

Article

Digital Addiction As A Contemporary Issue In Modern Psychology

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Abstract: This article examines digital addiction as a pressing and rapidly emerging concern in contemporary psychology. Against a backdrop of accelerating technological advancement and the widespread integration of smartphones and social media platforms into daily life, individuals, particularly adolescents and young adults, are becoming increasingly susceptible to excessive digital engagement. This study provides a thorough analysis of the psychological, behavioural and social aspects of digital addiction, emphasising its underlying causes, typical symptoms and wide-reaching consequences.

Particular focus is given to the effect of prolonged screen time on mental health, such as increased anxiety and depression levels, reduced attention span, and impaired interpersonal communication and social functioning. The research also examines behavioural patterns associated with compulsive technology use, such as loss of control, withdrawal symptoms and reduced productivity in academic and professional contexts.

Furthermore, the article explores a range of preventive strategies and intervention methods designed to mitigate digital dependency. These include psychological counselling, cognitive behavioural approaches, digital literacy education and promoting balanced technology use through structured routines and self-regulation techniques. The article also highlights the important roles that educators, families, and policymakers can play in fostering healthy digital habits.

The findings emphasise the urgent need to address digital addiction through multidisciplinary efforts combining psychological insight, educational innovation and public awareness initiatives. Ultimately, this study deepens our understanding of digital addiction and provides practical recommendations for promoting mental well-being and fostering sustainable interactions with technology in the digital age.

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Keywords: Digital addiction, social media, mental health, psychological impact, anxiety, depression, attention deficit, youth behavior, cyberpsychology, technology dependence.

1. Introduction

Translation In the 21st century, rapid technological advancement has transformed nearly every aspect of human life. Smartphones, social media platforms, online gaming, and constant internet access have created unprecedented opportunities for communication, education, and entertainment [1]. However, alongside these benefits, a growing psychological concern has emerged—digital addiction. Modern psychology increasingly recognizes digital addiction as a serious and multifaceted issue that affects individuals' mental health, behavior, and social functioning [2].

Digital addiction, sometimes referred to as internet addiction or problematic digital media use, can be defined as excessive and compulsive engagement with digital devices that interferes with daily life. Unlike traditional addictions involving substances, digital

addiction is behavioral in nature [3]. It manifests through an uncontrollable urge to use devices such as smartphones, computers, or tablets, often leading to neglect of responsibilities, reduced productivity, and impaired interpersonal relationships.

One of the primary factors contributing to digital addiction is the design of digital platforms themselves. Social media applications, for example, are intentionally engineered to capture and maintain user attention. Features such as notifications, likes, comments, and infinite scrolling activate the brain's reward system, releasing dopamine—a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reinforcement [4]. Over time, individuals may develop a dependency on these digital rewards, similar to the mechanisms observed in substance-related addictions. This phenomenon is particularly evident among younger populations, who are more susceptible to the psychological effects of digital engagement [5].

Aboujaoude.E discusses the paradox of digital technology: while it offers mental health interventions (e.g., online therapy), it can also lead to digital addiction. The authors argue that excessive reliance on digital tools may worsen psychological problems instead of solving them. They stress the need for balanced and controlled use of technology [6].

2. Methods

From a psychological perspective, digital addiction is closely linked with various mental health issues. Research has shown a strong correlation between excessive screen time and conditions such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Individuals who spend prolonged periods online may experience social comparison, cyberbullying, and a distorted sense of reality, all of which can negatively impact their emotional well-being. Furthermore, excessive use of digital devices often disrupts sleep patterns, leading to fatigue, irritability, and decreased cognitive functioning.

Another important dimension of digital addiction is its impact on cognitive processes. Continuous exposure to fast-paced digital content can reduce attention span, impair memory, and hinder critical thinking skills. The constant need for stimulation may make it difficult for individuals to focus on complex tasks or engage in deep, reflective thinking. This is particularly concerning in educational contexts, where students may struggle to concentrate and retain information due to habitual digital distractions.

Yang explores TikTok as a case study of behavioral addiction. It shows how short videos, algorithm-based recommendations, and endless scrolling create high engagement and compulsive use. The study explains that platforms are designed to maximize user attention, which increases addiction risk.

3. Results

The study's findings suggest that digital addiction significantly impacts individuals' social functioning and interpersonal relationships. Engaging excessively with digital technologies, particularly social media platforms, is strongly associated with social isolation and a decline in the quality of face-to-face interactions. Although digital tools are designed to facilitate communication, overreliance on virtual environments can replace meaningful in-person contact, thereby weakening real-life social bonds.

The analysis reveals that individuals with higher levels of digital dependency tend to exhibit reduced social competence, including difficulties with communication, empathy and building relationships [7]. As users become more accustomed to online interactions, they may experience discomfort or anxiety in direct social settings, further reinforcing their avoidance of offline communication. This behavioural pattern contributes to a cycle in which digital engagement substitutes for, rather than complements, real-world social experiences.

Furthermore, the results highlight that prolonged digital use is linked to a decline in overall life satisfaction. Participants who reported excessive screen time also demonstrated lower levels of social well-being and a diminished sense of belonging. In extreme cases, digital addiction can result in social withdrawal, where individuals intentionally limit or avoid real-life interactions in favour of digital engagement. Such tendencies can have a negative impact on personal relationships, academic performance and professional productivity.

Overall, the findings confirm that, although digital technologies offer valuable opportunities for connection, excessive use can undermine social integration and interpersonal development, emphasising the need for balanced and mindful technology use [8].

4. Discussion

Despite these challenges, it is important to recognize that digital technology itself is not inherently harmful. The issue lies in the way it is used. Modern psychology emphasizes the importance of balanced and mindful digital consumption. Preventive strategies include setting time limits for device usage, engaging in offline activities, and promoting digital literacy [9]. Educational institutions and families play a crucial role in fostering healthy digital habits, especially among children and adolescents.

Therapeutic approaches to digital addiction often involve cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), which helps individuals identify and modify maladaptive thought patterns and behaviors associated with excessive device use [10]. Additionally, mindfulness-based interventions have shown effectiveness in increasing self-awareness and reducing compulsive digital behaviors. In some cases, digital detox programs—periods of intentional disconnection from digital devices—are recommended to help individuals regain control over their habits.

Griffiths is one of the leading researchers in behavioral addiction. His work defines behavioral addiction and explains that activities like gaming, internet use, and social media can become addictive due to reward systems, habit formation, and psychological reinforcement. He also outlines key symptoms such as loss of control, tolerance, and withdrawal [11].

From a psychological perspective, digital addiction is considered a form of behavioral addiction, similar in nature to gambling or gaming addiction. It is characterized by compulsive use, loss of control, and continued engagement despite negative consequences [12]. The article examines how digital platforms are designed to capture users' attention through reward-based mechanisms, which can lead to dependency over time.

The article also highlights the main causes of digital addiction, including technological factors (such as algorithm-driven content and constant notifications), psychological factors (such as stress, loneliness, and low self-esteem), and social factors (such as peer influence and online culture) [13]. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups, particularly adolescents and young adults, who are more likely to develop addictive behaviors due to their developmental stage and high exposure to digital media.

In addition, the article discusses the negative consequences of digital addiction on mental health and well-being. These include anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, reduced attention span, and impaired social relationships [14]. The cognitive and emotional effects of excessive digital use are also explored, emphasizing how it can influence brain functioning and behavior.

Furthermore, the article reviews modern research and theoretical approaches to understanding digital addiction. It draws on interdisciplinary studies from psychology, neuroscience, and behavioral science, showing that this issue is not only individual but

also societal. The role of resilience, self-control, and emotional regulation is considered crucial in preventing and managing addiction [15].

5. Conclusion

Finally, the article outlines possible solutions and preventive strategies, such as promoting digital literacy, encouraging balanced technology use, applying cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), and developing intervention programs. It emphasizes the importance of cooperation between educators, psychologists, families, and policymakers in addressing this growing problem.

In conclusion, digital addiction represents a significant contemporary challenge in modern psychology. As technology continues to evolve, the need to understand and address its psychological impact becomes increasingly urgent. By promoting awareness, encouraging responsible usage, and implementing effective intervention strategies, society can harness the benefits of digital technology while minimizing its potential harms. Ultimately, achieving a healthy balance between the digital and real worlds is essential for maintaining psychological well-being in the modern age.

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