

PREVENTION OF INTERNET ADDICTION IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Katarina Halkovicova

Faculty of Education, Catholic University in Ruzomberok, Slovakia

Abstract

The submitted thesis deals with prevention of Internet addiction among pupils at secondary school. The aim of this work is to draw attention to this socio-pathological phenomenon and to contribute to its prevention. It discusses the issue of excessive use of the Internet and social networks, Internet dependence and Internet traps. The thesis has theoretical and practical character. The first part deals with theoretical knowledge, definitions, risk factors and consequences of this phenomenon, as well as with the possibilities of prevention. The thesis also contains a survey of pupils focusing on their relationship to the Internet and social networks. From our findings, we have subsequently established recommendations for practice.

Key words: prevention, addiction, internet, social network, pupil, secondary school

Introduction

The notion of addiction is mostly associated with alcohol, smoking, or the use of other legal or illegal drugs. So addictive behavior can also be found in various other forms. Media, information and communication technologies bring the danger of new addiction, addiction to virtual drugs.

We can not deny that the positive use of these technologies significantly outweighs the negatives. They enable us to have quick and effective access to information, are a means of communication, do not engage in work or school tasks without them, are a source of entertainment. Communication technologies interfere with our everyday life. Pupils meet with them during classes in the form of a wide range of teaching programs, spending their free time at home while performing their study duties. Just the disproportionate amount of time spent on a computer, mobile phone, and other media can be triggering addiction to them. Its role in this area is played by the school and the whole society, the smaller the role of a natural family. Parents

help their little child to explore the value of free time and try to encourage him / her to engage in good quality activities.

The aim of the thesis is to point out the prevalence of overuse of the Internet among pupils, the possible addiction to communication technologies, the summary of the previous knowledge and the offer of solutions for possible prevention.

Internet addiction

Dependence can be expressed as a progressive, chronic disorder that arises in the background of a person's natural desire after a change in survival. In the past, people have been searching for ways to escape from loneliness, grief, pain, and seek ways to intensify the feeling of joy, pleasure and good mood (Kalina at al., 2003).

We use computers and the internet everyday. Internet, mobile, and SMS can be potential sources of positive feelings, and the relationship with them to people who do not know the risk can acquire the nature of a mental disorder closely related to addiction to addictive substances (Emmerová, 2011).

For the group of non-substance addictions there is not yet established a uniform and comprehensive terminology, there are many different names. In addition to the concept of non-substance addiction, names such as: substance-free addiction, process dependence, or pseudo-dependence are used. In general, it is also possible to talk about the addictive behavior.

In English written literature we can find, for example: internet addiction (Block, 2008), pathological internet use (Davis, 2001), problematic internet use (DeLeo, Wulfert, 2013). All of these names represent psychic addictions that, on the basis of the pleasant experience of an individual, change their survival to the extent that it stops controlling and increases the desire for action that leads to the intense feeling.

Apart from Internet dependence, we can talk about other forms of so- of communication addiction, and those are chat at social network and the problem of using the mobile phone. For people with social relations problems in real life, a potential risk is also a online chat, which has a high risk potential towards addiction. The rationale for chat addiction risks are:

- its handicap can be hidden,
- communication provides a lot of time to think over the answer, intentionally avoid answering, etc.,

- easy acquisition of a new identity according to your wishes,
- provides a leak from the real world (Rořková, 2015).

Social networks make life easier for us in everyday life, but there is no doubt that everything when is too much, is harmful, and they can have far-reaching negative consequences. The positive aspects that social networks can bring, often change to negative aspects. We can certainly include fast communication, we can be in touch with anyone without the limitations of where we are, we can look for our old acquaintances, which we may never have met, we can also use them as a source of information (Eckertová, Dořkal, 2013).

D. Lacko (2014) describes just one positive side that went into the list of possible negative aspects, namely the loss of social relations. This revolutionary option social communication may have the opposite effect, people can move away from each other. Maintaining good relationships is not easy and social networks do not need to help them. Through social networks, children have the problem of making strong ties, and their popularity is rated mainly by how many friends or people like their profile photo. It can cause disorientation in the search for its identity, because in the "online" world it is easier to achieve the ideal of its virtual "me", as is the case in the real world.

Internet communication nowadays gains importance and is growing further. Especially in the younger generation, Internet communication takes place mostly through social networks. Social networks are a place where people create their online profiles and fill them with a variety of personal information. They use them in particular to communicate, to build new friendships and to maintain those who exist. Social networks make many positive, but they also bring many risks (Lukiř, Sokol, 2014).

The other dangers of the virtual world include cyberbullying, or bullying, which is on the virtual field. Cyberbullying can have many similarities, especially due to the diversity of the internet and the fact that in this environment we share a lot of private material that can be easily found and then abused.

Because cyberbullying, as opposed to classical bullying, is a relatively new phenomenon as its virtual variant, there are also other terms like cybernetic bullying, electronic bullying, digital violence, computer chicane, or cybernetic aggression. It can be defined as the specific type of

violence it uses to humiliate, infuriate, insult, intimidate, threaten, threaten and persecute individuals of modern media, the Internet, mobile phones, and so on (Vašutová et al., 2010).

All Internet addictions have one major common feature, and that is pleasant and quick feelings are obtained. Dependence on the Internet poses an increased risk, especially for school-age children. Childhood and adolescence are in a sensitive developmental period during which a child needs to acquire many skills and abilities for his / her future life (Majherová, 2013).

Prevention

Given that internet, computer and social addiction is a serious social and medical problem and involves almost all age categories, prevention is very important as with other addictions.

Increasing the effectiveness of primary prevention at primary and secondary schools requires not only the professional level of its implementation, but also the closer and intensified cooperation of schools with other institutions involved in the prevention of socio-pathological phenomena in children and youth at its different levels. The cooperation of schools with the Police Corps, both at the regional and the district level, is essential. The Regional Prevention Coordinators carry out this function mostly with the required professional erudition (Hroncová, Emmerová, Hronec, 2014).

Secondary prevention concerns pupils who are seriously threatened by the emergence of a certain type of media dependence. These are children and young people whose time spent on the Internet or mobile phones is alarming. Time spent with the media is reflected on the educational results, social relationships. Tertiary prevention is little reviewed in the area. Currently there are almost no cases of treatment of media dependence, which does not allow the intervention of assisting professions in the process of re-structuring of life and the readaptation of the individual to life in society (Dulovics, 2012).

Tertiary prevention is an activity aimed at preventing recurrence of undesirable behavior. It is part of a long-term resocialization process and is carried out at a professional level through specialist staff of resocialization facilities (Emmerová, 2011). We can also understand it as an indication of prevention because it is aimed at individuals who exhibit special signs or symptoms of social pathology. It is aimed at drug addicts who have undergone treatment (Niklová, Kamarášová, 2007).

Preventing the problem of excessive use of the Internet (computer) is possible by setting certain PC rules that are strictly observed and controlled by the parents. For smaller children, it can also help place the computer in a place that is visible to the parent. This will reduce the risk of inappropriate use of your computer. At the same time, the parent has an overview of the time the child spends with the computer (Ořavská, 2014).

For safe Internet manipulation it is enough for children and adolescents to adhere to a few simple but very important principles. First and foremost, young internet users should not let anyone know their home address, school address or phone number. They should also avoid sending any personal photos to strangers, they should not send to anybody or a friend. An important point is to protect access passwords and in no case give them access to anybody. It is also important for the child to realize that he is not obliged to have fun with everyone who contacts him. Young Internet users should also be aware that all published information may not be true.

Methodology

One of the main goals of research is to map the amount of time spent on Internet and social networks, the purpose of their visits and, last but not least, awareness of the potential risks that Internet and social networking can bring. The survey is aimed at comparing pupils of the 6th and 9th year of elementary school.

We selected the survey using the quantitative questionnaire method for data collection. Questions examine whether students use the Internet as often as they use it and for what purpose. The questionnaire also deals with relationship among pupils and social networks. The last questions are focused on prevention and implementation of preventive activities.

The research was carried out in four grades of the 2nd degree of the elementary school, in two classes of the 6th year and also in two classes of the 9th year of the elementary school. The total sample was 92 pupils aged 11-15 years, of which 43 were younger pupils (sample A) and 49 were older pupils (sample B). With regard to sample distribution by gender, in sample A was 24 boys and 19 girls, in sample B there were 22 boys and 27 girls.

Results

The results of this survey show that Internet use is not too much influenced by the age of children. Percent says that online technologies use almost all, except 7% out of younger pupils.

Most children at the age of 15 (70%) and almost half of children at the age of 11 (46%) connect to the internet every day. Only a group of pupils (16% younger pupils and 3% older pupils) joined the internet once a week. Based on the results, we can conclude that the internet is not only everywhere but also almost everyday part of the life of children on the 2nd level of elementary school. There is no doubt that the more often children join the internet, the more they are exposed to its risks.

Another finding is that up to half of fifteen-year-olds spend for four or more hours on the Internet. Here we see a significant age difference when this option labeled only 11% of younger pupils, which is still a large enough number. Less than an hour per day, 20% of the younger and 10% of the older pupils are surfing the Internet. The rest of the pupils use the internet daily for approximately 2-3 hours. So we can say that the time spent on the Internet tends to grow with the age.

The aim of the questionnaire was also to find out which activities the pupils most actively carry on the Internet. Approximately a third of eleven-year-olds listen to music on the Internet, go to social networks or play games. Even fewer pupils look for new information or learn something. However, the situation was different for older children. Most of them (58%) are mainly using social networking. Surprisingly, in both groups, only a small percentage of pupils uses the Internet to learning. This is linked to other findings that the overwhelming majority of younger (87%) and almost all older pupils (94%) have an account on their social network.

For reasons of joining social networking, it was the most common answer that the pupils wanted to be in touch with their friends. Interestingly, it's also found that a quarter of the younger pupils established their account because they had other friends, which have an account at social network. Here we can say that in this age the influence of the group is considerable. We also found out what they are doing on social networks. The results show that pupils primarily communicate with friends through a chat and only a small number of them are involved in writing statuses and adding contributions. If we could evaluate positively, if children do not add their photos and the files, it is less likely to abuse them.

Our survey also showed that our respondents see a lot of positives in the use of social networks and less negative ones. The biggest benefit you can see is that it brings them fun as well as when sharing with and interacting with friends. We can say that learners are aware that the use of social networks can also lead to the neglect of other duties or interests. But many pupils still do

not realize that social networks can also result in a loss of privacy or a deterioration in their relationship with friends.

Another finding is that 62% of younger and 14% of older pupils did not recognize the risks they may have on the Internet or on social networks. We found out that younger pupils do not engaged in preventive activities on this topic. Perhaps this topic is ranked up to higher grades. However, the results of the survey show that it is necessary to talk about Internet lures also with younger children. The pupils would certainly welcome such preventive activities.

Conclusion

It must be remembered that there is currently progress of development of many different services and telecommunication networks.. These are the most uselessly used by children and adolescents. With the emergence of new Internet services, there is also an increase in risks. Research shows that teachers and parents are not sufficiently informed about these new forms of communication and their risks. Conversely, pupils' knowledge of the use of these services is high (Řehulka, 2008).

An important point of primary prevention is the preparation of a strategy on how to prevent over-use of the Internet.

- 1) Finding the situation - the first step should be to map the situation among pupils to find out where the classes with the most widespread use of the Internet are. It is possible that the situation may be different in the city and in smaller villages, or even in classes where there are many children from a socially disadvantaged environment.
- 2) Collaboration with teachers - the next step should be to meet prevention coordinators and educational counselors at elementary schools as well as the pedagogical college of elementary schools. It is essential for teachers to recognize the risks and consequences of this sociopathological phenomenon. Pupils spend a lot of time at school, so teachers could be one of the protective factors. Classroom lessons offer space for discussion of various phenomena, including Internet traps.
- 3) Collaboration with parents - It would also be beneficial to foster parenthood, even through parents' associations, to make parenting and teacher education unified. In some schools, phones are now being stowed while they are being taught by the side. This is another step towards eliminating cyberbullying, but also overuse of the Internet.

4) Collaboration with other experts - they are ready to provide their services, whether in the form of long-term preventive programs, but also in the form of besied or workshops focused on this issue. Prevention should also include the creation of information leaflets for parents, teachers, but especially for pupils, posters and school bulletin boards. Prevention is the more effective the more elements it engages.

5) Leisure time - In our opinion, the most important recommendation is to create new opportunities for full-time spending of leisure time, whether at school or outside.

References

BLOCK, J. J. 2008. Issues for DSM-V: Internet Addiction. In *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 2008, vol.165, no.3, p.306–7.

DAVIS, R. A. 2001. A cognitive-behavioral model of pathological Internet use. In *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2001, vol.17, no.2, p.187–195.

De LEO, J. A. - WULFERT, E. 2013. Problematic Internet use and other risky behaviors in college students: An application of problem-behavior theory. In *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 2013, vol.27, no.1, p133–141.

DULOVICS, M. 2012. *Riziko vzniku mediálnych závislostí u žiakov základných a stredných škôl a možnosti prevencie z aspektu profesie sociálneho pedagóga*. Banská Bystrica: Pedagogická fakulta UMB, 2012. 94 s. ISBN 978-80-557-0424-1.

ECKERTOVÁ, L. - DOČKAL, D. 2013. *Bezpečnosť detí na internetu: rádce zodpovedného rodiča*. 1. vyd. Brno: Computer Press, 2013, 224 s. ISBN 978-80-251- 3804-5

EMMEROVÁ, I. 2011. *Aktuálne otázky prevencie problémového správania u žiakov v školskom prostredí*. Banská Bystrica: Pedagogická fakulta UMB, 2011. 140 s. ISBN 978-80- 557-0212-4.

HRONCOVÁ, J. - EMMEROVÁ, I. - HRONEC, M. 2014. *Sociálna patológia pre sociálnych pedagógov*. Banská Bystrica: Belianum, 2014. 300 s. ISBN 978-80-557-0806-5.

KALINA, K. 2003. *Drogy a drogové závislosti: mezioborový přístup*. 1. vyd. Praha: Úřad vlády České republiky, 2003, 319 s. ISBN 80-86734-05-61.

LACKO, D. 2014. Sociální sítě – fenomén 21. století aneb Facebook slaví deset let. <<http://davidlacko.blog.idnes.cz/blog.aspx?c=394899>>

LUKIČ, Ľ. - SOKOL, P. 2014. *Nebezpečie sociálnych sietí*. European Information Society Institute, 2014. 77 s. ISBN 978-80-971307-1-8.

MAJHEROVÁ, J. 2013. Žijeme vo virtuálnej realite? In *Výchova a vzdelávanie ako nástroj (de)formovania hodnotového systému spoločnosti*. Zborník z konferencie. Ružomberok: Verbum, 2013, s. 16 -24. ISBN 978-80561-0108-7

NIKLOVÁ, M. - KAMARÁŠOVÁ, L. 2007. Sociálny pedagóg a prevencia sociálnopatologických javov. Banská Bystrica: PF UMB, 2007, 162s. ISBN 978-80-8083-468-5.

ROLKOVÁ, H. 2015. Závislosti spojené s využívaním moderných komunikačných technológií. In *Virtuálna generála. Sme dnes iní ako kedysi?* [online]. Bratislava: IPčko, o.z. 2015, s. 55-65. ISBN 978-80-971933-2-4.

<<http://www.virtualnageneracia.sk/wpcontent/uploads/2015/11/zborn%C3%ADk2.pdf>>

ŘEHULKA, E. 2008. *Prevence závislostí ve škole*. Brno: MSD, 2008, 105 s. ISBN 978- 80-7392-077-7.

VAŠUTOVÁ, M. a kol. 2010. *Proměny šikany ve světě nových médií*. Ostrava: Filozofická fakulta Ostravské univerzity v Ostravě, 2010, 225 s., ISBN 978-80-7368-858-5

