

Internet Addiction: A Concerning Issue among Chinese College Students

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“Once the internet colonizes you in a bad way, so your future too.” –Rey L. Lapatha

THE advent of computers initiated the information revolution, fundamentally transforming individuals' ways of life. The use of internet brings about unprecedented convenience, efficiency, and abundance of information. For college students, the internet has significantly enriched their lives, opened more learning channels, and increased learning resources, as a result, broadening their horizons, facilitating academic exchanges, and making learning more engaging. On the other hand, the problematic use of internet such as internet dependence among some of them has imposed detrimental effects on their academic achievement as well as their mental and physical health.

Internet addiction disorder also referred to as pathological Internet use (PIU), is a new type of mental disorder that has emerged with the application and popularization of the Internet. The issue of internet addiction was first raised by American psychiatrist Ivan Goldberg in 1994, who defined it as a condition in which the user spends unreasonably lengthy periods of time online and fails to control this compulsive act. Internet addiction disorder is comparable to pathological gambling (Young, 1997; Hollander et al., 2000), with symptoms including increased tolerance, withdrawal, emotional disorders (such as depression, anxiety), social relationship disruption (reduced quantity or degraded quality of social connections) and more.

The internet addiction rate among Chinese college students has been trending upward over the past few years. According to the *46th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development* published by the China Internet Network Information Center, by September 2020, China had an Internet penetration rate of 67.0% and 940 million internet users, with students accounting for 28.2% (CNNIC, 2020). Internet dependence has become a major risk factor for the declining health and impeded academic development in higher education students. The *48th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development* revealed that the internet addiction rate among college students was 10.7% (Li, 2021). Research has

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demonstrated that internet addiction has a deleterious impact on academic levels, mental state, and everyday lives of college students. Specific consequences include but not limited to physical degeneration, memory loss, thinking ability degradation, and poor social adaptation. Therefore, in-depth analysis of factors contributing to college student Internet dependence is critical to the prevention and intervention of pathological Internet use in them.

The article titled “*Internet Addiction among College Students in China and Its Underlying Causes*” (Xia, 2023) in this issue provides an overview of internet addiction among Chinese college students, pinpoints its causes, and highlights its adverse effects, based on the analysis of previous relevant studies. It is hoped this study can spark more discussions on this subject.

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