



RESEARCH ARTICLE

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT OF INTERNET USE – PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the internet addicted teenagers' parents' awareness about positive and negative impact of internet use. **Methods:** A survey was conducted to find out the parents' awareness about positive and negative impact of internet use by distributing a questionnaire to the parents of those teenagers already identified as internet addicted. **Results:** 73% parents believe that internet useful to supports education, 81% agreed that internet useful for attaining informations, 51% believe internet is useful for individual development and 78% agreed that internet is very useful for communication and entertainment. Whereas 55% believe that internet somewhat facilitate easy access to child unfriendly contents, 70% agreed that internet somewhat hampers in individual's development, 64% have the opinion that internet somewhat puts negative impact on human psychology and 75% believe that internet somewhat puts negative impact on physical health. **Conclusions:** Though teenagers' parents have some knowledge about the positive and negative impact of internet, they have poor control over their children or, they don't know the strategic management for prevention and management of internet addiction.

INTRODUCTION

Internet has brought epidemiological transition in the society. Benefits of internet are uncountable but unwise use leads to several negative issues too (Syed Shah Alam, 2015; Young Kimberly, 2015; Li, 2015; Nicola Luigi Bragazzi, 2015; Yildirim, 2015; Krithika, 2015; White, 2015 and Elizabeth, 2015). Though people of all age groups are found addicted to internet as shown by several studies (Durkee Tony, 2011; Dyer Pam, 2016; Kerney, 2016; Sheopuri Anita, 2014; Mishra Subhasree, 2015; GhoshSmritikanaMitra, 2015; Goel Deepak, 2013; Dixit, 2015; Ahmed Ishfaq, 2011; Singh, 2013 and Faraci, 2013), teenagers also suffering from such addiction. Parents regard Internet as a window opening to the whole world and as a tool to attain information. Moreover, parents aware about the positive and negative effects of internet use. Determining the views of parents about children's Internet use is of great importance for parents to carry out their responsibilities (Isil Kabakci, Isil Kabakci, 2015). Therefore parents need to know the strategic management for prevention and management of internet addiction. The present study was conducted to assess the internet addicted teenagers' parents' awareness about positive and negative impact of internet use.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey was conducted to find out the parents' awareness about positive and negative impact of internet use by distributing a questionnaire to the parents of those teenagers already identified as internet addicted. Questionnaire printed in both English and local language. The questionnaire is a 5-point likert scale that measures the parent's opinion about the

positive and negative use as 1= never, 2= sometimes, 3= not sure, 4= often, and 5= always. It is a reliable tool with test-retest reliability coefficient 0.86 value. The tool is a 34-item questionnaire, measures parent's opinion about positive and negative impact of internet use. The questionnaire contains both positive and negative statements. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee at MGM Institute of Health Sciences and Permission obtained from the principals of the schools, also written consent taken from the parents of the teens as well as assent taken from the teens.

RESULTS

100% parents believe that internet helps in searching the objects of curiosity, helps in attaining information easily and fast, provides unlimited source of information, can be used as a library, improve communication with friends, facilitate playing games, facilitate downloading music, facilitate easy access to sexual content whereas 99% agree that internet helps attaining knowledge and leads to spending too much time on computer followed by 86% have the opinion that internet reduces outdoor activities. 81% have the opinion that internet leads to decreased sleep whereas 80% agree that it interrupts in other responsibilities. 77% agreed upon internet supports to do homework, 75% agreed internet helps discovering creativity, 69% agree that it helps in being informed about technological developments, 68% believe it leads to back ache, neck pain and obstructing in study, 66% have the opinion that it leads to various eye problems and reduces interaction with family, 65% agree that it gives access to various game sites with violence content, 64% with the opinion that helps in well mixing with people, 63% agree that it allows virus and spam contents, mails, 57% with the opinion that it saves time while doing homework and prevents developing hobbies, 56% believe it

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Table 1. Description of item wise distribution of parents' opinion about positive and negative effect of internet. (n = 347)

Effect of internet	Always n (%)	Often n (%)	Sum of positive opinions n (%)	Not sure n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Never n (%)
To support education						
Internet supports to do homework	61 (18)	206 (59)	267 (77)	0 (0)	80 (23)	0 (0)
Internet helps attaining knowledge	102 (29)	243 (70)	345 (99)	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Internet saves time while doing homework	2 (1)	195 (56)	197 (57)	82 (24)	67 (19)	1 (0)
Internet helps in preparation for future	2 (0)	124 (36)	126 (36)	159 (46)	62 (18)	0 (0)
In attaining information						
Internet helps in searching the objects of curiosity	88 (25)	259 (75)	347 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Internet helps in attaining information easily and fast	156 (45)	190 (55)	346 (100)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)
Internet provides unlimited source of information	164 (47)	183 (53)	347 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Internet can be used as a library	138 (40)	208 (60)	346 (100)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)
Internet helps in being informed about technological developments	3 (1)	236 (68)	239 (69)	35 (10)	73 (21)	0 (0)
In individual development						
Internet helps in well mixing with people	4 (1)	218 (63)	222 (64)	44 (13)	51 (15)	30 (8)
Internet helps in enhancing thinking skill	78 (2)	107 (39)	185 (41)	76 (28)	86 (31)	0 (0)
Internet helps discovering creativity	128 (37)	132 (38)	260 (75)	86 (25)	1 (0)	0 (0)
Internet helps in improving decision-making skill	0 (0)	148 (43)	148 (43)	92 (26)	107 (31)	0 (0)
In communication and entertainment						
Internet improve communication with friends	81 (23)	265 (77)	346 (100)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)
Internet facilitate playing games	115 (33)	232 (67)	347 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Internet helps in facilitate downloading music	217 (63)	129 (37)	346 (100)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)
Facilitate easy access to child unfriendly sites						
Internet facilitate easy access to sexual content	90 (26)	256 (74)	346 (100)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Internet allows virus and spam contents, mails	0 (0)	218 (63)	218 (63)	0 (0)	129 (37)	0 (0)
Internet allows Identity theft	0 (0)	118 (34)	118 (34)	1 (0)	228 (66)	0 (0)
Internet gives access to various game sites with violence content	2 (1)	222 (64)	224 (65)	0 (0)	123 (35)	0 (0)
Hampers in individual's life						
Internet helps communicating with unreliable people	2 (0)	173 (50)	175 (50)	0 (0)	173 (50)	0 (0)
Internet obstructing in study	50 (14)	188 (54)	238 (68)	12 (4)	97 (28)	0 (0)
Internet leads to spending too much time on computer	177 (51)	168 (48)	345 (99)	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)
Internet interrupts in other responsibilities	31 (9)	248 (71)	279 (80)	0 (0)	68 (20)	0 (0)
Internet prevents developing hobbies	64 (18)	134 (39)	198 (57)	100 (29)	49 (14)	0 (0)
Negative impact on human psychology						
Internet leads to deficiency in emotional development	1 (0)	173 (50)	174 (50)	93 (27)	77 (22)	3 (1)
Internet reduces outdoor activities	90 (26)	208 (60)	298 (86)	1 (0)	46 (13)	2 (1)
Internet reduces interaction with family	0 (0)	228 (66)	228 (66)	0 (0)	119 (34)	0 (0)
Internet decreases face-to-face communication	26 (8)	77 (22)	103 (30)	108 (31)	136 (39)	0 (0)
Internet Isolates the individual from friends	23 (7)	118 (34)	142 (41)	78 (22)	128 (37)	0 (0)
Internet breaks social life	0 (0)	193 (56)	193 (56)	75 (21)	79 (23)	0 (0)
Negative impact on physical health						
Internet leads to various eye problems	2 (1)	226 (65)	228 (66)	0 (0)	119 (34)	0 (0)
Internet leads to back ache, neck pain	2 (0)	235 (68)	237 (68)	0 (0)	110 (32)	0 (0)
Internet leads to decreased sleep	63 (18)	220 (63)	283 (81)	64 (19)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Table 2. Description of internet addicted teens' parents' awareness regarding positive and negative effect of internet use. N = 347

Effect of internet	Parents' awareness				
	Positive Effect	Not useful n (%)	Somehow useful n (%)	Useful n (%)	Very useful n (%)
Effects of internet to support education		0 (0)	45 (13)	252 (73)	50 (14)
Effects of internet in attaining information		0 (0)	52 (15)	282 (81)	13 (4)
Effects of internet in individual development		15 (4)	84 (24)	176 (51)	72 (21)
Effects of internet in communication and entertainment		0 (0)	0 (0)	77 (22)	270 (78)
<i>Negative Effect</i>					
		Not at all n (%)	Rarely n (%)	Somewhat n (%)	Very much n (%)
Internet facilitate easy access to child unfriendly contents		0 (0)	136 (39)	191 (55)	20 (6)
Internet has negative effect on individual's life		0 (0)	48 (14)	242 (70)	57 (16)
Internet puts negative impact on human psychology		2 (1)	103 (30)	224 (64)	18 (5)
Internet puts negative impact on physical health		15 (4)	58 (17)	260 (75)	14 (4)

breaks social life, 50% agree with it helps communicating with unreliable people and leads to deficiency in emotional development, 43% agree helps in improving decision-making skill, 41% with the opinion that it helps in enhancing thinking skill and isolates the individual from friends, 36% agree that it helps in preparation for future, 34% believe it that allows identity theft and 30% have the opinion that decreases face-to-face communication (Table-1) 73% parents believe that internet useful to supports education, 81% agreed that internet useful for attaining informations, 51% believe internet is useful for individual development and 78% agreed that internet is

very useful for communication and entertainment. Whereas 55% believe that internet somehow facilitate easy access to child unfriendly contents, 70% agreed that internet somewhat hampers in individual's development, 64% have the opinion that internet somewhat puts negative impact on human psychology and 75% believe that internet somewhat puts negative impact on physical health (Table-2).

DISCUSSION

100% parents believe that internet helps in searching the objects of curiosity, helps in attaining information easily and

fast, provides unlimited source of information, can be used as a library, improve communication with friends, facilitate playing games, facilitate downloading music, facilitate easy access to sexual content whereas 99% agree that internet helps attaining knowledge and leads to spending too much time on computer followed by 86% have the opinion that internet reduces outdoor activities. 81% have the opinion that internet leads to decreased sleep whereas 80% agree that it interrupts in other responsibilities. 77% agreed upon internet supports to do homework, 75% agreed internet helps discovering creativity, 69% agree that it helps in being informed about technological developments, 68% believe it leads to back ache, neck pain and obstructing in study, 66% have the opinion that it leads to various eye problems and reduces interaction with family, 65% agree that it gives access to various game sites with violence content, 64% with the opinion that helps in well mixing with people, 63% agree that it allows virus and spam contents, mails, 57% with the opinion that it saves time while doing homework and prevents developing hobbies, 56% believe it breaks social life, 50% agree with it helps communicating with unreliable people and leads to deficiency in emotional development, 43% agree helps in improving decision-making skill, 41% with the opinion that it helps in enhancing thinking skill and isolates the individual from friends, 36% agree that it helps in preparation for future, 34% believe it that allows identity theft and 30% have the opinion that decreases face-to-face communication (Table-1) 73% parents believe that internet useful to supports education, 81% agreed that internet useful for attaining informations, 51% believe internet is useful for individual development and 78% agreed that internet is very useful for communication and entertainment. Whereas 55% believe that internet somewhat facilitate easy access to child unfriendly contents, 70% agreed that internet somewhat hampers in individual's development, 64% have the opinion that internet somewhat puts negative impact on human psychology and 75% believe that internet somewhat puts negative impact on physical health. (Table-2) The study has its support from the previous study conducted by Isil Kabakci.²¹

Conclusion

Though teenagers' parents have some knowledge about the positive and negative impact of internet, they have poor control over their children or, they don't know the strategic management for prevention and management of internet addiction. Therefore parents should be sensitised about the strategic management of positive and negative impact of internet use.

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