

## **INTERNET ADDICTION AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: GENDER DIFFERENCES AMONG ADOLESCENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Internet addiction is a broad concept. Despite inconclusive or inconsistent definition for this disorder, usage of the internet is growing rapidly each year especially among adolescents, making it imperative to look into factors that can be impacted to it. The present study examined the internet addiction and spiritual intelligence among adolescents. A cross-sectional analysis of data of 70 adolescents was selected through simple random sampling. Test of significance revealed significant difference in the terms of gender. No other significant difference was found. Keeping these figures in mind, we need to focus on those factors which help to recover and awareness to the extent of this problem among adolescents, inspite of exposure to chronic adversity.

Keywords: Adolescence, Internet Addiction, Spiritual Intelligence

### **INTRODUCTION**

The computer and the Internet are becoming major influences in the lives of adolescents, progressing beyond the level of recreational activity. Internet usage has led to various psychological changes in adolescents. These changes to an Internet-based society can be viewed both optimistically and pessimistically. Addiction is defined as a complex disorder whose core diagnostic feature is the repeated urge to use a substance or indulge in certain behaviour despite its negative consequences (Hollen, 2009). Marlatt and colleagues define similarly addictive behaviour as a recurring pattern of behaviour that increases the risk of health, personal or social problems. Addictive behaviour is defined subjectively as experienced loss of control and occurs despite the efforts of abstinence or moderate use. Typically, such a pattern of behaviour is characterized by immediate satisfaction (short-term benefits) and is often accompanied with delayed harmful effects (long-term costs). Attempts to change addictive behaviour (treatment or self-help) are usually characterized by a high degree of relapse (Marlatt et al., 1988). Experts distinguish between two basic types of addiction: (a) physical addiction, which is

reflected by the fact that people are addicted to psychoactive substances due to certain physiological processes that are caused by these substances in the body, and (b) mental or behavioural addiction, when people display basic elements of addictive behaviour in relation to certain activities (Hollen, 2009). For the latter group of disorders, there are many different terms. In addition to the behavioural addiction other terms are also used such as non-substance addiction (Frascella et al., 2010), non-chemical addiction (Marks, 1990), process addiction (Hollen, 2009).

### **Adolescent Internet Addiction (AIA)**

Internet addiction can be defined as overuse of the Internet leading to impairment of an individual's psychological state (both mental and emotional), as well as their scholastic, occupational, and social interactions (Beard and Wolf, 2001). Kimberly Young (1998b) a well know researcher in this field, describes Internet addiction as follows:

“Internet addiction is defined as any online-related, compulsive behaviour which interferes with normal living and causes severe stress on family, friends, loved ones, and one's work environment. Internet addiction has been called Internet dependency and Internet compulsivity. By any name, it is a compulsive behaviour that completely dominates the addict's life” Kimberly Young (1998b).

### **Spiritual Intelligence**

Perez (2012) has stated that spiritual intelligence is one of the several types of intelligence that can be developed independently and contributes to psychological well being and overall healthy human development. Hosaini et al. (2010) stated that, the adolescence period is the best time to develop positive emotions and training skills, because adolescents are seeking to find their identity and their future personality at this period. He further stated that spiritual intelligence has a significant influence on the quality of life of adolescence and spirituality can be viewed as a form of intelligence because it predicts functioning and adaptation and offers capabilities that enable people to solve problems and attain goals. David King (2008) defines spiritual intelligence as a set of mental capacities which contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of one's existence, leading to such outcomes as deep existential reflection, enhancement of meaning, recognition of a transcendent self, and mastery of spiritual states. Gardner presented spiritual intelligence as the ninth intelligence (Sisk, 2008).

Previous studies perceived the internet as having an overall negative effect on their daily lives and a

break in the individual's spiritual intelligence. The following studies are as follows:-

Kuss et al (2013) conducted a research on 3,105 adolescents. The Results indicated that 3.7% of the sample was classified as potentially being addicted to the Internet. The use of online gaming and social applications (online social networking sites and Twitter) increased the risk for Internet addiction. These findings support the inclusion of 'Internet addiction' in the DSM-V.

Azadeh et al. (2012) conducted a study on 285 students which were selected based on classified sampling method, on which the spiritual intelligence questionnaire SIQ and Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT) were conducted. Results showed that there is a negative relationship ( $P < 0.01$ ) of internet addiction with spiritual intelligence, and this relationship does not depend on field of study and gender. This negative relationship indicates a reduction of internet addiction in spiritual intelligence. With increase of internet addiction in people's spiritual intelligence can be reduced.

Children and Adolescents Intellectual Development association in 2009 in a study conducted on students 11 to 18 years declared that 53% of them have become addicted to the mobile phone (Hassanzadeh, 2010). Azadeh et al. (2012) found that higher levels of adolescence internet addiction decreases spiritual intelligence.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To assess the gender difference in internet addiction among adolescents of Jammu city.
- To assess the gender difference in spiritual intelligence among adolescent of Jammu city.
- To assess the relationship between internet addiction and spiritual intelligence among adolescents of Jammu city.

### **HYPOTHESES**

- There will be no significant gender differences internet addiction among adolescent boys and girls of Jammu city.
- There will be no significant gender difference in spiritual intelligence among adolescent boys and girls of Jammu city.

- There will be no significant relationship between internet addiction and spiritual intelligence among adolescent boys and girls of Jammu city.

### **SAMPLE**

The sample consisted of 70 school going adolescents (35 boys and 35 girls) from Jammu City falling in the age group of 13-16 years.

### **Tools Used**

1. **Internet Addiction Test (IAT):** by Dr. Kimberly Young (2006). It consists of 20 questions wherein each item is scored using a five-point Likert scale. It covers the degree to which internet use affect daily routine, social life, productivity, sleeping pattern, and feeling. The reliability for this questionnaire is 0.899 in Cronbach's alpha. Higher the score greater the level of internet addiction.0
2. **The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24):** designed by (King and DeCicco, 2008) consisted of 24 self report measure items of spiritual intelligence. The tool exhibits a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = .94$  by Cronbach's alpha. Item responses ranged on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 ("not at all true of me") to 4 ("completely true of me"), with higher responses representing higher levels of spiritual intelligence. A total spiritual intelligence score can be calculated by summing across all subscales.

### **RESULTS**

Data was comprised of 70 school going adolescents (35 boys and 35 girls). Data was collected, individually by regular visits. Parents/school consent was taken and adolescents assent was also taken verbally. Participants were told that their results were kept confidential.

**Table 1: Critical Ratio on Internet Addiction of Boys and Girls.**

Variable	Sample	Mean	SD	Critical-ratio	Significance
Internet Addiction	BOYS	53.2	15.8	3.40**	Significant at .01 level
	GIRLS	35.23	17.7		

The C.R between internet addiction of boys and girls came out to be 3.40, which is significant

at .01 level. This shows that both the groups differ significantly from each other. Thus hypothesis is rejected at .01 level.

**Table 2: Critical Ratio on Spiritual Intelligence of Boys and Girls.**

VARIABLE	ADOLESCENT	MEAN	SD	CRITICAL RATIO	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Spiritual Intelligence	BOYS	63.46	11.46	0.96	Non-significant
	GIRLS	63.29	16.54		

The C.R between spiritual intelligence of boys and girls came out to be 0.96, which is non significant. This shows that both the groups do not differ significantly from each other. Thus hypothesis is accepted. The mean value shows that spiritual intelligence of adolescent boys is better than adolescent girls.

**Table 3: Pearson Correlations between Internet Addiction and Spiritual Intelligence**

VARIABLE	MEAN	SD	CORRELATION	INTERPRETATION
Internet addiction	44.24286	19.00529	+ 0.03	Weak but positive
Spiritual intelligence	63.37143	14.12693		

The weak positive correlation between internet addiction and spiritual intelligence.

## DISCUSSION

Findings of the study have shown that there is significant difference between internet addiction of boys and internet addiction of girls. Waldo (2014) found that adolescents are

frequent online users and that there are significant differences in terms of *gender*, school type, and online behaviors; social desirability had a strong positive relationship with adolescent internet addiction. In a study conducted by Zadeh et.al.(2012) revealed that internet use facilitate and retard psychosocial development among high school students particularly at the moratorium stage (19 years old/early adolescents). Thus, the higher use of internet the higher diffusion of the identity of teens.

An interesting finding of the study is that boys have higher internet addiction than girls as the mean score of boys' sample is 53.2 and girls' sample is 35.23. In a study of Waldo et.al (2014) boys were found to have higher levels of internet addiction as than their girl's counterpart. Mazalin & Moore (2004), Chen & Fu (2009), Sato (2009), Beutel (2011) and Kennedy, Wellman, and Klement (2003) utilizing teenage population for the comparison on gender difference on internet addiction. In this study, adolescent male's use the internet as a social mean or as a ground for interpersonal relations. Most studies in this field usually indicate female that seek out close friendships and prefer anonymous communications (Young, 1996). This unexpected finding seems to support Chou, Condron, and Belland (2005) finding that internet use is a substitute for real-life social interaction. Interventions, treatment programs, preventive strategies may be designed specifically considering the areas in which the two genders are different and similar.

TABLE 2: Results of present study also revealed that there is non-significant difference between spiritual intelligence of boys and girls. Adolescents link their spiritual intelligence to their spiritual experiences (Perez, 2012). They may have imbibed a strong adherence to the social teaching (Austria, 2009); they cultivate an optimistic attitude that contributes to emotional balance and the capacity to survive (Wang, n.d) and have adolescents ability to accept reality (including failure and defeat) in terms of God's will (Hetherington, 2011). Carl Jung emphasized the ability of humans to draw on spiritual resources in problem-solving and dealing with the issues of the concept of life and values. Perhaps this may contribute to the understanding that adolescents seek divine interventions in solving their problems.

Harvey (2004) studies have shown spirituality has a protective effect and acts against stress and leads to gain physical and psychologically healthy, having goal and meaning in life, hopefulness, optimism and improves individual's psychological status. Girls have higher spiritual intelligence than boys. Some

protective factors working in case of girls like internal strength manifested by religious beliefs and practices. Some attention has focused on links between participation in religious and/or spiritual activities and physical and mental health (Ko'enig 1997).

TABLE 3: The weak positive correlation between internet addiction and spiritual intelligence. In a study of Rahmani & Lavasani (2011) suggested that internet addicts have accepted the internet as a way to create spiritual change in them and similarly, adjustment in negative moods. It seems that this way, although harmful, is the shortest and most available way for them. Although this is suggestive it might be useful to draw upon it as an example, in order to seek other possible factors.

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