere and not get internet dependent.

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ANNEXURE

List of questions asked to gather the required information are as follows.

Open ended questions were asked to derive requisite information.

1. Do you use a smart phone?
2. Which Android and Model of phone are you using (*to obtain tech specifications*)
3. How much is your average daily internet usage?
4. Which are the top 5 Apps that you use in your phone?
5. Why do you use Social media? Which is your favourite SM site?
6. How do you manage your social media? Your relations with your online friends? (*positive relations with others*)
7. How do you spend your free time?
8. Do you use Gaming apps/ Streaming apps etc. (*to know types of*

apps and nature of use)

9. If your mobile is taken how will you opt to spend that time? If there is no internet then how do you spend your time?
10. How much average time do you spend on chats/mobile surfing?
11. Do you think this is too much time?
12. How has internet helped you?
13. Is internet your primary stress buster?
14. Do you think internet gives you Freedom (*autonomy*), Confidence (*Self acceptance*)
15. Does internet helps you to master a task and personal growth (*Environmental Mastery and Personal growth*)

Note: Apart from these questions were asked based upon the responses of the student.