

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNET ADDICTED STUDENTS

Kryucheva Yana Vladimirovna¹
Tolstoukhova Irina Vasilievna²

¹ Industrial University of Tyumen, 38, Volodarskogo St., Tyumen, 625000, Russia

² Industrial University of Tyumen, 38, Volodarskogo St., Tyumen, 625000, Russia

ABSTRACT

The work is devoted to the problem of Internet addiction disorder. The article deals with the psychological characteristics of Internet addicted students. Three levels of Internet addiction were defined. The role of the Internet in the lives of today's students was investigated. The research aimed to determine the level of communication skills development, the peculiarities of emotional sphere, the level of stress resistance and will power. To study the psychological constitution of students, such research methods as enquiry, questionnaire, testing, monitoring and ascertaining experiment were used. The dynamics of psychological constitution of Internet addicted students was analyzed in the process of increasing the extent of this addiction. It was concluded that Internet addicted students have low level of communication skills, the prevalence of such emotional states as anxiety, passivity, loneliness, depression, low level of stress resistance and will power. The main ways of Internet addiction prophylaxis were proposed. The formation of positive traditions among the collective, the development of self-management skills and skill of constructive relationships making, play the important role in the prophylaxis of Internet-addicted behavior. The results of the study may be interesting for lecturers, teachers, and graduate students, interested in the problems of Internet addiction.

Keywords: Internet addiction, communication skills, stress resistance, will power, emotional state.

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the increasing computerization and internetization of Russian society, an urgent problem is the negative impact of the Internet on the person, including students. Of course, the power of the Internet can not be overestimated: it helps you quickly to find the information you need, it is an effective means of communication and the tool for the acquisition of necessary goods and services. But uncontrolled use of the Internet and social networks by students leads to various problems: to the difficulty in socializing outside the Internet, to the frustration of social adaptation, including problems with studying, low self-assessment, Internet addiction. Internet addiction – is an obsessive desire to connect to the Internet and painful inability to disconnect from it timely [2].

A number of domestic and foreign authors (K.Young, A.E. Voiskunskiy, A.S. Hall etc.) [9,10,12] describe Internet addiction as non-chemical dependence, compensating disadvantages of behavior in real life, by means of displacement of personal goals in virtual reality. The base of Internet addiction is compulsive need of the person to use the Internet. M. Orzack identified psychological and physical symptoms, common for Internet addiction. American psychologist Kimberly Young described the stages of development of this addiction type, defined the criteria and dangerous signals of this disorder [12]. R. Davis proposed cognitive-behavioral model of pathological Internet use. F.A. Saglam investigated and defined the causes of Internet addiction in adolescence; he proposed the classification of Internet addicted teenagers [5]. Drepa M.I. defined the backgrounds of Internet addiction among students, systemized diagnostic criteria of this phenomenon [1].

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The aim of the research is to study the psychological characteristics of Internet addicted students.

The methods of the investigation: the analysis of domestic and foreign scientific literature, observation, interview, questionnaire, testing, ascertaining experiment.

At the first stage of psychological and pedagogical research, we have identified internet-addicted students and established the degree of Internet addiction. The study involved 100 first-year students, 18-20 years old, studying on the course of «Technological machines and equipment" of the Institute of Industrial Technology and Engineering of Tyumen Industrial University. 84 of them had Internet addiction of varying degrees. According to the test results on the Internet addiction of K. Young, 19% of the students had a high degree of Internet addiction; 49% and 32% of students had medium and low level of Internet addiction, respectively. The results are shown in Figure 1.

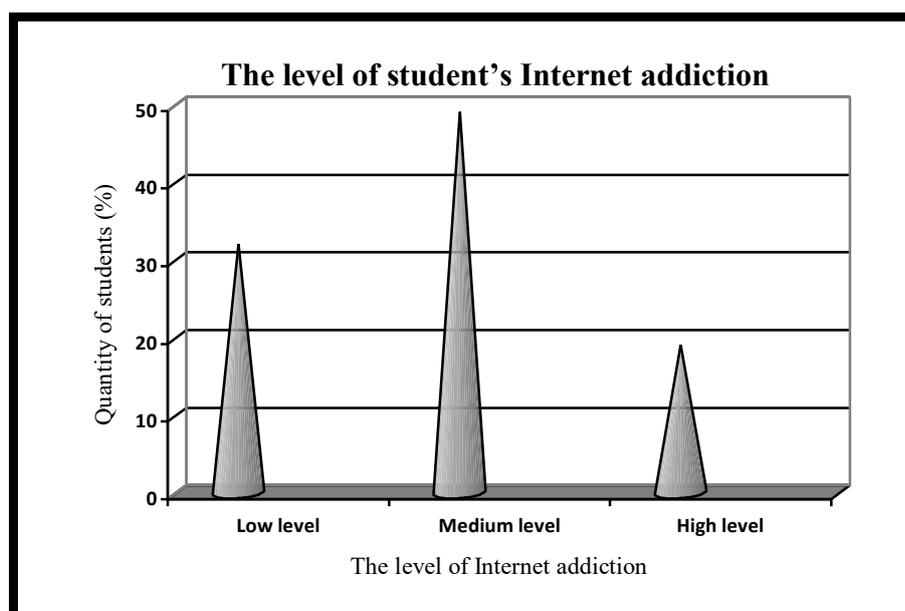


Figure 1. The level of Internet addiction.

At the second stage of the investigation, we examined the role of Internet in the lives of today's students, as well as the psychological characteristics of Internet-addicted behavior. Diagnostic of the psychological characteristics of Internet-addicted students was carried out using the following methods:

- 1) "Communication and organizational inclination" test (V.V. Sinyavskiy, V.A. Fedoroshin);
- 2) self-assessment of emotional states of A. Uessman and D. Riks;
- 3) self-assessment test of stress resistance of S. Kouhen and G. Villianson;
- 4) diagnostic of person's willing potential [3].

In the process of study the role of Internet in students' lives, the authors were interested in things, which were the most attractive for the students in global network, the frequency and duration of Internet use, and social networking sites.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

"The Internet today is the most important source of information," - said the majority of respondents (67%); 56% of students get acquainted and communicate with friends. All of them, without exception, use the Internet for educational purposes: writing the report, doing control work or homework. 42% of students considered, that the importance of the Internet is in its entertainment: listening to music, watching movies, on-line-games. A small percentage of students use the network as possible source of additional income, and shopping.

83% of respondents connect the network every day; 9% - from four to six times per week; 7% - two or three times. Thus, the average duration of Internet use per week is the following: 27% of students - 25-30 hours, 44% - 18-24 hours, 21% - 10-18 hours and 9% - less than 10 hours per week. "Do you lose the notion of time, while you are using the computer?" - 32% of respondents had the positive answer. 27% of students admitted, that while surfing the Internet, they forget about home affairs and education. 19% of students had already physiologically experiencing the effects of long sitting at the computer: eye pain, neck pain, disturbance of sleep and dietary regime. 21% of respondents noticed, that relatives expressed their anger and dissatisfaction with the long stay on the Internet. 29% of students have other hobbies and interests; they are engaged in sports, music, dancing, embroidery, robotechnics. In their class collectives there are no traditions, which are so necessary to develop common standards of behavior, for the development of relationships. Traditions unite the collective, they contribute to the dialogic and polilogic in communicating with students, overcoming loneliness and insecurity.

Students actively use social networking sites (100% of the respondents). The most popular are "VKontakte" (70%), "Odnoklassniki" (21%). It was found that 11% of respondents are log in all popular networks (VKontakte, Twitter, Facebook, Odnoklassniki). The main purposes of social networking use by the students are the following: communication, information sharing, watching movies, videos, listening to music. Students answered negatively to the question "Do you know about the signs of forming, symptoms of expression and stages of development of Internet addiction?"

3.1. Studying of communication skills

Studying of communication skills has shown that in the process of increasing the degree of addiction, there was a decrease of this capacity, i.e. the students with a high degree of Internet addiction had a low level of communication skills. They are characterized by lack of vocabulary, plenty of interjections, words-parasites, use of non-literary words and phrases, inability of proper and simple formulation of their opinion and asking questions. They find it difficult to make contact and to make constructive relations.

3.2. Studying of emotional states

The methodology of "Self-assessment of emotional states" allows to estimate the following states: calm - anxiety, energy - fatigue, elation - depression, self-confidence - a feeling of helplessness. In this case, the relationship between degree of Internet addiction and emotional states was also investigated. With increasing the degree of addiction, the following emotional states become dominant: anxiety, uncertainty, fear, lethargy, fatigue, depression, weakness, feeling of incompetence.

The students with a high degree of addictive behavior are characterized by irritability, nervousness and anxiety. They do not have enough energy, they are passive at the lessons and lacking initiative, they react poorly to the teacher's offers to take part in the discussion of raised issues. They are characterized by distractibility and attention instability. Some of them are not very confident in their abilities. All this indicates about some deviation in the emotional sphere of personality.

3.3. Studying of stress resistance

In the process of investigation the degree of stress resistance of Internet-addicted students, it was found its decrease with increasing the level of Internet addiction. This fact speaks for the inability of students to bear considerable intellectual, willing and emotional stresses positively, without having harmful consequences for the educational activity and their health. The causes of stress for the students is the inability to apportion properly their time, the violation of day regime, "long stay" at the computer, resulting in absence from school, bad doing of homework or course work, poor performance at certain discipline. The life of such students is full of stresses, exciting situations and emotional experiences. Students with high level of Internet addiction are often easily offended, angry and aggressive.

3.4. Studying of will power

During the analysis of will power of Internet addicted students, it was found that in the process of increase the Internet addiction, the coefficient of volitional characteristics is reduced, and students with a high degree of Internet addiction are characterized by a weak will power. The decrease of will power level among internet-addicted students was expressed in the inability to control, first of all, the duration of stay at the computer, in the inability to govern itself and solve certain problems. The infirmity of purpose expresses in impulsiveness and unwillingness to deal with the difficulties on the way to the goal, which contributes to the progression of Internet

addiction, due to the possibility of targets displacement from real life into the virtual. "The self-control of behavior is a particular aspect of the study of "will power", because it is connected with controlling of the actions in a variety of difficult situations, with the containment of desires", - says E.P. Ilyin [4]. The students with addicted behavior have weakened self-control. It is difficult for them to analyze and estimate themselves; they lost a critical attitude to their actions and behavior.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that Internet addicted students do not know how to apportion their time, they are emotionally unstable, have low resistance to stress, they haven't the ability to make harmonious relationships with others in real life. In turn, the desire to dive into the Internet-space (gaming, reading, watching movies and films, etc.) leads to the waiting and stressing of the individual, which becomes a stable feature and aspiration, leading to mental ill health and isolation from other people.

Thus, Internet-addicted behavior requires the development of preventive measures aimed to:

- informing students about addictive behavior and negative impact of Internet excessive use to their life and health;
- elaboration of positive traditions in the collective;
- forming of skills for making constructive relationships;
- increase of stress resistance;
- development of the capacity for self-government and the will power of the individuals.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author confirms that the presented data do not contain any conflict of interest.

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