

THE IMPACT OF COMPUTER ADDICTION ON THE EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

This article examines the impact of computer addiction on the emotional development of adolescents, identifies the main factors contributing to addiction, and explores methods of prevention and intervention, including the roles of parents, educators, and social support systems. The findings indicate that ensuring stability during adolescence requires fostering interests, identifying individual abilities, satisfying communication needs, and developing stress resilience. Special attention is given to effective time management, distinguishing between virtual and real environments, and promoting balanced adolescent development. Additionally, strategies for building psychological immunity against harmful computer games, online gambling, and excessive exposure to information streams are discussed.

Keywords: computer addiction, virtual environment, information flow, family cooperation, psychological support.

INTRODUCTION

Modern digital technologies are becoming an integral part of human life. In particular, the rapid increase in computer and internet use among adolescents significantly affects their psychological development, especially their emotional sphere. Adolescence is an emotionally sensitive and dynamic stage, during which external influences have a particularly strong impact.

The development of the emotional sphere in adolescence is closely linked to socialization, self-awareness, and self-regulation processes. However, excessive use of computers and the internet can negatively affect these processes. Prolonged immersion in virtual environments limits real-life social interactions, leading to emotional detachment, reduced empathy, and affective instability.

Main Body

Moreover, computer addiction may contribute to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms among adolescents. Escaping into virtual environments often becomes a coping mechanism for avoiding real-life problems, thereby undermining psychological stability.

The duration of computer use is also a critical factor. Moderate use (1–3 hours per day) may have positive outcomes, whereas prolonged use (5–8 hours or more) can lead to psychological strain and emotional exhaustion.

Technological advancement, including the widespread use of the internet and social networks, has deeply penetrated all aspects of human life. While these technologies offer educational benefits and access to information, they also produce negative consequences. Among these, computer addiction has emerged as one of the most pressing contemporary issues.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has emphasized the significance of the information environment in societal development and youth education. In an interview with the Yangi O‘zbekiston newspaper, he stated:

“Today, information networks play an important role in understanding the issues and concerns of people. In particular, the internet allows us to feel the ‘heartbeat’ of society.”

Computer addiction is widely studied in modern psychology and is characterized by excessive engagement with virtual environments, leading to withdrawal from real-life social relationships. It manifests when individuals spend excessive time on computers, the internet, or video games, resulting in impairments in social, emotional, and intellectual development.

During adolescence, individuals undergo significant psychological and emotional formation. At this stage, they are highly sensitive to external influences, emotionally unstable, and actively engaged in identity formation. Therefore, any harmful factors—including technological addiction—can hinder their healthy development.

According to Jean Piaget, social life is shaped by language, content, and rules, which contribute to cognitive development. Similarly, Sigmund Freud emphasized unconscious drives in adolescent development, which may lead to egocentrism and social conflicts.

Adolescence is also characterized by increased intellectual activity and a strong desire for knowledge. During this period, individuals transition from childhood to adulthood, striving for independence and self-expression. Therefore, parents and educators must pay special attention to guidance and support.

Negative Effects of Computer Addiction

Computer addiction can lead to several adverse emotional outcomes in adolescents:

Emotional instability: Limited real-life interaction results in psychological imbalance.

Aggression: Exposure to violent content may increase aggressive tendencies.

Loneliness: Reduced social interaction leads to feelings of isolation and depression.

Low self-esteem: Comparison with idealized online images lowers self-worth.

Sleep disturbances and fatigue: Excessive screen time negatively affects physical and emotional health.

Prevention Strategies: The following measures are essential in preventing computer addiction:

Parental and teacher supervision: Regulating and guiding technology use. **Alternative activities:**

Encouraging sports, arts, reading, and real-life communication. **Psychological support:** Consulting

school psychologists or specialists when necessary. **Digital literacy:** Teaching responsible and conscious internet use.

Conclusion: Proper use of computer and internet technologies can enhance modern knowledge and skills. However, excessive use—especially during adolescence—can severely harm emotional and psychological well-being. Therefore, families, schools, and society must work collaboratively to promote balanced and purposeful use of technology among adolescents. This approach ensures emotional stability and contributes to the development of a healthy generation.

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