The Current Situation and Prevention Strategy for the Internet Addiction Disorder of College Students

Zhi-Hai YE
Art School of Jinan University, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China. Post code: 510632
Tel.:020-85220397 13826178985
E-mail: yezhihai@jnu.edu.cn

Keywords: Internet, Addiction, college students, Prevention

Abstract. The Internet addiction disorder among college students has become a vital social issue that impacts the overall development of college students. Thus, this paper introduces the specific current situation of the Internet addiction disorder on campus, and suggests that we should strengthen the Education for Humane Mental Quality; that we should flourish campus culture; that we should reinforce the management of network on campus, and implement the “Green Surfing” program; that we should fortify psychological instruction, and offer prompt psychotherapy to the addicted students; that we should adopt the prevention strategy such as rectifying the surrounding environment of campus and establishing interaction with parents and so on.

With the large-scale application of the Internet in both higher education and university life, the Internet has become almost a normal and habit in daily life. In addition to its convenience, it also gives rise to many negative impact, bringing its impact on collegiate psyche to the public concern. Since Young [2] put forward PIU (Pathological Internet Use) in 1996, scholars from home and abroad conducted numerous research on this issue. Some scholars tend to describe the phenomenon of psychological addiction of the Internet as IAD (Internet Addiction Disorder), which, however, has not been universally recognized but its consequent symptom has been intensively studied. Undoubtedly, the Internet addiction disorder inflicts huge impacts on college students who are the pillar of society in future and are still growing. Thus, the current situation and prevention strategy ranks the first in all subjects of higher education research.

Main Behavior of the Internet Addiction Disorder

The main behavior of the Internet addiction disorder is the noticeable fortification of the duration and addiction. Duration refers to the fact that the addicted would incessantly increase the surfing time to be content, resulting in longer time in surfing and more frequency; and addiction mainly refers to certain abstinence symptom including irritability, anxiety, delusion, compulsory thinking about surfing, consciously or unconsciously movement of fingers like clicking or typing, and tendency or even behavior of suicide. Meanwhile, there will be other morbid behaviors as result of the Internet addiction disorder including inability to curb the impulse of surfing and indulgence in surfing or thinking about it, impulsive action of checking e-mails or social network, hankering for surfing next time soon after logging out, as well as changing sleeping habit to have more time to surf on the Internet and staying up late, heedless in personal hygiene. Some also show the symptom of being evasive in social activities or preferring chatting online rather than communicate face-to-face; taking the Internet as a way to escape problems and other negative emotions such as helplessness, regret, anxiety or depression; ignoring the responsibility for family, friends or work. Others manifest the addiction of cyber sex: frequently visiting porn website and downloading porn photos and videos, finding sex partners and having cyber flirting or even virtual sex to meet their sexual desire. Still some display the symptom of denying: denying the huge amount of time they spent on surfing and lying or concealing the addiction. There are even physical symptoms: dried eyes, fatigue, double image, blurred eyesight, ache on the back, insomnia, hyperactivity, failure to concentrate, decreased appetite, pain on the wrist, and loss of weight.
All the symptom mentioned above will inflict serious impact on students’ study and life on campus as well as the surrounding students.

The Occurrence of the Internet Addiction Disorder

According to some studies of foreign scholars, the occurrence rate of the Internet addiction disorder among college students is 8%~13%\(^4\text{-}^6\)\(^{[4-6]}\). In China, the rate is 13.7% among 910 Taiwan students; a research conducted by the psychology college of Peking University about 500 college students from 12 universities shows the rate of 6.4%\(^7\); my research on 1586 college students in Guangzhou shows the rate of 6.34%\(^8\); Lin Xunhui’s\(^9\) research about 293 college students result in 9.6%; and Dai Fangzhen\(^10\) got a conclusion from 1982 college students that heavily-addicted students make up 0.76% and lightly-addicted 5.29%.

Despite of the slight difference in the results, the Internet addiction disorder among college students do exist to a large extent, posing huge threat to school’s teaching and students’ development.

Especially, in recent years, with the rapid development of network technology, the Internet has penetrated into every aspect of college students’ study and life. As a result, Internet Addiction Disorder has become an inevitable problem in the stage of higher education. It not only is harmful to college students’ physical health, but lead college students to form a kind of unhealthy way of life resulting the psychological destructive impact. Lately, caused by Internet Addiction Disorder, the problem is really alarming with successive occurring of malignant incidents and crimes. Internet Addiction Disorder among college students has been recognized as a wide spectrum of social problems. The work, the prevention and treatment of Internet Addiction Disorder, permits no delay.

The Prevention Strategy of the Internet Addiction Disorder

The Internet addiction has already become a serious problem for higher educators. The reasons for such phenomenon is miscellaneous, but we should study case-by-case, generally speaking, the public tend to attribute the cause to factors like family, society, school and individual and so on, but in actual fact, this phenomenon is the production of several factors simultaneously. Therefore, to solve the problem, we should put effort in many aspects, thus to prevent new problems. In my opinion, several tasks should be carried out with great effort:

A. Strengthen the Education for Humane Mental Quality, and Flourish the Campus Culture.

Shaping the mind is the key to solving the problem. Thus, it is of critical importance to take in the prevention of the Internet addiction disorder to the education for humane mental quality. Only if we put emphasis on it, can we ensure the effect. The instructor on campus should take active part in getting information of students’ lives and network using especially for freshmen. Preparing them for the university life and helping them to adjust themselves to the transition from high-pressure environment in the high school to this relatively relaxing environment on campus, from family life to aggregation life, and from monotonous place to multi-cultural atmosphere. These are the key to preventing students from being addicted to the virtual world. In the meantime, it is also advisable to teach students a healthy way to use the Internet at the beginning in case that they fall into addiction in future.

Given the fact that many students become addicted due to the mental void and grasping virtual world, it is significant to develop prosperous, healthy and positive campus culture. The higher educators should set the development of campus culture as the top priority. A campus culture with school’s characteristics and humane spirit can attract students with the colorful second class and encourage students to play an active role in building the campus culture, and strengthen the sense of belonging, increase the opportunity for social activities, thus forming a virtuous circle which cut the addiction rate.

B. Enhance the Administration of Campus Network and Implement the Engineering of Green Network Access
The lack of effective monitoring that is the main reason why a large number of people addicted to the unreal net world. Because of lack of self-control, youth students can not always dominate online time and browsing content. Although many schools are launching efforts for limiting the time and browsing content online, network supervision is hardly take effects, because students live off campus and apply for outer net. Therefore, the college should enhance the management of college dorms at the same time implement campus network control and supervision project. The college can require students sign commitment contracts to promise civilized Internet in school, strengthen their self-discipline and make good use of students’ cooperation and the leading role of college student leaders. At the same time, the college can carry out "Peer Education" activities and create the good atmosphere of “Green Network Access” to prevent addiction to cybersex, online game and cyber-violence etc.

C. Strengthen Students’ Psychological Consultation and Give Some Form of Psychotherapy to Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) College Students

The college should put the co-relational prevention and intervention measures of internet addiction disorder into the system of psychologically healthy education, and let the students to study the related knowledge of the prevention and treatment of addiction. At the same time, the college encourage students to actively proceed mental state guides which provided by the professional psychological counselor. School shall organize the general survey of psychological health at least every semester. If find some students who might develop an addiction to Internet, psychological counselor shall connect with them and give an one-to-one psychological counseling. If find IAD students, counselor shall give some form of psychotherapy to them and help them actively cooperate with the treatment.

D. Rectify the Surrounding Environment of Campus and Establish Interactive Contact with Parents

Schools should cooperate with the local government and focus around the school remediation to shut down the unlicensed “cyber cafes”. In order to prevent that students are unsupervised in holiday so that the phenomena of IAD rebounds, schools should maintain close communication with parents to let them know the knowledge and methods of the prevention and treatment of IAD in different forms. Parents should give their support and their understanding and cooperate with school to ensure that during vacation, students also can surf the Internet healthily at home.

In conclusion, Internet Addiction Disorder already becomes a comparatively serious problem of the mental health affecting college student. Concerning this issue, university educators must pay highly attention to it and complete the system for the prevention and treatment of college students’ Internet Addiction Disorder.

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