

Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on determining the difference among the levels of emotional maturity and self-concept of low, moderate and high users of internet. Two dimensions of emotional maturity have been studied in the research viz-a-viz Emotional Instability and Personality Disintegration.

For the purpose of the study, a sample of 100 participants were selected which consisted primarily of students between the age group of 17-24, considering the fact that an individual's personality has been shaped and the self-concept of individuals in this age group may/may-not be affected due to external variables.

After the data collection, the results showed that low internet users will have lower emotional instability, lower chances of personality disintegration and lower self-concept. Moderate users were seen to be having a positive correlation between Emotional instability and Personality Disintegration and negative correlation with respect to self-concept and High users of Internet were seen to be having Higher Emotional Instability, Lower personality Disintegration and Low self-concept.

Mean, Standard deviation and Pearson Product movement correlation was used to analyze data and bar graphs and line graphs were used to interpret data.

Keywords: *Emotional Maturity, Emotional Instability, Personality Disintegration, Self-Concept.*

In a recent advertisement that I viewed, a highly social girl had been portrayed who would get instant likes on any photo of hers that she would post. But after a few days she begins to notice that she was not receiving the attention that she previously used to get and starts feeling dejected

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Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

and left out until a few people respond positively to her profile photo. Though this advertisement is that of a telecom company trying to sell their product, it does not escape one's sight as to what is being showcased in it.

Receiving approvals from peers has become the reality for the present generation. More so, getting approval/likes of others on social media has become a necessity for many.

A lot can be said by how to present yourself to the world. According to Ellison et al. (2009), "A photo of a man posing without a shirt on and another photo of the same man standing in front of the wall where his diplomas are displayed, function on many levels." Both pictures belong to the same individual but both of them convey a very different meaning. Ellison et al., 2006 in their study have also found out that people are generally very selective and careful while assigning a profile photo of themselves. They are very particular about the different poses in which they pose. Opinions of self and others are usually based some idea that a person has.

The issue of the perfect picture is also often translated into online dating platforms. Monica T. Whitty (2007) in her study found out that "people experimented with what photos and descriptions of themselves would be more successful at attracting others to their profile."

In her study, it was also found that people felt that having the perfect picture on a online website was the ultimate need, even above any other feature or characteristic of their profile.

It is important for today's generation to be known as 'Somebody' and not as 'One in many'.

Internet Addiction

Internet Addiction refers to any online related behavior that is pretty much compulsive in nature that hampers the day to day living of an individual. Such an excessive use of the internet would normally cause stress on family, friends etc and aggression. It is a compulsive behavior and use up most of the time in a person's life. Internet addiction is also called Internet Dependency. It is called so because the user becomes dependent on the internet in order to exist. In a priority list, Internet would always feature before family or for that matter of fact even himself.

Internet addiction can be measured in three categories namely

- Low internet users
- Moderate internet users
- High internet users

The level of addiction can be found by conducting a simple assessment by Dr. Kimberley Young.

Self- Concept

When we encounter a term such as Self- Concept, the first striking word in the term is 'Self'. Self concept consists of all components of the self. It is all that makes one believe in themselves.

Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

“Self-concept is made up of one's self-schemas, and interacts with self-esteem, self-knowledge, and the social self to form the self as whole.” Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow were the first psychologists to coin the term Self-Concept. Rogers believed that everyone dreamed of the ideal-self. Individual's use self assessments in order to make a mark of their own schemas. A negative self concept often leads to identity crises because with time the self schemas are often reassessed and reevaluated.

Emotional Maturity:

Emotional maturity defined as, “A process in which the personality is continually striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-psychically and intra- personally”.

“Emotional maturity is the refined and development ability to understand and use one's emotions in personally controlled ways.”

Alexander Magoun

Adolescents in the present time generally find it difficult to detach themselves emotionally from the world online. Is the reason behind it the fact that they are emotionally immature and don't know how to disconnect themselves. Why is it that young adults find it difficult to spend a day without checking their internet status? What is it that they are afraid of?

Yes, Emotional Maturity is something that may come with age, but is it not possible that it may be cultivated and developed in a person!

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a study by **Anderson and McCabe(2012)** conducted on young and older adolescents, it was found that the internet can be used as a medium through which one could interact and also a medium which could be used in order to socialize with others. According to the study, development of an individual's identity also takes place. The authors believe that even if the internet helps develop the socializing behavior of an individual, lying and deception would always result in risky behavior.

It is always beneficial for those who have a low self esteem to express themselves freely in such sites without a fear of being judged by others. **Frost and wood (2012)** examined this very idea in their three studies. It was found that people with low self esteem found it comfortable to express themselves but, other individuals were not very welcoming of this fact due to the high negativity and low positivity of the former's posts.

Krämer, Nicole C.; Winter, Stephan (2012) conducted n exploratory study which tried to analyze the relationship between the offline personality of an individual and the online presentation of the individual's personality. The sample of the survey was 58. It was seen that the self efficacy of the individual was directly proportional to the number of virtual friends, the

Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

display picture or even the information being displayed about them. Although there was no significant change in the individual's level of self esteem, slight hints of extraversion were noticed.

Gonzales and Hancock (2011) in the article "Mirror, Mirror on my Facebook Wall: Effects of Exposure to Facebook on Self-Esteem", revealed that as opposed to previously conducted studies on objective self awareness, viewing one's profile would actually increase an individual's self esteem and not spiral is downward. It was also shown that people who constantly check their profiles and often change it or edit it also have a high self esteem and not the other way around.

Face to Face communications have been surpassed by internet ways of communication and it is definitely more popular than the former presently. **Kujath (2011)** in his study suggested that online forms of communication were not overshadowing the traditional forms of communication but just were an extension of it. With 183 subjects the aim was to find out the use of these social networking sites. It was found that these were indeed acting as an extended form of the traditional form, though it was found that some students use more time in the modern way.

A study by **Luo (2010)** examining the social networking sites as a whole was conducted. The main aim of this study was to get an estimate of its level of popularity. The result showed that these socializing websites were where students would spend time. It was seen that these social websites were the second most popular destination for their peer socializing circle. They also considered it a useful way to spend their time.

A similar study conducted by **Baker and White (2010)** which aimed at studying the influences on the adolescents use of the technology. It basically studied an extension of the planned behavior model and the study incorporated additional group norms and self esteem influences. This was basically done to monitor the use of the social networking sites. This study was done in a time of one week and was a comparative one. The study helped in finding certain factors that influenced the use of the sites.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

- To establish the relationship between the role of self-concept and emotional maturity in excessive internet use.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between self concept of an individual and level of internet use.
2. To examine emotional instability and personality disintegration as parts of emotional maturity and its relationship to Excessive Internet Usage.

Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

3. To examine emotional instability and personality disintegration as parts of emotional maturity and its relationship to Moderate Internet Usage.
4. To examine emotional instability and personality disintegration as parts of emotional maturity and its relationship to Low Internet Usage.

Hypothesis

1. Excessive Internet users would have a lower and negative self-concept.
2. Excessive usage of the Internet would lead to higher emotional instability.
3. Excessive Internet Usage would lead to higher personality disintegration.
4. Low Internet users would have Lower emotional instability and lower personality disintegration.
5. Low Internet users would not have a negative self-concept.

Locale Of The Study

The data was collected in the form of online versions of the selected tools. Respondents belonged to various colleges such as Amity University Noida, Delhi University, IMT-Nagpur, Lancer's Convent School, Maharaja Agrasen Model School, Ryan international School.

Participants

The total numbers of participants used for this study were 100 participants of young adults between the ages of 17-24 divided into groups of three as

- High Internet Users
- Moderate Internet Users
- Low Internet Users

Research Design

A comparative study on the lines of ex post facto research design is used as the study is concerned with finding out whether variables are associated with each other, if there is any difference between them or not.

Ex-Post facto design is a non-experimental research technique in which pre existing groups are compared on some dependent variable.

Internet usage	Self-Concept	Emotional Instability	Personality Disintegration
High/Moderate/Low (COMBINED TOTAL)	100	100	100

Exclusion and Inclusion criteria-

Inclusion Criteria- This study would comprise of a sample of school and college students from 17-24 years.

Exclusion Criteria- People conducting their business via phone and internet are excluded in this study.

Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

Instrumentation

The present study is divided into three quantitative studies namely:

Name Of The Tool	Year Of Publishing	Name Of The Author	Tool Description
Self-Concept Questionnaire	1992	Dr. Raj Kumar Saraswat	48 items 5 likert scale
Emotional Maturity Scale	1990	Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava	48 items 5 likert scale
Internet Addiction Test	1994	Dr. Kimberly Young	20 items 5 likert scale

Procedure

The tools after selection were distributed in person to school and college students between the ages of 17-24. The instructions for filling the questionnaire were clearly given and no time limit was given. The participants were informed that there was no correct or wrong answer and that they have to mark according to what suits them best. The data once collected was scored according to the prescription of the manual and data was interpreted using statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Pearson Product Movement Correlation (CORREL).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Shows The Low Level Of Internet Usage Among Individuals And The Mean And SD Of Emotional Instability, Personality Disintegration And Self-Concept

Internet usage	Low Internet Usage	Emotional Instability	Personality Disintegration	Self-Concept
Mean	33.93	25.08	22.04	165.72
Standard Deviation	8.61	7.01	6.99	15.85

Table 2: Shows The Moderate Level Of Internet Usage Among Individuals And The Mean And SD Of Emotional Instability, Personality Disintegration And Self-Concept

Internet usage	Moderate Internet Usage	Emotional Instability	Personality Disintegration	Self-Concept
Mean	60.54	29.18	29.44	158.81
Standard Deviation	10.08	7.85	8.76	21.58

Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

Table 3: Shows The High Level Of Internet Usage Among Individuals And The Mean And SD Of Emotional Instability, Personality Disintegration And Self-Concept

Internet usage	High Internet Usage	Emotional Instability	Personality Disintegration	Self-Concept
Mean	85.5	33.75	32.80	139.25
Standard Deviation	3.69	6.07	7.04	23.64

Table 4: Shows The Correlation Values Of Low Internet Usage Scores With Respect To Emotional Instability, Personality Disintegration And Self-Concept

Internet usage	Emotional Instability	Personality Disintegration	Self-Concept
LOW	0.14	0.31	0.20

Table 5: Shows The Correlation Values Of Moderate Internet Usage Scores With Respect To Emotional Instability, Personality Disintegration And Self-Concept

Internet usage	Emotional Instability	Personality Disintegration	Self-Concept
MODERATE	0.27	0.29	-0.43

Table 6: Shows The Correlation Values Of High Internet Usage Scores With Respect To Emotional Instability, Personality Disintegration And Self-Concept

Internet usage	Emotional Instability	Personality Disintegration	Self-Concept
HIGH	0.40	-0.90	-0.90

The assumed hypothesis of the study was that Excessive users of internet would have a lower self concept and that people who use internet excessively would have higher emotional instability and higher levels of personality disintegration. It was also hypothesized that low internet users would have lower emotional instability and lower chances of personality disintegration but on the other hand would have a high self-concept.

Low Internet Users are those people who do not engage in being on the internet for a regular period and are not addicted to the internet in anyway. They believe in interacting with the real world rather than being a part of the virtual realm. They do not stay on-line longer than they intend to, there are little chances that the household chores would be neglected they do not engage in relationships that are formed online; neither does their work suffer with the amount of time they spend on the internet. These individuals prefer to spend their time with people rather than spending time over the internet. Moderate Internet users are those who may or may-not

Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

prefer to spend time online. It may depend on their mood and from individual to individual regarding their preferred source of entertainment. These people even though they may happen to spend a considerable amount of time over the internet may not be feeling low and depressed. It solely is based on individual differences and choices that they make. High Internet Users on the other hand often stay longer on the internet than they intend to. Detaching themselves from the virtual world may seem like a task. They would rather form close relationships over the net than go out and spend time with actual people. Their work life is often disturbed due to their love for being online. These people often end up feeling low and do not feel like owing anything else besides living in their own world.

According to Table 4, 5 and 6; the correlation scores of each of the three variables can be seen for low, moderate and high internet users.

It was seen that there was positive correlation between internet usage and emotional instability. The correlation score for low internet usage was seen to be 0.14. It meant that lower the level of internet use, lower would be the level of emotional instability. The correlation score between moderate internet usage and emotional instability was seen to be 0.27. This meant that people who fell in this category maybe prone to going through emotional instability. With moderate internet usage, Emotional instability would be moderate and it would depend on individual choices and individual differences. The correlation value between high internet users and emotional instability was seen to be 0.40 which signifies that it these two variables are positively correlated with each other. Higher the level of internet usage, higher would be the emotional instability.

Kalia K. and Anita (2013) conducted a research on influence of internet use on emotional maturity and social competence. The study was conducted on 496 internet users. It was found out that there is a significant influence of emotional maturity and general well being.

There was positive a correlation score between Low Internet Usage and Personality disintegration. The score was 0.31 which means that lower the internet usage, Lower would be the levels of personality disintegration.

A positive correlation was also seen among moderate users of internet and their level of personality disintegration. The r score came out to be 0.29 which meant that these users were prone to disintegration of personality.

For the high users of internet, it was hypothesized that personality disintegration would be more in their case and a positive correlation would have proved it, but in my study, the personality disintegration correlation score is -0.90. This means that even for high internet users the personality disintegration would not happen. This can be due to two things, either the data collected for high users was insufficient from a sample size of 100 or the individuals are beyond

Role of Self-Concept and Emotional Maturity in Excessive Internet Usage

the level of disintegration and are so much into spending time online that nothing seems to affect them at all.

The correlation scores between a person who is a low user of internet and their self-concept came out to be a positive 0.20 score. According to the hypothesis, Low internet users should have a higher self-concept and the results should have yielded a negative correlation. But since the correlation is a positive one and it suggests that low internet users would have a lower self concept, it is possible for such a result to occur due to the age group of students that the sample consisted off. 18-24 is the age when individuals might be trying to establish an identity for themselves. Though the reason for this low score is unknown, it might be attributed to the different styles of upbringing that an individual goes through. The correlation scores between moderate internet users and self-concept and high internet users and self-concept are -0.43 and -0.90 respectively. This meant that individuals who spent more time online have a negative self concept.

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