Correlate the Level of Internet Dependence and Associated Behavioral Problems among the Preschooler Children in the Selected Urban Area of Wardha District

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

ABSTRACT

India is seeing an increase in internet usage, particularly among young and children, as a result of the low cost and easy availability to touch screen mobile phones, tablet devices, and Wi-Fi. Since the previous decade, Internet use in India has grown at an exponential rate, resulting in a generation of gloomy anxiety about it, which has progressed to the point of becoming a hazardous addiction. Behavioral problems are arising due to internet dependence such as temper tantrum, aggression, thought problems, attention problems and rule breaking behaviors in the children and youth people too.

Aim: To correlate the level of internet dependence and level of associated behavioral problems

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among the preschooler children.

**Materials and Methods:** Descriptive correlation research design was used to conduct this study. A non-probability Convenience sampling was used to select the samples. This research study included 100 preschooler children from the Gajanan nagar (Arvi Naka) selected area of wardha district. Samples must select according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Young's Internet Addiction Test and behavioral scale was used to assess the level of internet dependence and also the level of associated behavioral problems of internet dependence.

**Results:** The level of internet dependence: 3% of the preschooler children were disagree that they had internet dependence 4% had not sure, 80% had agree and 13% of them had strongly agree. Minimum Internet dependence score was 28 and maximum Internet dependence score was 64. Mean Internet dependence score was 54.70±6.84 and mean percentage of Internet dependence score was 72.93±9.12. and associated Behavioural problems are 2% of the preschooler children were disagree that they had behavioral problem, 3% had not sure, 77% had agree and 18% of them had strongly agree. Minimum associated behavioral problem score was 37 and maximum associated behavioral problem score was 87. Mean associated behavioral problem score was 75.26±8.07 and mean percentage of associated behavioral problem score was 75.26±8.7. The hypothesis is tested statistically with association between internet dependence and behavioral problem.

**Conclusion:** Parents and schools should educate their children on how to use the internet responsibly and how to balance time between online surfing, schoolwork, and outside physical activity. This study shows that there is a correlation-ship between the levels of internet dependency and associated behavioral issues in preschoolers. The situation is serious, and it will soon develop to an addicted state. Interventions such as setting limits and identifying early warning indications of underlying psychopathology are necessary.

**Keywords:** Behavioral problems Internet dependence; internet addiction scale; preschooler children.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the usage of the internet on school campuses and in society has risen rapidly. While educational usage of the internet is largely for study and research, the internet has become an integral component of student life [1]. The number of hours using the web has been drastically increased but the rationale wasn't limited to educational purposes only. Internet addiction was linked to melancholy, anxiety symptoms, behavioural difficulties, hyperactivity/attention deficit disorder, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts, according to a multicentric research done in 11 European countries. In the Brazilian paediatric population, there is no evidence of a link between internet addiction and behavioural problems [2]. Children and preschoolers are increasingly using the Internet to learn, play online games, buy, watch movies, engage social media, and communicate. These exercises are frequently used to treat internet addiction and psychological issues [3]. When regarded in this light, children are the primary users of technology and the ones who will take it forward. Among many personal risk factors of Internet addiction, depression, aggression, and impulsivity are of particular interest due to their association with other clinical subtypes. Depression is related to emotional vulnerability or internalizing problems, and aggression and impulsivity are related to externalizing problems such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which are both known to increase the risk for Internet addiction. Using Young’s Internet addiction test, a school-based study of 9th and 10th grade students in seven European nations (Greece, Spain, Poland, Germany, Romania, the Netherlands, and Iceland) found that 0.8 percent to 1.7 percent of the kids were suspected of having Internet addiction [4].

2. **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Data will be collected from the preschooler children age group of 3-8 years. Descriptive correlation study design was used to conduct this study, the research approach is evaluative. The study will be conducted in selected areas of wardha district. The sample was Preschooler children 3-8 years of age group in selected areas of wardha district. The subjects will be selected by using on nonprobability convenient sampling technique. The sample consists of 100 children.
2.1 Method of Data Collection

The data gathering process began from November 2020 to May 2021. The investigation visited the selected area in advance and obtained the necessary permission from the concerned authorities. The investigator introduced them and informed them about the study so as to ensure better cooperation during the data collection.

The investigation approached the mother of preschooler children and explained the purpose of the study and how the study will be conducted. Following a thorough study of the literature, the researcher devised a structured interview schedule, as well as Young's online addiction test and Behavior measures. Five experts checked the content's authenticity, and changes were made based on their recommendations. There were three components to the tool: section-A demographic characteristics, section-B modified Behavior Scale, and section-C Internet Addiction Test. The behavior Scale to assess the level of child behavior problems. It consists of 15 questionnaires. Numerical values 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 are assigned to each questionnaire to indicate the severity of child behavior problems, scoring key includes -0-Strongly disagree, 1-Disagree, 2- Not sure, 3- Agree, 4- Strongly agree .To determine the severity of internet addiction, use the Internet Addiction Scale. There are 20 questions in all. Each questionnaire is given a numerical score of 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 to reflect the degree of internet dependency. The highest score is 100, while the lowest score is 0, scoring key includes strongly disagree, 1-Disagree, 2- Not sure, 3- Agree, 4- Strongly agree.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 shows that Percentage wise distribution of pre-schooler children with regards to their demographic characteristics. A nonprobability convenient sampling technique of 100 subjects was drawn from the study population, who were pre-schooler children from wardha district. The data obtained to describe the sample characteristics including age of child, gender of child, education of mother, occupation of mother and father, family monthly income, type of family, number of children at home, order of child respectively.

Table 2 shows that according to the questionnaire the level of internet dependence as 3% of the preschooler children were disagree 4% had not sure, 80% had agree and 13% of them had strongly agree. Minimum knowledge score was 28 and maximum knowledge score was 64. Mean knowledge score was 54.70±6.84and mean percentage of knowledge score was 72.93±9.12.

The above table shows that 2% of the preschooler children were disagree had behavioral problem, 3% had not sure, 77% had agree and 18% of them had strongly agree. Minimum level of Associated Behavioral Problem score was 37 and maximum level of Associated Behavioral Problem score was 87. Mean level of Associated Behavioral Problem score was 75.26±8.07and mean percentage of level of Associated Behavioral Problem score was 75.26±8.7.

The Table 4 the correlation between the level of internet dependence score and level of associated behavioral problem in children due to internet dependence are compared and Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient is applied at 5% level of significance. The tabulated value for n=100 i.e., 98 degrees of freedom was 1.98. The ‘p’ value i.e.,0.0001 are much higher than 5% level of significance. Hence it is statistically interpreted that the positive correlation was established internet dependence and behavioral problem in preschooler (r=0., p=0.0001).

| Demographic Variable       | Number of children | Percentage |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Age of child               |                    |            |
| 3-4 yrs                    | 53                 | 53%        |
| 5-6 yrs                    | 47                 | 47%        |
| Gender of child            |                    |            |
| Male child                 | 69                 | 69%        |
| Female child               | 31                 | 31%        |
| Transgender child          | 0                  | 0%         |
| Education of mother        |                    |            |
| Primary school             | 54                 | 54%        |

Table 1. Distribution of preschooler children with regards to demographic variables
| Demographic Variable                      | Number of children | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Secondary school                         | 18                 | 18%        |
| Diploma                                  | 9                  | 9%         |
| Degree                                   | 13                 | 13%        |
| Post-Degree                              | 6                  | 6%         |
| Occupation of mother                     |                    |            |
| Private job                              | 61                 | 61%        |
| Government job                           | 19                 | 19%        |
| Own business                             | 3                  | 3%         |
| Other                                    | 17                 | 17%        |
| Occupation of Father                     |                    |            |
| Private job                              | 51                 | 51%        |
| Government job                           | 36                 | 36%        |
| Own business                             | 6                  | 6%         |
| Other                                    | 7                  | 7%         |
| Family monthly income                    |                    |            |
| 5000-10000                               | 25                 | 25%        |
| 10001-20000                              | 42                 | 42%        |
| 20001-30000                              | 23                 | 23%        |
| 30001-above                              | 10                 | 10%        |
| Type of family                           |                    |            |
| Joint family                             | 37                 | 37%        |
| Nuclear family                           | 56                 | 56%        |
| Extended family                          | 7                  | 7%         |
| Number of children at home               |                    |            |
| 1                                        | 21                 | 21%        |
| 2                                        | 45                 | 45%        |
| 3                                        | 24                 | 24%        |
| 4                                        | 10                 | 10%        |
| Order of Child                           |                    |            |
| 1st                                      | 38                 | 38%        |
| 2nd                                      | 42                 | 42%        |
| 3rd                                      | 20                 | 20%        |
| 4th                                      | 0                  | 0%         |
| Is internet connection at home           |                    |            |
| Yes                                      | 96                 | 96%        |
| No                                       | 4                  | 4%         |
| Number of smartphones at home            |                    |            |
| 1                                        | 20                 | 20%        |
| 2                                        | 52                 | 52%        |
| 3                                        | 12                 | 12%        |
| 4 and more than 4                        | 16                 | 16%        |

Table 2. Assessment of level of internet dependence in Pre-Schooler children n=100

| Internet dependence | Score Range | Level of internet dependence |
|---------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
|                     | Frequency   | Percentage                   |
| Strongly Disagree   | 1-15        | 0                             | 0%                        |
| Disagree            | 16-30       | 03                           | 03%                       |
| Not Sure            | 31-45       | 04                           | 04%                       |
| Agree               | 46-60       | 80                           | 80%                       |
| Strongly Agree      | 61-75       | 13                           | 13%                       |
| Minimum internet dependence | 28          |                              |
| Maximum internet dependence | 64          |                              |
| Mean Score          | 54.70±6.84  | 72.93±9.12                  |
| Mean %              |             | 72.93±9.12                  |
Table 3. Identify the level of associated behavioral problem score n=100

| Associated behavioural problem | Score Range | Associated behavioural problem Score | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Disagree              | 1-20        | 0                                    | 0         | 0%         |
| Disagree                       | 21-40       | 02                                   | 2         | 2%         |
| Not Sure                       | 41-60       | 03                                   | 3         | 3%         |
| Agree                          | 61-80       | 77                                   | 77        | 77%        |
| Strongly Agree                 | 81-100      | 18                                   | 18        | 18%        |
| Minimum level of Associated Behavioral Problem score | Score 37 | 75.26±8.07 | 75.26±8.7 |
| Maximum level of Associated Behavioral Problem score | Score 87 | 75.26±8.7 |

Table 4. Correlation between Internet Dependence and Behavioral Problem among the Pre-Schooler Children n=100

| Overall | Mean | SD   | Correlation ‘r’ | p-value |
|---------|------|------|-----------------|---------|
| Internet dependence | 54.70 | 6.84 | 0.314 | 0.0001 |
| Behavioral problem | 75.26 | 8.07 | S, p<0.05 |

Fig. 1. Correlation between Internet Dependence and Behavioral Problem among the Pre-Schooler Children

And at last with the association of the level of internet dependence and behavioral problem score with their demographic variable. Internet dependence score of age of child is statistically associated with their internet dependence score. Gender, family monthly income, order of child of child is statistically significantly associated with their internet dependence score and family income and order of child is statistically significantly associated with their behavioral problem score.

4. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to provide a descriptive assessment of the level of Internet dependency on preschooler children. In this
present study the Level of internet dependence in preschooler children 3% of the preschooler children were disagree had behavioral problem, 4% had not sure, 80% had agree and 13% of them had strongly agree. Minimum knowledge score was 28 and maximum knowledge score was 64. Mean knowledge score was 54.70±6.84and mean percentage of knowledge score was 72.93±9.12. Behavior problem of preschooler 2% of the preschooler children were disagree had behavioral problem, 3% had not sure, 77% had agree and 18% of them had strongly agree. Minimum knowledge score was 37 and maximum knowledge score was 87. Mean knowledge score was 75.26±8.07and mean percentage of knowledge score was 75.26±8.7. The supported study was done by Ramesh Kumar Sahu1 & Dr. S.M. Mahendra Simha Karna et al. The study's aim was to discover internet addiction among youngsters in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. To obtain primary data, the researchers used a semi-structured interview schedule that included socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, Young's Internet Addiction Test Scale (IAT) translated into Hindi, and participants aged 7 to 18 year old. The result showed that Out of 70 participants, 50 percent of both districts were represented. Males made up 60% of the group, while females made up 40%. The majority of 42 (60 percent) were serious internet addicts aged 15 to 79, and the majority of these were from Sagar. 39 (55.72%) respondents rated themselves as moderate (scoring 50-79), whereas 22 (31.43%) rated themselves as mild and safe (score 50-79) [5]. Another supported study done by Babita Kayastha, Ashmita Gurung, et al, A Descriptive Study to Assess the Level of Internet Addiction among Adolescents: A Case Study of High Schools in Mangalore. The degree of IA and its influence among high school students were assessed using a descriptive technique in this study. A baseline proforma, a modified version of the IA exam, and a structured questionnaire produced throughout the study comprised the instrument. Karl Pearson's coefficient correlation was used to assess the dependability, and it was determined to be dependable. The majority of the teenagers (70.5%) were normal users, while 23 percent had a light addiction, 6% had a moderate addiction, and 0.5 percent had a severe addiction, according to the study. The majority of samples (73%) had a mild effect, 16.5 percent had a moderate effect, and 10.5 percent had no effect. Some of their demographic characteristics, such as fathers' age, social status, and employment, exhibit strong correlations with both IA and its impact [3]. Another Supported study a cross-sectional study conducted in two schools in Curitiba/PR – one public school (Escola Municipal Julia Amaral Di Lena) and one private school (Colégio Sagrado Coração de Jesus) The incidence of internet addiction was 21% when an IAT score of 50 or above was considered. In public schools, 10 participants (21.3 percent) fulfilled the threshold for internet addiction, whereas 9 participants (20.4 percent) met the same criteria in private schools. As a result, there was no difference in the number of Internet Addicts who participated in public and private schools. [6] another supported article also mentioned that impact of covid 19 has also discusses the signs and symptoms, its genesis, diagnostic procedure, treatment, and prevention as advised by WHO, as well as the influence of COVID-19 on global wealth and excess use of internet and smartphones during that period [7,8,9]. Moreover, in a relatively short amount of time, "COVID-19" has captured the world awareness by bringing about amazing changes in our day-to-day lives [10,11].

5. CONCLUSION

Though internet addiction is not yet formally recognized as a unique behavioral illness, it has been identified as a global problem in the context of rapidly expanding internet use. It appears that some effective approaches for the prevention and management of internet addiction are required. Achieving a balance between providing appropriate internet infrastructure and protecting the children from Internet-related risks. A multidisciplinary treatment strategy combines interventions from several disciplines such as medication, psychotherapy, case management, and family counselling, all of which can be used [12]. Although internet addiction is not yet an officially recognized disorder, it has been demonstrated to have serious medical, social, emotional, and financial repercussions, needing prevention, control, and rehabilitation. Rather than completely avoiding harmful Internet usage, the goal of treatment is to minimize it [13] Internet use separates people from the real world, robbing them of a sense of belonging and connection to real-world interactions. Despite the fact that existing data shows that electronic media has mixed impacts, we offer advice for clinicians, policymakers, and educators in collaborating with caregivers and youth to
encourage electronic media usage that promotes favourable outcomes in these areas [14,15]

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The study was approved by institutional ethical Committee of Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences Wardha 05/02/2021. (Reference No. DMIMS (DU)/IEC/2021-174

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here: https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/74230