



Association Of Internet Addiction With Depression Among Indian Adults

Amisha Bisht^{1*}, Khushi Sati^{2*}, Dr. Mandakini Sharma^{3*}

*1. Visiting Faculty, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Graphic Era (Deemed to be) University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India.

*2. Student, BA (H) Psychology, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Graphic Era (Deemed to be) University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India.

*3 Associate Professor, Department of Visual Arts, Graphic Era Hill University.

*Corresponding author Email ID: guestfaculty.hss@geu.ac.in

ABSTRACT

In today's digitally-driven world, using the internet is an essential aspect of daily life, especially for young people. However, little attention has been paid to how Internet addiction affects these crucial years of life in India. The study aims to assess whether Internet addiction is common among Indian adult users and how it connects to depression.

Methodology: An investigation into the link between internet addiction and depression using the correlational study methodology. The age range of the 60 volunteers for the current study was 15 to 30. Adults in India received questionnaires through sharing Google Forms after being randomly selected as participants. Aaron T. Beck, a psychiatrist, created the 21-question Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II) to assess the severity of depression. Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT), a multiple-choice self-report inventory with 20 questions was used to gauge adult internet addiction.

Results: The findings show a substantial and positive relationship between internet addiction and depression levels in Indian adults ($P < 0.001$). According to the research, internet addicts are also more prone to have more severe cases of depression. It became apparent that measures to stop internet addiction and enhance adult mental health were required.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, Social Media, Depression, Indian Adults.

Introduction

Internet use has increased significantly during the course of the twenty-first century. Communication and information sharing has become much easier and more accessible worldwide due to the technological revolution. Worldwide, websites offer a wealth of really important information. Daily conveniences include the ability to reach family and friends at any time and from anywhere thanks to certain websites and programs. Social media (SM) is "a set of Internet-based applications that facilitate the creation and transmission of client-produced content," (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Online networking has evolved to include important functions like keeping in touch with family and friends, sharing private information, and getting news and entertainment.

Internet was created to make communication and research easier. However, the recent surge in internet usage has resulted in pathological use (Internet addiction). Internet addiction is the term used to describe compulsive or uncontrollable cravings, behaviours, or preoccupations with computers and the internet that impairs one's functioning or cause suffering. Academic achievement, psychological health, and interactions with friends and family can all suffer from internet addiction. Along with a rise in computer (and Internet) access, internet addiction has drawn more attention from scholars and the general public. A new tool, the internet is quickly taking over as a necessary component of daily life for individuals (Nalwa & Anand, 2003), and its popularity is rising, particularly among young adults. Even though this technology is often regarded as beneficial, psychologists and educators are aware of its drawbacks, notably overuse and the resulting physical and mental health problems (Greenfield, 2000). Internet addiction is a rising issue that has a negative influence on many people's academic, romantic, financial, and professional lives and affects people worldwide in varying degrees of frequency (Chou & Hsiao, 2000; Griffiths, 2000).

The internet's explosive growth has affected psychological studies into how it affects emotional states, and there is a growing concern about how addictive it could be (Griffiths, 1998). The three most notable emotional reasons that may be responsible for college students' internet addiction are stress, anxiety, and depression (Kandell, 1998). According to studies on internet addiction and depression, compulsive internet use, which interferes with people's daily lives and those of others, is linked to a rise in the occurrence of depression (Kraut et al., 1998). According to a different study, extreme internet use might prevent people from spending quality time with friends and family, which reduces social networks and increases loneliness and level of stress (Nie et al., 2002). Other negative effects of heavy use include financial issues, interpersonal problems, social isolation, and neglect of household, professional, and academic obligations (Griffiths, 2000; McKenna & Bargh, 2000).

Internet addiction is a global phenomenon which is more common in nations with advanced technology and internet infrastructure. Clinical samples and the pertinent surveys both report a dominance of male respondents. Computer use is considered to have started in people's late 20s or early 30s. The rise in adult depression in India negatively affects society

and worries parents. The results of this study will raise people's awareness of the link between excessive Internet use and health issues in their loved ones. Educational institutions can also use the findings to discourage the usage of such technologies on their campuses. Government authorities can use the manual to develop regulatory guidelines for organizations and public awareness initiatives. The study's shortcomings and future directions are discussed at the end.

Methodology

Study design, study population, and sampling

Using a random sample method, young adults from Dehradun were chosen as this study's participants. The data was collected by both online and offline methods. In online, a Google form on social media sites including Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and others was circulated. Additionally, it was done offline with the subjects' permission. The ideal number of participants for the study was 60, which included both males and females from 15 to 30 years. The people who use social media frequently were preferred to participate. Ultimately, a sample size of 60 responses was gathered, and 16 responses were randomly removed. Participants in the study were limited to those who consented to participate in the investigation. Both male and female volunteers were welcomed to obtain a more balanced viewpoint and improve the investigation's overall value.

Young's Internet Addiction Scale was used to report an online addiction test that assesses the traits and attitudes associated with internet addiction. It consisted of 20 items and has an acceptable 0.85 test-retest reliability. Strong internal consistency of 0.90-0.93 has been found for its validity. The scale is measured on a Likert scale with a range of 0 to 5. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), a 21-item self-report rating questionnaire, was used to assess depression-related attitudes and symptoms. The inter-item correlation ranged from 0.53 to 0.78, while the Cronbach alphas ranged from 0.75 to 0.92. The validity investigation revealed that the factor levels for all items ranged from 0.77 to 0.93. The items are scored on a 4-point Likert-type scale from 0 to 3 based on how serious it was over the past two weeks.

The objectives of the research were explained to the participants before providing them with the questionnaire. There was no time constraint, and it was underlined that they should select the response that they felt most strongly to be true. Confidentiality was assured, and participants' informed consent was obtained.

Statistical analysis

The data analysis included descriptive statistics analysis. The association between internet addiction and depression was examined using Pearson's correlation coefficient and a conventional linear regression.

Results

A total of 60 questionnaires were analyzed. Mean, standard deviation and standard error are noted in Table 1 and correlation statistics is noted in Table 2.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics about internet addiction and depression (n=60)

Variables	N	M	SD	SE
Internet Addiction	60	37.82	17.396	2.25
Depression	60	15.8	10.26	1.32

Table 1 depicts the mean scores for internet addiction and depression among young adults. The mean for internet addiction was 37.82, and the mean score for depression among young people was found to be 15.8.

Table 2: Correlation statistics between internet addiction and depression

	Correlation(r)	Df	p-value	Level of significance
Internet Addiction	0.54	52	0.01	significant at 0.01

The correlation analysis between Internet addiction and depression is shown in Table 2. Internet addiction and depression have a significant and positive association ($r=0.54$, $P < 0.01$).

Discussion

The extensive use, expanding acceptance, and rapid growth of social networking sites among this population have increased the need for study into the associations between the internet and depression in adults and teenagers. Because of how regularly they use the internet and social networking sites, teenagers and young adults are an especially vulnerable category. The purpose of the study was to examine any connections between depression and internet addiction. The results have shown that there is a meaningful link between these variables. When asked how they feel about their excessive usage of the internet for extended periods of time, the majority of them said they felt exhausted. However, some also mentioned feeling guilty or anxious. Others felt as though they were wasting their lives but couldn't help using the internet for extended periods of time to fill the void they typically feel.

A decline in social connections, melancholy, loneliness, and a poorer sense of self-worth are all significantly related with internet addiction, according to new researches. This finding is in line with earlier researches that have found a connection between internet addiction and depression. Additionally, studies of sad people, who are more inclined to utilise the internet, have provided evidence in favour of this claim. Therefore, it seems that people may experience less depression if they can lessen their internet addiction. This study represents a step in our knowledge of the link between internet use and depression. In the previous studies, a decline in social relationships, anxiety, and general well-being have all been linked favourably to internet addiction, along with higher degrees of loneliness, poorer social adaptation, emotional abilities, and lower levels of self-esteem.

Due to amount of time they spend online and on social sites, teenagers and young adults are a particularly vulnerable generation. The first stage of this study is determining how internet use and depression are related among Indian people and it is critical to understand some study limitations. First, because of the cross-sectional approach used in the present study, we are unable to establish if there is a causal relation between internet addiction and depression. Second, there were fewer men than women that took part in this study, which is a negative factor.

Conclusion

With the exponential increase in Internet users around the world, there has been a marked surge in Internet addiction, especially in young adults. The reliance on the Internet for a variety of functions, including social media, data collection, and news, has grown as it has

quickly spread over the entire nation. Internet addiction is a serious issue that is detrimental to mental health. In order to improve the mental health of adolescents and young adults, it is crucial to develop prevention strategies and therapeutic interventions. It is also important to inspire other researchers to carry out additional study in this area.

People regularly enter the congested virtual world to find acceptance from friends and peers or to escape from depression. Our research has demonstrated a strong link between Internet addiction and depression. A vicious cycle of despair leading to Internet addiction that breeds more depression is common. The strong correlation between internet addiction and depression discovered in our study and the majority of previous ones lend credence to the idea that internet addiction should be included in the future DSM. The severity of the illness needs to be adequately determined by several studies with greater sample sizes. It is now necessary to recognise Internet addiction as a serious problem and take action before it gets out of control.

References

1. Ahmet A. & Iskender, Murat. (2011). Internet addiction and depression, anxiety, and stress. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences (IOJES)*, 3, 138-148.
2. Armstrong, L., Phillips, J., & Saling, L., (2000). Potential determinants of heavier internet usage. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 53, 537-550.
3. Bessièrè, K., Pressman, S., Kiesler, S., & Kraut, R. (2010). Effects of internet use on health and depression: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 12(1).
4. Chien C. & Ming-Chun H. (2000). Internet addiction, usage, gratification, and pleasure experience: The Taiwan college students' case. *Computers & Education*. 35, 65-80.
5. Caplan, S. E., (2003). Preference for online social interaction: A theory of problematic internet use and psychosocial well-being. *Communication Research*, 30, 625-648.
6. Davis, R. A., (2001). A cognitive-behavioral model of pathological internet use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 17, 187-195.
7. Griffiths, M. D., (1998). Internet addiction: Does it really exist? In: Gackenbach, J. (Ed.), *Psychology and the internet: Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal applications* (pp. 61- 75). 27.
8. Greenfield, D. N., (2000). Psychological characteristics of compulsive internet use: A preliminary analysis. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 5, 403-412.
9. Houston, T. K., Cooper, L. A., & Ford, D. E. (2002). Internet support groups for depression: a 1- year prospective cohort study. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 159(12), 2062-2068.
10. Jelenchick, L. A., Eickhoff, J. C., & Moreno, M. A. (2013). "Facebook depression?" Social networking site use and depression in older adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52(1), 128-130.
11. Kandell, J. J. (1998). Internet addiction on campus: The vulnerability of college students. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 1(1), 11-17.

12. Kaplan A. & Haenlin M., (2010). Users of the world, unite! the challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
13. Kraut, R., Lundmark, V., Patterson, M., Kiesler, S., Mukopadhyahy, T., & Sherlis, W., (1998). Internet paradox: A social technology that reduces social involvement and psychological well- being? *American Psychologist*, 53, 1017–1031.
14. Moreno, M. A., et al. (2011). Feeling bad on Facebook: Depression disclosures by college students on a social networking site. *Depression and anxiety*, 28(6), 447-455.
15. Nalwa, K. & Anand, A., (2004). Internet Addiction in Students: A Cause of Concern. *Cyberpsychology & behavior: the impact of the Internet, multimedia and virtual reality on behavior and society*, 6, 653-6.
16. Primack, B. A., et al. (2017). Use of multiple social media platforms and symptoms of depression and anxiety: a nationally- representative study among US young adults. *Computers in human behavior*, 69, 1-9.
17. Radovic, A., et al. (2017). Depressed adolescents' positive and negative use of social media. *Journal of adolescence*, 55, 5-15.
18. Seo, D. G., et al. (2016). Mobile phone dependency and its impacts on adolescents' social and academic behaviors. *Computers in human behavior*, 63, 282-292.