

THE ROLE OF INTERNET ADDICTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE SYMPTOMS AMONG YOUTH: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Internet addiction has become a major public health concern among youth, which can also impact mental health. This paper examines the role of internet addiction in the development of obsessive-compulsive symptoms (OCS) in youth. Excessive internet use may contribute to OCS through conforming to similar behaviors, increased anxiety and stress, social comparison, and escape/avoidance coping mechanisms. The constant presence and instant gratification of the internet may reinforce compulsive habits, increase anxiety, and promote a negative self-image. Given the widespread internet use among youth, understanding the link between internet addiction and OCS is crucial for early intervention and prevention. In this study, the following results were found according to the problem statement of the study. A total of 121 college students from Purvanchal region of UP state, participated in this study, 33.9% (n=41) of the participants were males and 66.1% (n=80) were females, the age ranged from 14 to 25 years old with mean age 17.32 (SD 2.11) years old. The results showed that 88 of them were internet addicted and 33 were normal internet users, the total prevalence of internet addiction among the youth in this study was 72.7% with 95% confidence interval, 50.4% of them were mildly internet addicted and 22.3% were moderately addicted. This paper emphasizes the need to promote digital balance, mental health support, and awareness to reduce the risks associated with internet addiction and OCS.

Keywords: Internet, Addiction, Internet Addiction, Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms, Youth.

INTRODUCTION

Internet addiction, also known as problematic internet use or internet addiction disorder, refers to an excessive and compulsive use of the internet that interferes with daily life, work, and relationships. It is a relatively new and controversial concept in the field of psychology and mental health, and it is not officially recognized as a distinct disorder in diagnostic manuals like the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).

However, many experts and researchers acknowledge that some individuals do experience significant negative consequences in their lives due to their excessive internet use.

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a mental health condition characterized by the presence of obsessions and compulsions. It is considered an anxiety disorder and can significantly impact a person's daily life and functioning.

Obsessions: Obsessions are intrusive, distressing, and persistent thoughts, images, or urges that occur repeatedly and involuntarily. These thoughts cause significant anxiety or discomfort. Common

obsessions include fears of contamination, worries about harm coming to oneself or others, and disturbing sexual or religious thoughts.

Compulsions: Compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts that a person feels driven to perform in response to their obsessions or to reduce the distress caused by them. These behaviors are often performed according to specific rules or in a rigid manner. Common compulsions include excessive hand washing, checking locks repeatedly, counting, or praying.

Obsessive-compulsive symptoms, characterized by intrusive thoughts and repetitive behaviors, are increasingly reported among young populations. The overlap between compulsive internet use and obsessive-compulsive tendencies suggests a potential psychological link. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted among high school and college students aged between 14 and 25 years, in Purvanchal region of UP state. Participants were administered standardized questionnaires in classroom settings with informed consent. Confidentiality and ethical considerations were maintained. The sample for the research consists of 66.1% (n=80) female, 33.9% (n=41) male, total 121 samples were selected according to the Convenience sampling method. “Internet Addiction Test (IAT)” Young, (1998), and The Obsessive Compulsive Inventory-Revised (OCI-R) (Foa et al., 2002) and Demographic Information Form were used for collecting data.

In the statistical evaluation of the research all analyses are performed by using SPSS 22.0 for windows. Considering purposes of the study, Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, Pearson moment’s correlation were figured out in data analysis. In this study, the following results were found according to the problem statement of the study. The first sub-questions of the research were expressed as “Is there any statistical meaningful correlation between internet addiction and Obsessive Compulsive symptoms?”

RESULTS

A total of 121 college students from Purvanchal region of UP state, participated in this study, **33.9% (n=41)** of the participants were males and **66.1% (n=80)** were females, the age ranged from 14 to 25 years old with mean age 17.32 (SD 2.11) years old.

Regarding Internet addiction (IA), the results showed that 88 of them were internet addicted and 33 were normal internet users, the total prevalence of internet addiction among the youth in this study was 72.7% as shown in figure (1) with 95% confidence interval, 50.4% of them were mildly internet addicted and 22.3% were moderately addicted as shown in table. (1).

Table (1): The Prevalence and level of Internet addiction

Level	Frequency	Percent
Normal Use of Internet	33	27.3
mild level of Internet addiction	61	50.4
moderate level of Internet addiction	27	22.3

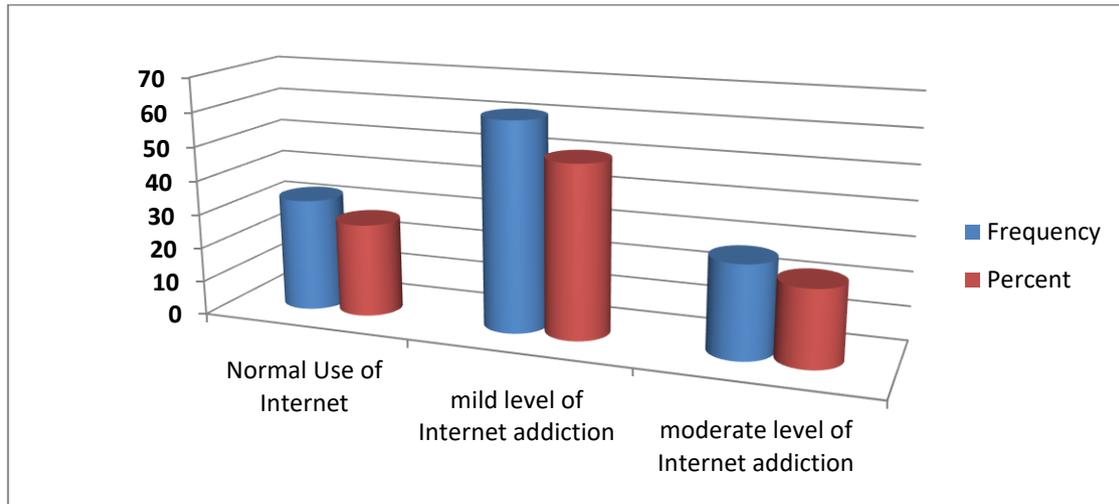


Figure (1): The Prevalence of Internet Addiction among Youth

Regarding obsessive-compulsive symptoms, the results showed that 102 (84.3%) of them were shown obsessive-compulsive symptoms and 19 (15.7) were normal, then the total prevalence of obsessive-compulsive symptoms among the youth in this study was 84.3%) as presented in table (2).

Table (2): The Prevalence and level of Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms

OCI Score level	Frequency	Percent
No Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms	13	15.7
likely presence of Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms	102	84.3

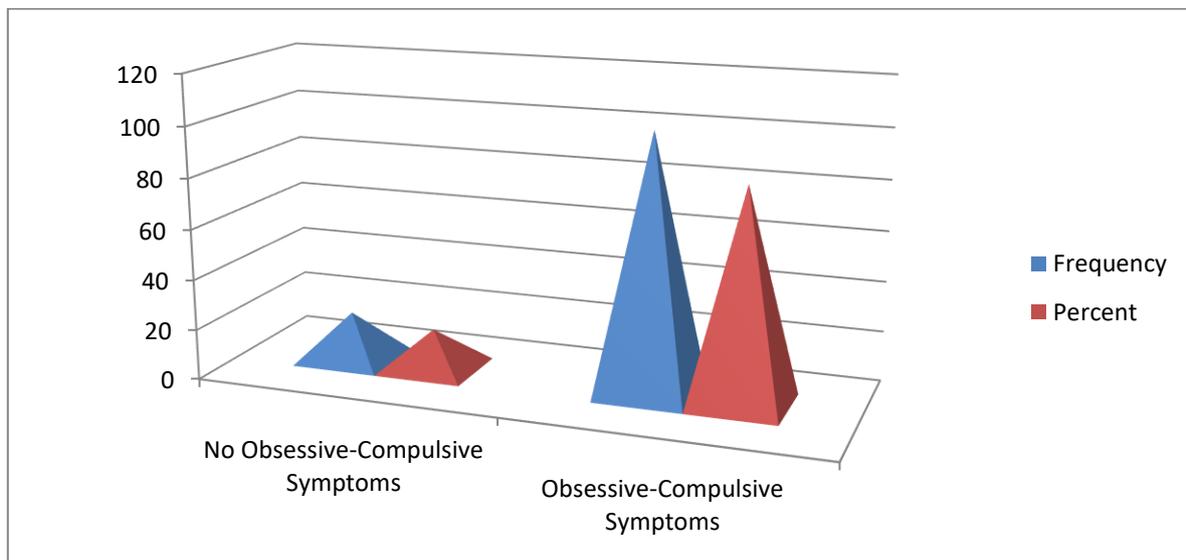


Figure (2): Prevalence and Severity of Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms

❖ Pearson Moment’s Correlation Test was applied in order to determine whether there is a statistically meaningful correlation between Obsessive-Compulsive Inventory and Internet Addiction Scale scores of the students.

❖ The analysis of the data implies that there was a statistically meaningful positive correlation between internet addiction score and Obsessive Compulsive Symptoms ($r=.454$)

Table 3. Correlation of OCI-R test scores with IAT test scores

Scale	OCI-R (Obsessive-Compulsive Inventory)
IAT (Internet Addiction Test)	
r	.454**
n	121
p	.000

** $p < .001$ statistically meaningful correlation

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Simple linear regression was used to test if IAT Scores significantly predicted OCI-R score. The overall regression was statistically significant ($R^2 = .206$, $F(1, 119) = 30.84$, $p < .000$). It was found that IAT Scores significantly predicted OCI-R score ($\beta = .420$, $p < .000$).

Table No.4 Simple linear regression

Regression Statistics	
R	.454
R Square	.206
Adjusted R Square	.199
Std. Error	10.40579
Observation	121

DISCUSSION

These findings support the hypothesis that Internet addiction is deeply associated with obsessive-compulsive symptoms. These results align with cognitive-behavioral theories, suggesting that repetitive online behaviors reinforce compulsive patterns.

Processes such as reinforcement, anxiety reduction, and social comparison may play a role in explaining this association. Spending excessive time on digital platforms may heighten susceptibility to intrusive thoughts and ritualistic behaviors.



In this study the main aim is to reveal the relationship between internet addiction and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder among youth. The analysis showed that obsessive compulsive Disorder is related with internet addiction.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that internet addiction plays a significant role in the development of obsessive-compulsive symptoms among youth. The findings of this study underscore the importance of monitoring internet usage patterns and implementing early psychological interventions to prevent the escalation of mental health issues.

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