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A Community-Based Descriptive Assessment of Internet Usage Patterns and Addiction Tendencies among Adolescents

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Abstract:
The fast growth of online technology has played a critical role in shaping the way and manner of life and behavior of the teens. Although using internet has its educational and social advantages, there are problematic habits and addiction that may occur with its overuse. The goal of the given community-based descriptive study was to determine the internet usage tendencies and the intensity of the addiction tendencies among adolescents. The quantitative approach and descriptive cross-sectional design were used. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on adolescents who lived in a chosen community. The results revealed that there were differences in the extent of internet usage where a percentage of teenagers were portraying indications of over-usage and addiction. The paper highlights the significance of parental counseling, sensitization, early intervention measures in advancing healthy digital life practices among teenagers.

Keywords: Lifestyle behaviour, internet addiction

INTRODUCTION:

The internet has taken the place of a normal way of life particularly among adolescents. It allows access to learning facilities, entertainment, communication systems as well as social networks. Nevertheless, the enhanced accessibility by the use of smartphones and low-priced data services has led to longer screen time in the youths. The developmental factor makes adolescents especially susceptible to changing their internet usage patterns into unhealthy habits: emotional sensitivity, peer impact, and curiosity cause the former to adopt harmful habits. Overuse of internet can disrupt the studies, sleep habits, physical activities, and even the relationships with other people. With time, there will be behavioral dependence, also known as internet addiction due to uncontrolled usage. There is a need to learn the use habits and detect addiction among teenagers to foster healthy digital lifestyles and avoid the effects of its use on the long term.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the pattern of internet usage among adolescents in the selected community.
2. To determine the level of internet addiction tendencies among adolescents.
3. To identify the association between internet usage patterns and selected demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

The research design consisted of a descriptive cross-sectional research design, which was a quantitative research method to determine the patterns of internet use and likelihood of addiction among the adolescents. The selected community area was where the study was carried out among the adolescents whose ages were 13 to 18 years and who lived within the locality. The sample of 120 adolescents was identified using convenience sampling method, which is dependent on the availability and willingness of the respondents at the time when the data was collected.

The structured questionnaire was used to retrieve the data with the inclusion of demographic variables, internet usage patterns and a standardized scale to determine the addiction tendencies. Informed consent was obtained and participants and their parents were informed where necessary about the research, whereby, the concerned authorities were notified beforehand the research. During the study, confidentiality and anonymity were observed. The data collected were examined under descriptive statistics frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation in the interpretation of data.

RESULT

The results of the three tables give an impression of the demographic factors, lack of use of internet and the habitual tendencies of adolescents towards addiction (N = 120). Most of the respondents (54.2) were between the ages of 16-18 years with an even smaller percentage (51.7) of 16-18 year olds being male. The internet becomes a subject when it came to the hours spent on the internet daily, 45 per cent of the adolescents said they spend 2 -4 hours per day online and 31.7 per cent of the adolescents indicated that they were spending over four hours a day on the internet.

Regarding an objective, social media was the most used (76.7%), academic use (70.8%), and video streaming (60.8%). Almost 50 percent of the participants (48.3) played online games. Adolescent addiction tendencies assessment showed that 50.8% of the adolescents were moderate risk and 20.9% had shown high-risk addictive tendencies. The proportion of those who were under the mild or normal usage category was only 28.3%. On the whole, the findings suggest that the percentage of adolescents with moderate to high levels of internet dependency is substantial, which means that preventive and awareness actions are necessary.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Adolescents (N = 120)

S. No	Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Age	13–15 years	55	45.8%
		16–18 years	65	54.2%
2	Gender	Male	62	51.7%
		Female	58	48.3%
3	Daily Internet Use	< 2 hours	28	23.3%
		2–4 hours	54	45.0%
		> 4 hours	38	31.7%

Table 2: Purpose of Internet Usage among Adolescents (N = 120)

S. No	Purpose of Use	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Social Media	92	76.7%
2	Online Gaming	58	48.3%
3	Academic Activities	85	70.8%
4	Video Streaming	73	60.8%

Table 3: Level of Internet Addiction Tendencies (N = 120)

S. No	Level of Addiction	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Mild Usage (Normal)	34	28.3%
2	Moderate Risk	61	50.8%
3	High Risk (Addictive Tendencies)	25	20.9%
	Total	120	100%

DISCUSSION

According to the study findings, the internet use is prevalent among the adolescents, but a significant number of them have developed dependency behaviors. Prolonged screenplay time, absence of supervision, and more enthusiasm in online entertainment can lead to addictive behavior. These results show that community educational initiatives on digital well-being are required. Adolescents can be encouraged to balance between on-line and off-line activities with the help of parental control, daily schedule, and schooling.

CONCLUSION

The research reaches the conclusion that, the prevalence of internet among adolescents is high, and a significant number of adolescents is characterized as moderate to highly addicted. The problematic patterns of usage need to be identified at an early stage to avoid adverse academic, psychological, and social consequences. It is suggested that community based interventions, parental participation and school based awareness campaigns will help in the responsible and balanced internet use among adolescents.

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