

Hooked On The Internet: A Comprehensive Analysis of Internet Addiction

Julius Chan
Singapore
juliuschanjq@gmail.com

Abstract - Internet addiction has developed as a major contemporary issue, drawing the attention of researchers, healthcare, and the general public. This paper looks into the various types of internet usage, intending to bring awareness to its prevalence. This research examines the different aspects that contribute to internet addiction, including individual characteristics, and societal influences, using a comprehensive assessment of the literature and unique research findings. Furthermore, the paper investigates how internet addiction affects mental health, interpersonal connections, and academic/work performance. Ultimately, this research adds to continuing efforts to address the problems caused by excessive internet usage and encourage healthy digital behaviors in today's society.

Keywords - Internet addiction, prevalence, causes, consequences, mental health, technology, prevention, digital habits.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Prevalence

The widespread use of digital technology and the internet has completely changed how people interact, work, and communicate. Despite its advantages, excessive internet use has given rise to a new issue: internet addiction.

As of 2023, the estimated number of internet users worldwide was 5.4 billion, up from 5.3 billion in the previous year. This share represents 67 percent of the global population. (Petrosyan, 2023). [1]

Internet addiction is characterized by obsessive, excessive internet use, and has grown to be a serious problem impacting millions of people globally.

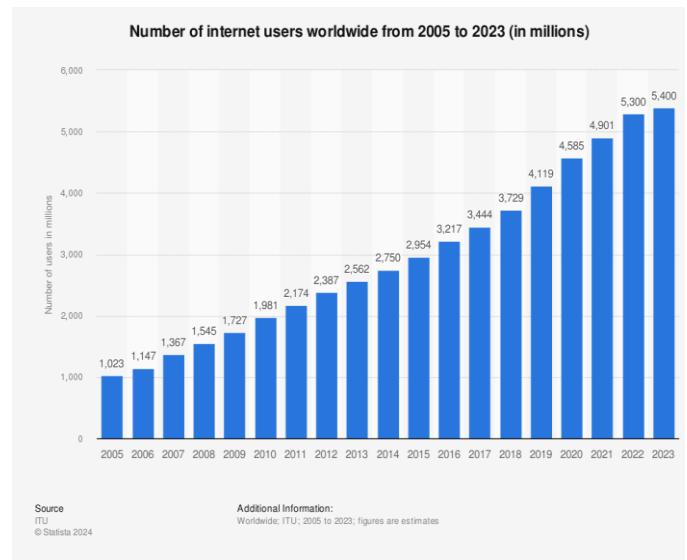


Fig. 1: Number of internet users worldwide from 2005 to 2023 (Statista, 2023)

B. Internet Addiction

1) **Background:** For the past two decades, the general public has been more concerned about internet addiction as the number of users has increased. In light of these issues, researchers have attempted to better understand and define the concept of internet addiction (IA).

2) **Definition:** The term "Internet Addiction" will be primarily used in this paper. Internet addiction is defined as a psychological dependence on the internet, regardless of the type of activity once logged on. (Jordanova and Loleska, 2021). [2]

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

While Assignment 1 (J. Chan, 2024) [3] gave an overview of internet addiction's prevalence and psychosocial effects, more recent research has uncovered new trends and perspectives on internet addiction. One such trend is an increasing awareness of various online activities as the top contributors to internet addiction.

A. Global Trends

1) **Social Media:** According to recent statistics, in 2023, people spent an average of 151 minutes daily on social media, demonstrating the global prevalence of social media. (Dixon, 2023). [4] The increase in the time spent on social media plays a significant role in the prevalence of internet addiction among adolescents. (Gökçay, 2024). [5]

2) **Internet Gaming:** Similarly, research by (Balhara et al, 2021)[6] claims that internet gaming has become increasingly widespread among teenagers and emerging adults, resulting in a public health concern for a minority of individuals known as internet gaming disorder (IGD).

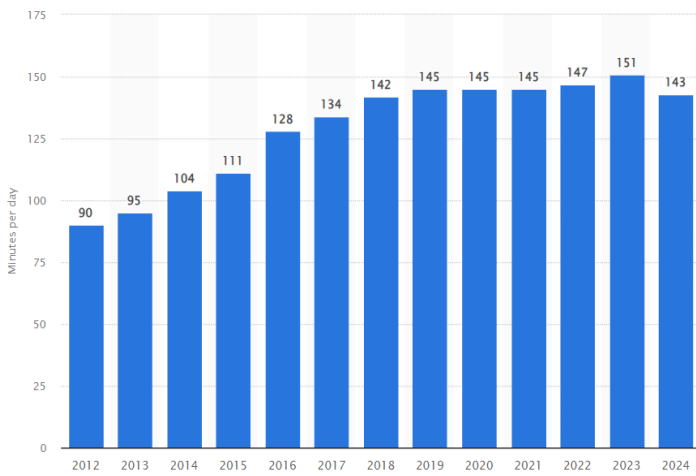


Fig. 2: Average daily time (mins) spent on social media worldwide 2012-2024 (Statista, 2024)

B. Emerging Challenges

1) **Virtual Learning:** Digital virtual learning environments (VLEs), have long been a feature of higher education's educational methods. (Borba, 2018) [7]. Although high levels of digital use can have certain benefits for study, such as familiarity with information retrieval methods but high internet usage also harms learning.

2) **Remote Work:** The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the transition to remote work, which is now common in many firms. While this allows for more personal time, it also encourages digital distraction, which breaks work focus due to the incorrect use of electronic devices (Agrawal, 2017). [8]. Furthermore, attentional impulsivity and digital distraction, all lead to internet addiction (Chen, 2020). [9].

C. Negative Effects

1) **Impact on Adolescents:** Adolescents frequently experience IA due to exposure to the internet at a young age, which is linked to several negative effects. Numerous studies have shown that IA causes children to disrupt their relationships with their peers, and causes sleeplessness, all of which can result in negative emotions (Erdem and Sezer Efe, 2022). [10]

2) **Academic Performance:** There was a negative association between IA and desire to study: IA had a negative influence on learning techniques, making it more difficult for students to arrange their learning successfully; IA was also positively connected with test anxiety. Higher levels of internet addiction lead to poorer intrinsic motivation to study among university students. (Truzoli, 2020). [11]

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional approach to investigate internet usage habits and their impact on various aspects of life. Data was collected through a self-administered online survey.

B. Participants

The target demographic was everyone with internet access and of all ages. Open recruitment was conducted through messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram, yielding a sample of 33 individuals. Participants ranged from all ages, with the 25-34 range representing 45.5%.

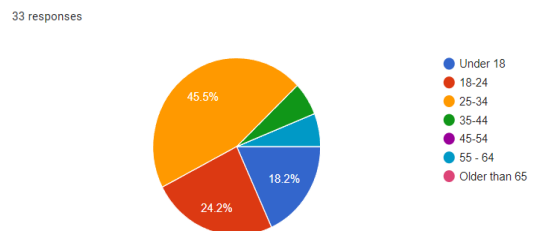


Fig. 3: Response for Age Groups.

C. Data Collection

An independently administered online survey that consisted of 15 questions as seen under Appendices was developed using Google Forms due to its accessibility and ease of use. The survey was distributed via messenger platform groups such as WhatsApp and Telegram. The survey covered key areas:

- 1) **Demographics:** age, gender, educational level, employment, daily internet usage.
- 2) **Internet Usage Patterns:** Age of internet use, favorite online activities, negative effects on work/study.
- 3) **Internet Addiction Tendencies:** strong desire to use the internet, trouble limiting internet use, prioritizing online time.
- 4) **Negative Experience:** lying about usage, and utilizing the internet as an escape.

D. Limitations

The survey was carried out with a limited sample size in a specific geographical location, which may limit the generalizability of the results. The research depends on self-reported data, which is prone to response bias which may not necessarily represent their actual internet usage.

IV. RESULTS

The survey results indicated a diverse range of participants across age categories, with the majority (63.6%) reporting daily internet use of 3-6 hours. Social media was the most popular activity (81.8 %) where the high prevalence of social media use aligns with the statistics by Dixon (2023).

Surprisingly, while some individuals (36.4%) experienced negative effects on work and academic performance, the majority (60.6%) did not.

How often do you use the internet on a daily basis?

33 responses

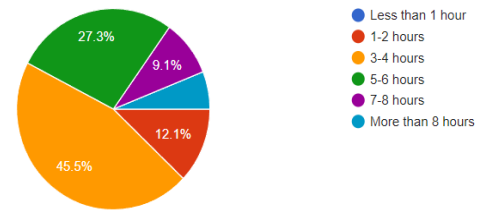


Fig. 4: Response for Internet Usage.

What types of online activities do you engage in the most? (Select all that apply)

Copy

33 responses

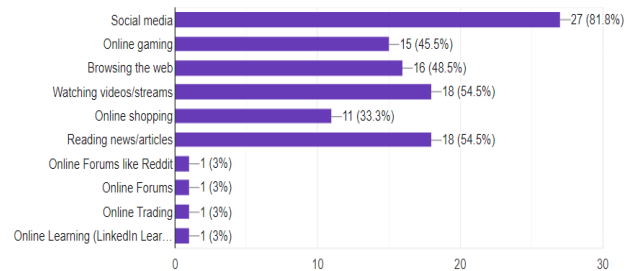


Fig. 5: Response for Online Activities

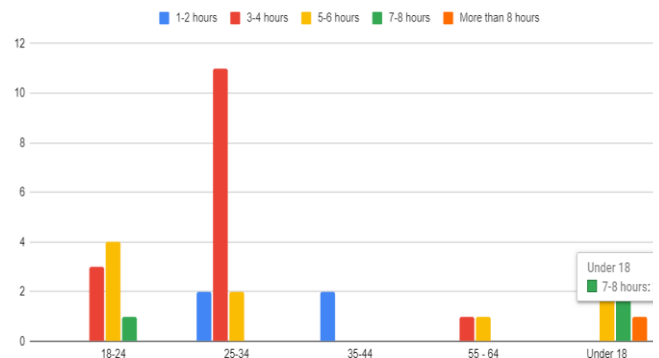


Fig. 6: Internet Usage based on Age Group

V. DISCUSSION

1) **Adolescents Group:** Participants under the age of 18 began using the internet under 10 years of age and also have the highest internet usage, with an emphasis on social media and internet gaming for this group. The early exposure to the internet raises concerns regarding possible addiction hazards, particularly for younger users, as highlighted by Erdem and Sezer Efe (2022).

2) **Demographics:** Daily usage varied, with unemployed individuals & students using the internet more frequently than employed individuals.

3) **Positive Usage Patterns:** Individuals with higher education and full-time work were more likely to report utilizing the Internet for article reading, indicating a possible relationship between education level and information-seeking behavior. This aligns with the possibility of successful Internet integration of Virtual Learning as highlighted by Borba (2018).

VI. CONCLUSION

The paper has examined the widespread problem of internet addiction (IA), exposing its huge impact on people. A comprehensive analysis of the literature and a unique study survey revealed that online activities, such as social media and internet gaming contribute considerably to internet addiction. It also indicated some positive usage trends, notably among those with a higher degree and full-time employment.

Moving forward, it is critical to dive further into the influences driving internet use, beyond demographic statistics. Understanding these can help to encourage healthy online habits and avoid addiction.

Researchers must continue to study larger and more diverse populations to get a full grasp of internet addiction in the general population. This will result in more effective solutions for addressing this contemporary issue and developing a balanced and healthy interaction with the internet in today's culture.

VII. REFERENCES

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VIII. APPENDICES

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Survey on Internet Usage

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This survey attempts to collect information about people's internet usage habits, behaviors, and experiences as part of internet addiction research. Your participation in this survey will help to better understand the elements that contribute to internet addiction and its effects on different demographic groups. The poll asks about your demographics, internet usage patterns, and opinions about internet addiction. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Thank you for participating!

What is your age? *

☐ Under 18
☐ 18-24
☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44
☐ 45-54
☐ 55 - 64
☐ Older than 65

What is your Gender? *

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Prefer not to say

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At what age did you first start using the internet regularly? *

☐ Under 10
☐ 10-14
☐ 15-18
☐ 19 or older
☐ Prefer not to say

What types of online activities do you engage in the most? (Select all that apply) *

☐ Social media
☐ Online gaming
☐ Browsing the web
☐ Watching videos/streams
☐ Online shopping
☐ Reading news/articles
☐ Other...

Do you feel compelled to use the internet even when you don't want to? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Sometimes

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What is your level of education? *

☐ Masters Degree
☐ Bachelor's Degree
☐ Diploma/A-Levels
☐ Secondary School or Lower

What is your employment status? *

☐ Full Time Employment
☐ Part Time Employment
☐ Unemployed
☐ Student
☐ Retired

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☐ No
☐ Maybe

Do you prioritize spending time online over other activities? (e.g., socializing, exercising) *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Sometimes

Do you feel that your internet use has had a negative impact on your academic/work performance? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not Applicable

Do you use the internet as a way to escape from problems or negative emotions? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Sometimes

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Have you experienced any negative consequences as a result of your internet use' (e.g. Neglecting responsibilities, Relationship Problems)

☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Maybe

Do you find it difficult to control the amount of time you spend online? *

☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Maybe

Have you ever tried to cut back on your internet use but found it difficult? *

☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Not applicable

Have you ever lied to friends or family members about the amount of time you spend on the internet? *

☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☐ Maybe