

# Internet Overuse of High School Students from Different Nationalities Due to Coronavirus

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## Abstract

**Due to the rising number of online courses caused by Coronavirus's breakout, teenage students, especially high school students, started showing deeper independence upon the internet. This study aims to analyze and compare the different levels of internet overuse from two different nations, the United States and China. The investigator has chosen eight high school students (four are American teenagers, and the rest are Chinese high school students) in total to ask for feedback, and all of them have provided their information. All the American participants provide their information by interviewing with the investigator, and all of the Chinese high school students have provided their feedback through email. The amount of time spent on the internet by American high school students was averagely 2 hours more than the time of internet use from Chinese teenagers. This study shows the different time use on the internet of both American and Chinese high school students and gives a potential reason for the difference between them.**

## Keywords

**Internet overuse; Unite States; China; Interview; Survey; Potential reason.**

## 1. Introduction

Recently, online courses or classes taken through the internet have become unprecedentedly popular and common for students with different grades, degrees, or institutions due to the worldwide pandemic. Thus, teenagers have a more reasonable reason to go online for different uses. Now, students have a better opportunity to be addicted to the internet because they gained more time due to the suspension caused by COVID. In work, this article would argue that the redundant time because of the lockdown of the COVID would make students, especially the high school students, to overuse the internet. The research would also talk about the adverse effects of network dependence. Eight participants in total to constitute the convenience population due to the social distancing for the prevention of the pandemic.

## 2. Literature Review

At the end of 2019, contagious pneumonia, known as coronavirus or COVID-19, appeared in Asia, and it has thoroughly spread to the whole world [1]. The outbreak of this unexpected pandemic caused many social institutions to close, including K-12 schools and higher education. COVID has forced students to stay at home to stay away from the crowds, and created situations where learning via online platforms has been the best — and sometimes the only way to keep students engaged with the course content. COVID19 has affected the quality of schools' quality of education but also has given students more time to web-surf. Before the current pandemic, teenagers' addiction to the internet had become a global issue bothering millions of parents. Recently, more and more people — not only students — have become addicted to social media. Many adults have more free time, they have fewer possible options to keep themselves busy, given the suspension of many outdoor activities, and millions are working from home online.

Nearly fifty percent of people who expressed themselves in a 2020 study of American adults' use of social media about the overuse of social media during the COVID-19 have agreed that they spent more time on social media during the quarantine time. "In the above pie chart, you can see 45% of people said they have become addicted to social media during Coronavirus whereas 32% of people said they have not and the other 23% expressed their uncertainty about this" [2]. As a deadly disease, not only the patients diagnosed with this virus are suffering; instead, the whole society is infected. The anxiety and depression rates are increasingly mounting every day because stepping out of isolation has bothered the society mentally. "Some health officials have forecast a steep rise in new mental health disorders" [3].

### 3. Methodology

To get enough information about the internet overuse from both American and Chinese high school students, the eight participants have answered five or six questions depending on their nationality. Four of them are American male-teenagers between fourteen and seventeen; another four participants are Chinese high-school students, female-teenagers aged from fifteen to eighteen years old. The researcher has interviewed all the American participants for their answers to the research; to get in touch with all the Chinese high school students, the six questions, including a specific question for Chinese students, have been sent to participants' email, and all of the Chinese high school student participants provided their answers back to the researcher via email as well [2].

The Six Questions Participants Received are:

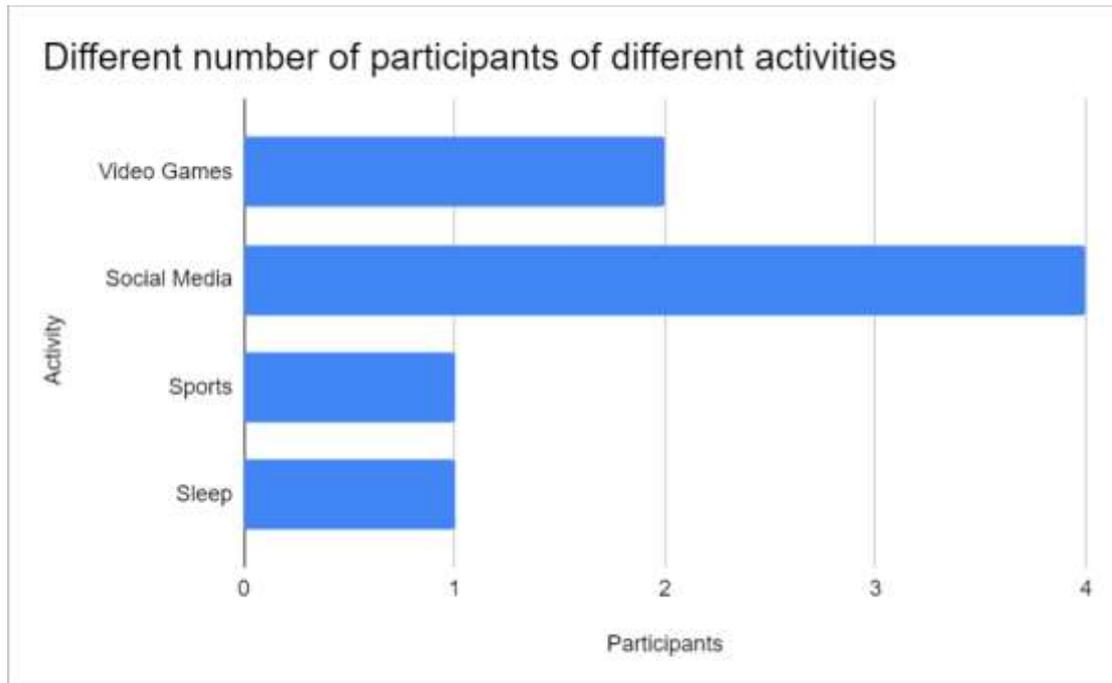
1. During the quarantine time, what kind of activity would you choose to do the most to relax every day?
2. What would you do during the breaks between classes and periods? Such as a lunch break or a Bathroom break?
3. What kind of applications would you spend the most time on every day?
4. How much time do you think that you spend more on that app compared to the non-quarantine period?
5. Before going to sleep, would you spend some time checking devices such as cell phone, iPad, or laptop? How long would that take?
6. How much time would you spend on the internet before going to sleep during the summer break (Chinese students only)?

### 4. Finding

Eight high-school students with two nationalities participated in this research. Four of them are American male-teenagers between fourteen and seventeen; another four participants are Chinese high-school students, female-teenagers aged from fifteen to eighteen years old.

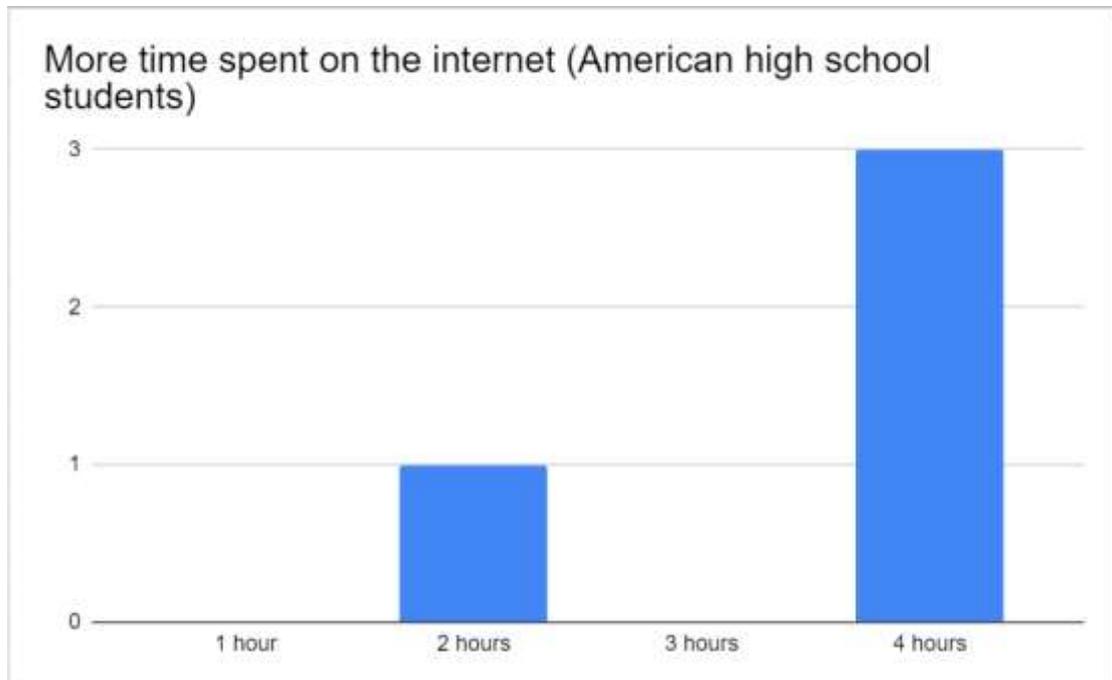
The outcomes are shown in the following charts:

This picture shows what kind of activity that children from different countries would spend the most time with during the time of learning from the internet at home due to the COVID-19. As the results showed, 50% of teenagers chose to use social media for relaxation. All the American high school students adopted different activities, playing video games, using social media, doing sports, and sleeping; three out of four Chinese high school students release stress by spending more time on social media, and one of them played more video games.

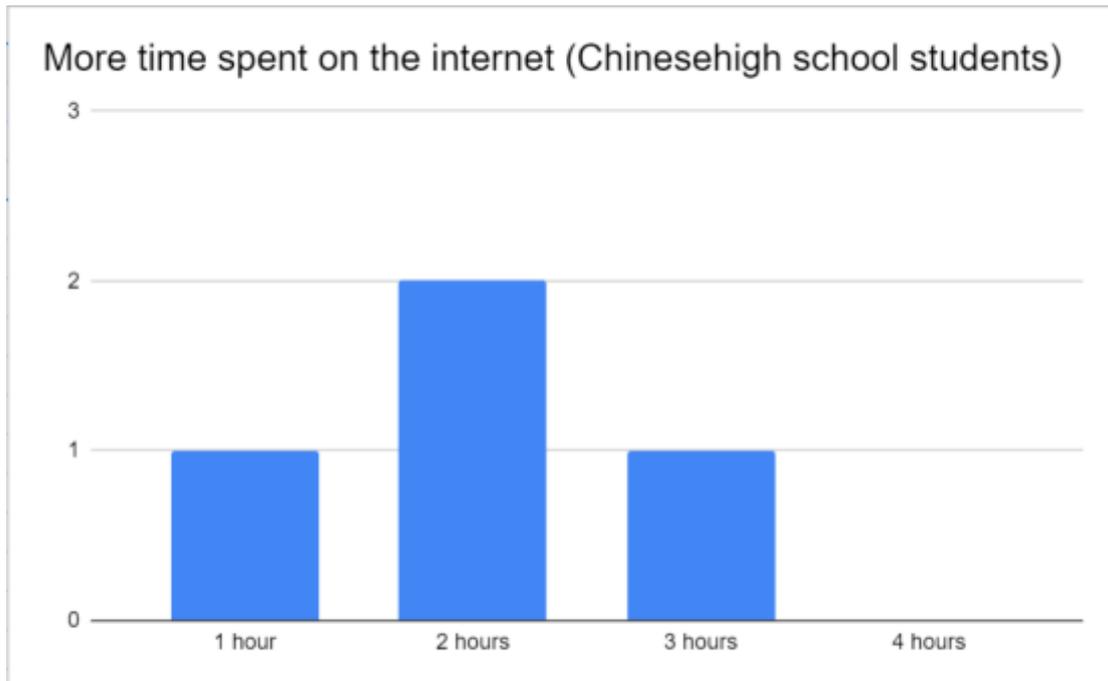


**Figure 1.** Different number of participants of different activities

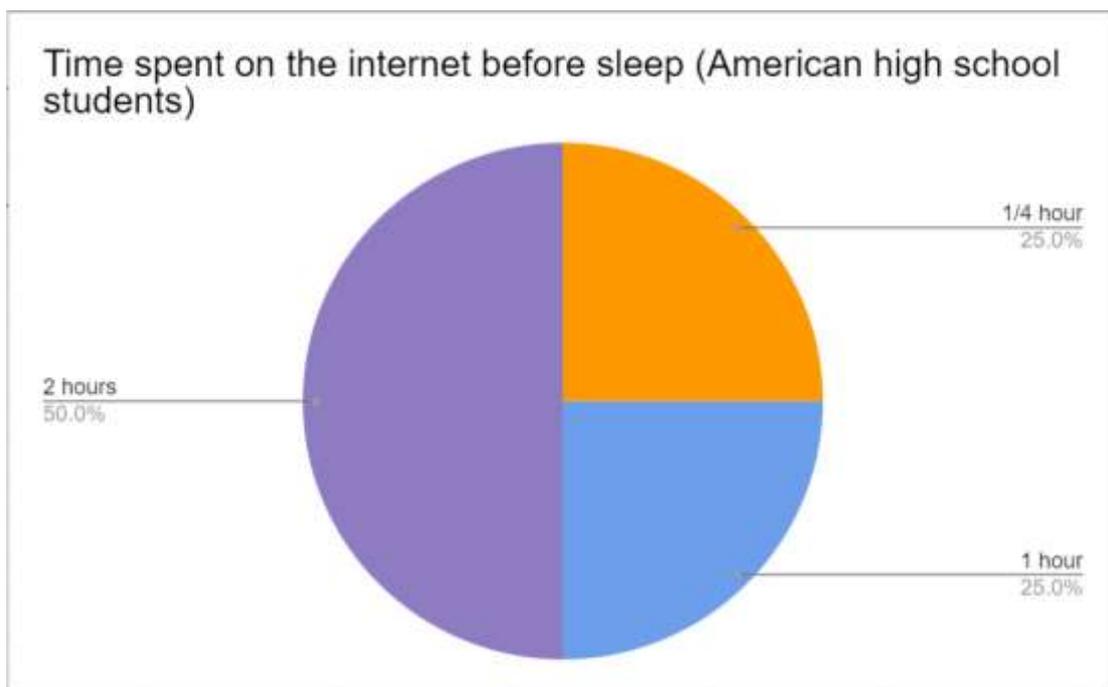
Social Media criteria do not only include traditional instant messaging apps but also consists of the following apps: TikTok, Youtube, Netflix...



**Figure 2.** More time spent on the internet for entertainment from American high school students (Does not include the time spent on the internet before going to sleep)



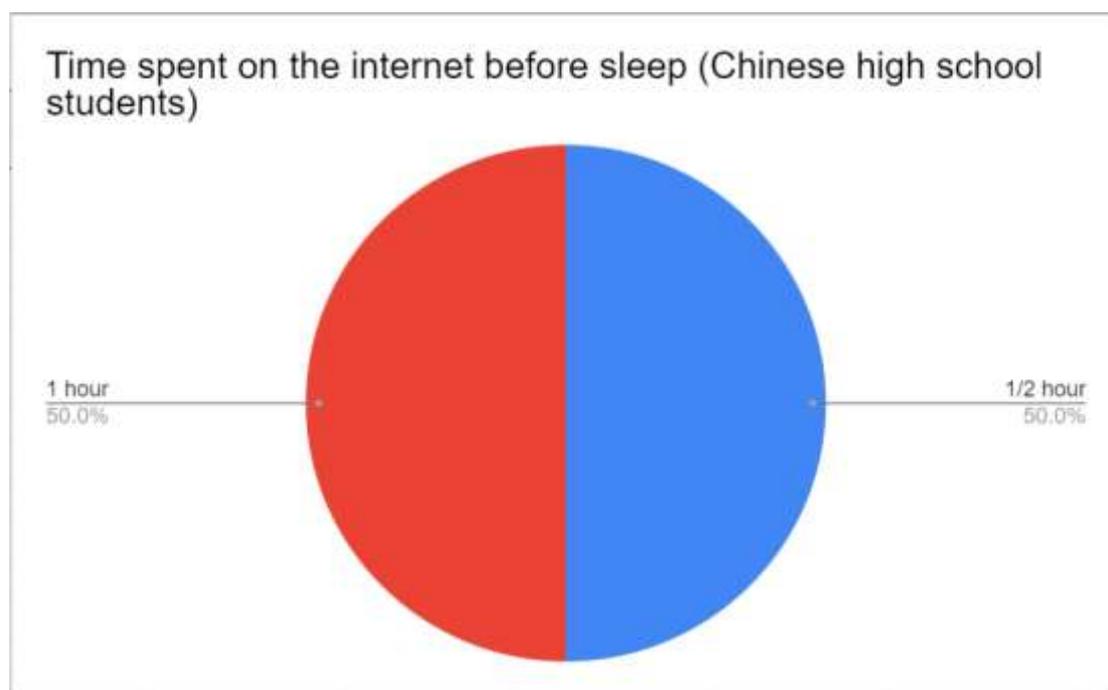
**Figure 3.** More time spent on the internet for entertainment from Chinese high school students (Does not include the time spent on the internet before going to sleep)



**Figure 4.** Time spent on the internet before go to sleep at night from American high school students

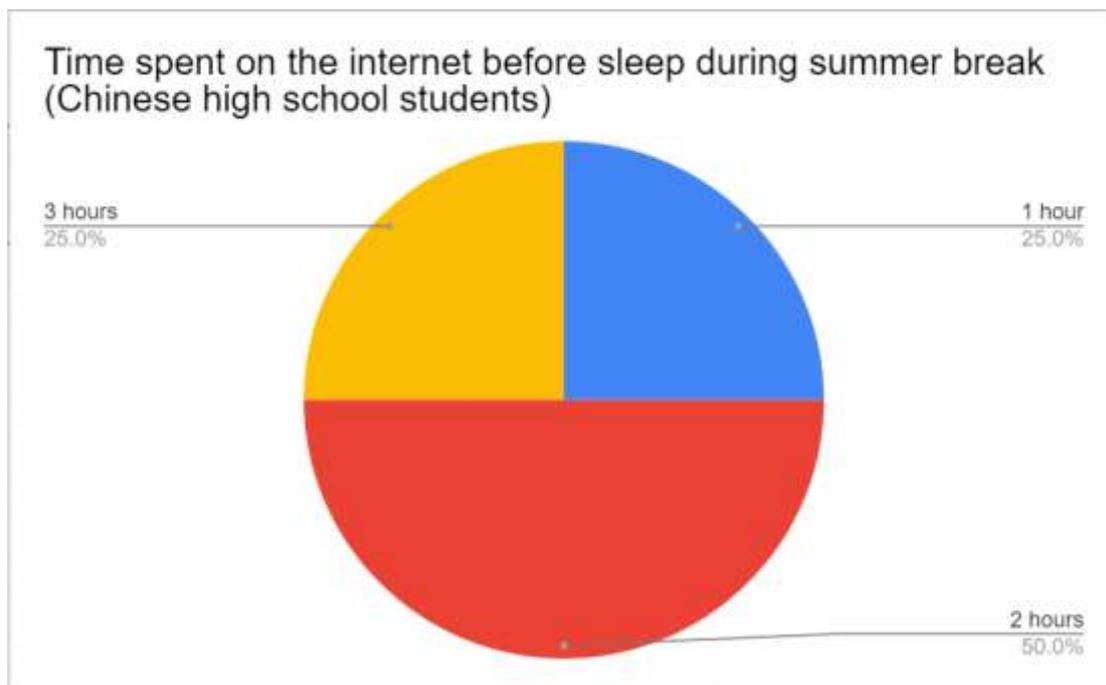
These two charts are the different time spent on the internet from both Chinese and American students. Eight of the participants all show the behavior of spending more time on the internet for different uses. The potential reasons why the Chinese students spent relatively less time on the internet might be the heavier workload and more frequent exams provided by Chinese high schools [4]. The difficulty of being a student of a fine college in China has been well known around the world. Over ten million students take the Chinese university entrance exam every year with the growth of the acceptance rate [5]. Therefore, plenty of students in China do not

have extra time to use the internet. On the contrary, the distinct testing mechanism of college in the USA gives students more time to do various things, not only the internet-use. However, "in many ways, children from very different countries share similar online interests" [6]. More and more people, not only teenagers, would like to choose using electronic devices to go online for relaxation rather than other activities. "Due to the explosion of the digital age, Internet Addiction Disorder has taken the reigns as the top culprit is technology addiction" [7]. Undoubtedly, the growth of the internet has significantly positively changed people's lives. At the same time, the negative impact also occurs in society due to the majestic development of this substantial international digital communication web. Thus, reasonable control of the internet-use is needed to avoid network dependence for the people in the 21st century.



**Figure 5.** Time spent on the internet before go to sleep at night from Chinese high school students

From these charts, the time used on the internet from students with different nationalities before going to sleep is present. The total time spent on Chinese teenagers is comparatively shorter than the sum of the time used on the internet before American students rest. Due to the different time spent on the internet from American and Chinese students, both before going to sleep and the whole day, the Chinese teenager participants, the less time spent on the internet, were asked another question. "How much time would you spend on the internet before going to sleep during the summer break?" This particular question's significance is to test the importance and influence of the different amount of school work that can potentially have on the students' time management on the internet.



**Figure 6.** Time spent on the internet before going to sleep during summer vacation from Chinese high school students

As the picture shows, the total time spent on the internet from Chinese high school students showed the growth trend when the summer vacation comes. The increase in leisure time gives students more time to web-surfing. The reasons behind the overuse of the internet can be complicated. The simple way to explain this phenomenon is the emotional need for solace and escape against depressed mood or stressed condition [8]. According to the research, depression, and anxiety cases have been mounting since the Coronavirus outbreak [8]. Not only do the students become addicted to the internet, but more adults with proper mental health also start suffering from anxiety [8]. According to the article "Computer/Internet Addiction Symptoms, Causes and Effects", the lack of emotional support deserves attention from society considering the increasing trend of addiction to gambling, drugs, and alcohol. When students become overdosers to the internet, things that should be done by them during this time can hurt them physically, mentally, and academically if the network dependence took a tremendous amount of time away from their daily lives. For instance, the possibility of receiving poor grades due to the lack of enough studying time would potentially cause a negative impact to the self-development of a student. In total, overuse and the addiction to the internet during the pandemic COVID-19 are becoming a problem. Its negative effects on both society and individuals, including students and adults, will motivate people to fight against this virus by following social orders and, most importantly, self-control.

## 5. Conclusion

To conclude, high school students with different nationalities both showed varying degrees of over-reliance on the internet during the quarantine. With various schools' educational methods, different leisure time made students from different countries have a distinct level of internet overuse. The development of the international network shapes the 21st century, but at the same time, the adverse effects caused by the overuse of the internet deserve everyone's attention to avoid.

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