

SELF-CONTROL IN INTERNET USE: ROLE OF TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS

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Research on the interface of computers and human behaviour has seen a paradigm shift within the last decade from focusing on inter-generational to intra-generational differences in internet usage. The shift is particularly focusing on individual differences in student's internet usage, taking different dimensions of human behaviour. We argue that individual differences in student's Internet self-control will have critically important implications on understanding various aspects of student's academic and non-academic behaviour. It is key to understanding internet addiction and problematic internet use (PIU). Internet addiction is fast accruing global recognition in professional and academic circles as a new psychological disorder as it has serious connections with mental health and its allied concepts. Some users are unable to control their Internet use, and thus experience some problems in their functioning at work and in social and private life. Therefore this article will discuss and conceptualize role self-self-control in internet use and delineate the implications for mental health of students. Role of teacher and teacher educator will be highlighted in this context.

KEYWORDS: Internet self-control, internet use, internet addiction, mental health, teacher educator, teacher, internet addiction, wellness education. s

Present day population of young adults has immersed themselves in digital technology to such an extent that it becomes inevitable to discuss implications of digital technology on their health and wellness. While the research on dynamics of technology adoption among young adolescents is still a maturing, yet there has been a significant amount of research conducted to further the understanding that present day university students constitute a psychologically distinct population, whose cognitive and Behavioural skills differ significantly than their predecessors (teachers) (see Prensky, 2005; Dede, 2005). This assertion of digital natives vs. digital immigrants has been challenged from a group of scholars who argue that the dichotomy should not bar us from the fact that there are individual differences among digital natives (Margaryan, Littlejohn, Vojt 2010), which have serious implications

on the question of how should contemporary educational institutions approach technological revolution. Like when we hype the benefits of ICT in education we tend to overlook the fact that overuse of the Internet may result in several negative consequences for adolescents, for example, poor school work, expulsion, social isolation, and disrupted daily routines etc. (Young, 1998). Taking the same into consideration we are taking up internet self-control important and interesting issue related to student's digital usage. This will scrutinize our understanding of categorizing present day young population as a distinct category of digital natives and substantiate the argument of individual differences among digital natives. We shall conceptualize self-control in internet usage and discuss how teachers and teacher educators can play a vital role in augmenting student's internet self-control.

SELF-CONTROL

Humans have one of the most unique abilities of will power and the capacity to exert self-control is one of the most powerful and beneficial adaptations that follows from will power. Self-control refers to the ability to manage monitor, inhibit, persevere and adapt one's behavior, emotions, thoughts and desires in order to achieve a certain goal. It offers the ability to regulating ones behaviour and impulses to achieve long-term goals (Duckworth 2011). Self-control grants human beings ability to manage thought and actions for happiest and healthiest life by forging an optimal fit between self and environment, and this fit can be substantially improved by altering the self to fit the world (Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder, 1982). A high personal capacity for self-control should be powerfully adaptive and should enable individuals to live an efficient life. Self-control is also essential in learning and developing adaptive competencies and consequentially operating efficiently with socio-ecological context. It is also essential for living a healthy and happy life (Tangney, Baumeister & Boone, 2004). Substantial individual differences exist in people's capacity for self-control. Some people are much better able than others to manage their lives emotional, rationally in personal, social, economic, educational and formal settings. These differences seemingly ought to be associated with greater success and well-being in life (Tangney, Baumeister, Boone, 2004). On theoretical grounds deficient self-control is deemed to have substantial impact on many of social and personal problems (see Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994). Self-control theory has been effective in explaining behavior problems, particularly antisocial behaviors (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). The role of low self-control in depression, loneliness and Internet addiction has also been observed to be

significant (Özdemir, Kuzucu & Ak, 2014). Following the same we hypothesises that self-control in internet use is an essential component that determines success in many spheres of life, like education and learning, capital enhancing, improving ones cognitive abilities like communication, creativity etc. Self-control in internet use is a fluid aspect of human behaviour that can be learned through proper training and education. Being a fluid attribute of human psyche, internet self-control can be developed and learned with the help of trained teachers. Better teacher training is required for continuing professional development of teachers in this arena. Self-control in internet use can help significantly reduce problematic internet addiction.

SELF-CONTROL IN INTERNET USE

According to Bandura (2001), the self-regulatory and self-reflective abilities that determine an individual's level of self-control over behavior could also be relevant to Internet addiction. Through self-monitoring and reflection, self-control helps individuals to become aware of their behavior and its impact on themselves, others, and the environment. People continuously reorient their thought and actions in response to environment by observations and personal experiences, Good matches corroborate thoughts; mismatches tend to refute them. Therefore peoples expected outcomes from internet are continuously reformed in order to promote a fit between one's thoughts and the results of the actions they spawn. (Bandura, 2001). Social-cognitive theorists propose self-regulation as the key to understanding physiological and behavioral addictions (Bandura, 1999). When an individual is not able to regulate actions and motivations for Internet use, this may be attributed to deficient self-control in internet. An unregulated internet use (when an individual is not able to control the dynamics of his expected outcomes from internet use) may have fetal consequences to the psycho-social aspect of an individual. Therefore the despite supposed universal benefits and appeal to young student's, internet has produced difficulties for some individuals. This could be conceptualized as Problematic Internet use (PIU) which refers to use of the Internet that creates psychological, social, school and/or work difficulties in a person's life (Beard & Wolf 2001). Some may call these same phenomena as internet addiction (Young, 1998). Internet addictions represent a lack of normal self-regulatory mechanism. The self-described "addicts" are aware that their usage is excessive but fail to apply standards that could supply the self-incentive to modify the behavior (Larose, Mastro & Eastin, 2001).

One goal of the present article is to argue that individual differences in self-control in internet use

would effectively predict positive outcomes across various domain of educational process. Also internet self-control constitutes an indelible dimension of technology adoption and use among students, because it has serious implications for mental health of students. It influences mental health and in turn gets influenced by it. Following are the reasons for taking up internet self-control as a factor in determining mental health of students (a) a substantive body of research has established self-control as a protective factor against adolescent unregulated and problematic internet use (Li et al., 2013; LaRose et al. 2003; Li et al. 2009). We also argue that a positive and connected school ethos fostered by well-trained teachers will prove effective in reducing unregulated internet use and helping students restore their self-control in internet use. Research has also indicated that adolescents who feel connected to school are less likely to develop PIU (Wang et al. 2011; Yen et al. 2009). For instance, Wang et al, (2011) concluded that school connectedness (positive relationships with teachers and classmates) was a protective factor for adolescent PIU. These findings highlight the value of teacher's role in reducing adolescent PIUs

Coping self-efficacy, or the belief that one can successfully overcome addiction, affects the success of these self-regulatory efforts. Coping self-efficacy may be bolstered through enactive mastery, verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, and control of physiological states. Teachers can play a determining role in this case. Thus, social-cognitive theory emphasizes self-help coupled with appropriate social support. The treatment paradigm for online addictions might stress the development of self-awareness of excessive usage and online communities that support moderation (Larose, Mastro & Eastin, 2001).

ROLE OF TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS

As discussed self-control in general and internet self-control in particular has significant implications for the overall psyche of young students, therefore it seems pertinent to discuss how it can be augmented through teaching and teacher education. As far as the response of educational institutes towards technological revolution is concerned, it has been observed that technology has been adopted without properly assessing its implications for student population. Based on apriori presumptions technology is being integrated within classrooms for its assumed universal appeal and effectiveness. Less and less effort is being made to understand the interface of interaction between technology and students. Individual differences in students internet use have not been given due consideration. Contrary to the facts teachers and students have been classified as belonging to two

different categories of digital immigrants and digital natives respectively (Prensky, 2001). Now given the diversity of differences in student's technology adoption, it is vital to make research efforts to analyse each of them. Internet self-control forms one such individual difference. Since technology adoption among students has become universal it becomes essential that its use among students is self-regulated and managed for efficacious outcomes. Internet self-control is neither an inborn tendency nor is it too ridged that it cannot be learned, it is rather a life-skill for which an individual can be trained. The attribute of being learned makes Internet self-control an exciting domain of research particularly in teacher education. Internet self-control means managing and regulating both the time & content in internet usage. In contemporary era digital technology is believed to have circumscribed the position and role of teacher, but as is evidenced by the facts for inculcating skills of internet self-control teachers and teacher educators can play a vital role. Role of teacher and teacher educators can be vital in two different ways. Firstly training students for developing self-control as a life skill can be very effective. Teacher's role can also be considered when students face the problem of unregulated internet usage.

Different strategies have been suggested for improving self-control in internet. For problem users self-regulation might be restored by encouraging them to track their own behavior, setting realistic and achievable goals for psychic & behavior change, developing multiple coping strategies, and identifying incentives that motivate abstinence (Perri, 1985). Role of teacher as a counsellor can be emphasized at this point Social support is also important, including developing social support for abstinence (Bandura, 1999). Research has shown that leisure boredom, Internet, and social activities increase the probability of Internet addiction while as however, family and outdoor activities along with participative and supportive parental monitoring reduce the tendencies. It can be argued that teachers can play a vital role in helping students manage their leisure time and encourage to go for outdoor activities. Overall evidence indicates that parental monitoring is an inhibitor of adolescents' Internet addiction. Thus, adolescents should be supervised or monitored in their daily routines and encouraged to participate in family and outdoor activities (Lin, Lin, & Wu, 2009). Promoting a healthy and positive school ethos also helps students in developing internet self-control as it has been observed that a positive student engagement can foster a well regulated internet use.

CONCLUSION

The use of the Internet by today's young generation called digital natives has increased dramatically in recent years. Whereas the academic use of the Internet is primarily intended for learning and research, the Internet has also become an important part of student life. However, with time, cases of over involvement with the Internet called internet addiction have increased. Indeed unregulated internet use is believed to significantly divert students' academic behaviour in negative directions (Chou, Condrón, & Belland, 2005). We argue that internet addiction is only one of the consequences of a poor self-control in internet use. Unregulated internet use may have many fetal consequences on student's psychosocial behaviour. There should be no doubt in the fact that internet is potential of extending exhilarating and beneficial consequences to students, provided a proper management is applied to its use. A lack of self-control in internet use precluded any possibility of harnessing the varied potential benefits of internet. Therefore developing internet self-control provides an animating opportunity for researchers to explore and also adds a novel responsibility for teachers to execute. It constitutes the essence of 21st century teaching and teacher education. It very necessary that our teacher education programmes become responsive to the process of developing a life skill called internet self-control.

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