Role of Problematic Internet use on Family Relationship and Loneliness Among University Students

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Abstract:- "The internet appears to be capable of altering the mood, motivation, concentration and producing a dissociating and disinhibiting experience for users. For some individuals, patterns of use can transform to abuse, taking on a compulsive quality, many of the daily spheres of behaviour, including work, appear to be effected by this powerful technology."(Dr. David Greenfield, Centre for internet Behaviour, USA) "We can improve our relationships with others by leaps and bounds if we become encouragers instead of critics" (Joyce Meyer) Purpose of the study: To understand the role of problematic internet use on family relationship and loneliness among university students. Method: Correlation and t Test was used. Participant: The study was conducted in 100 university students which include (50 males and 50 females) from various universities in India. Measures: UCLA loneliness Scale Version 3 (Russell.D. 1996), The Brief Family Relationship Scale by Carlotta Ching Ting Fok, James Allen, David Henry, People Awakening Team (2011) and The Generalized Problematic Internet Use Scale (Caplan,2002) was used to collect the data. Result: Research has found that loneliness and problematic internet use is associated and it also affect family relationship. Implication: problematic internet use and its role on family relationship and loneliness help to understand how misuse of technology could interfere with life. So that if problematic use of internet is controlled, family relationships can be improved, amount of spending time with peers and loved ones can be increased. CBT is an effective therapy to reduce internet addiction.

Keywords: Problematic Internet use, Loneliness, Family Relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Internet is a part of modern world. Knowledge is in your finger tips and you have access to anything you want to know. Problematic internet use happens when individuals especially college students make overuse of internet. According to Erick Erickson's Psycho social theory, an age group between 18 to 25 years is time period were people learn and acquire knowledge from universities and this stage is known as young adulthood. The virtue of this developmental stage is love. Young adults tend to seek for relationships in this age and it can be friendships and as well as romantic relationships. Erickson named this stage as intimacy vs isolation. When people fail to have good relationships they feel isolated and therefore the virtue called love is not fulfilled. This is the end of adolescence and they tries to be successful in their studies, start to make commitments and move to a stable job.

Due to problematic internet use students find difficulty in sleeping, they avoid meetings with friends and family, there is a decline in academic grades, lack of proper exercise and fatigue. When individuals stay online longer, or when someone irritates you while you are online, you feel difficulty in sleeping and if you are not aware of the time you are being online you may be having problematic internet use. The matter of doubt is, are people getting addicted to the internet or to the stimulation via internet. Problematic internet use is not classified in the new edition of Diagnostic and statistical manual for Mental disorders (DSM-V). It is defined as "an individual's inability to control their internet use, which in turn leads to feelings of distress and functional impairment of daily activities."(Shapira et al.2000). It was Kimberly S.Young who mainly focused on 'Internet Addiction". According to Young, Eight diagnostic criteria to find out a person's internet use was originally proposed by her.

THE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Staying online for long hours without limit.
- Increased tolerance.
- When an individual lie about online activity.
- Attempts to reduce internet use fails.
- Negative emotions after internet use.

According to Chou, Belland and Condron (2005), they states that there exist a relationship between internet addiction and the person's Social-Psychological or Personality Variables. And these variables include;

- Loneliness
- Depression

- Sensation- seeking
- Use and gratification
- Pleasure experiences

Other variables related to internet addiction include drinking, stressful events, dissatisfaction in family and relationships. According to Lam et al (2009) his study states that internet addiction is a behavioral manifestation of stress. And the stress which he explains here is about the internal stress. Stress is an important influencing factor for internet addiction. So that people tries to escape from reality and live in the magical world of internet. He also found that individuals who experience addiction to internet, have problems in relationships, family and friends.so that people interact through internet and they find it as an effective way to reduce face to face communication and avoid communication anxiety.

Family is an inevitable factor in human life. Family supports understands and help in our growth. Family relationships are studied with psychology, philosophy, child development and more. In older times joining together and forming a large group or herd helped people to gather food, defend against wild animals. But family relationship is now affected by internet use. When internet use become high, family relationships are affected and therefore parent children relationship, the bonding, cooperation, love, spending time with family everything is being affected.

When a survey was conducted in 2011, by Relationships Australia Victoria, they found that partners are keeping a secretive nature in their relationship due to influence of internet. Hacking in to other individual's account, especially in the case of their ex partners are seen. Family is mainly affected because communication between family members are decreasing due to internet use. This can result in poor social skills, lacking confidence, attachment, trust and many other issues.

Another factor that is connected with internet use is loneliness. Some studies have found that loneliness and internet use is correlated. When people engage more in online activity they tend to be more lonely and depressed as friendship and face to face communication is comparatively lesser for them. Lack of social support may make them fall in to serious issues and addicted to internet. According to Peplau and Perlman (1979) they states that loneliness is an unhappy situation and it is connected to lack of social networks by an individual. "Loneliness is a subjective psychological feeling or experience that occurs when an individual senses a lack of satisfactory interpersonal relationships and a gap between his or her desired and actual levels of communication." (Ditommaso et al., 2003.) Chen et al (2003) states that when an individual is supported by a friend, partner or family member they are less likely to feel lonely.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Internet addiction is a commonly discussed topic nowadays and this can interfere with personal as well as public lives of individuals. Especially in the case of students, internet addiction is being problematic. They tend to spend more time online, fail in exams or finds a difficulty in managing time. So that it is necessary to find the role of problematic internet use on family relationship and Loneliness among University students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To study the role of problematic internet use on family relationship and loneliness among university students.

OBJECTIVES

- To find the relationship between Problematic internet use and family relationship among university students.
- To find the relationship between problematic internet use and subscales of family relationship among university students.
- To find the relationship between problematic internet use and Loneliness among university students.
- To find the relationship between subscales of family relationship and loneliness among university students.

HYPOTHESES

- There is significant relationship between Problematic internet use and family relationship among university students.
- There is significant relationship between problematic internet use and subscales of family relationship among university students.
- There is significant relationship between problematic internet use and Loneliness among university students.
- There is significant relationship between subscales of family relationship and loneliness among university students.

- OPERATIONAL DEFNITION

Problematic Internet use: problematic internet use or internet addiction refers to uncontrolled use of internet, which interferes with family, friends, work life, can lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety and many other serious issues.

Family relationship: Family is a group related by blood or some other bond, were people share a common space and a relationship that is long term.

Loneliness: Loneliness can be defined as a negative or distressing experience when an individual have less social relationships and there can be decrease in quantity as well as quality of relationships.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

'Assessment of internet addiction and loneliness in secondary and high school students' a study by Koyuncu T, et al (2014) states that internet addiction was found as a serious issue and major health problem in middle and high school students. Loneliness and internet addiction is positively correlated. The sample consist of 1157 students, 636 males and 521 females aged between 11 to 19 years were included for the study. Young internet addiction scale and Los Angeles Loneliness scale was used.

'Internet addiction and loneliness' a study by Zygouris. N and A.karapetsas A.Fotis (2015) states that students addicted to internet have higher rates of loneliness. It was shown that there is a positive correlation between loneliness and internet addiction. The sample consist of 100 adolescent students from 13 – 15 years. To find out the connection between internet addiction and loneliness a self – administered questionnaire, children's depression inventory (Kovacs, 1981) was used.

'**Problematic internet use and feelings of loneliness'** a study by Costa R.M, Patrao.I and Machado.M (2018) states that social networking was reported more for females than males. And perceived loneliness was connected with PIU independently of age. The sample consist of 548 individuals. The age group ranging from 16-26. The study was conducted in Portuguese adolescents and young adults, Generalized Problematic internet use scale -2, the UCLA loneliness scale, and general functioning subscale of MCMaster family assessment device was used.

'The effect of internet addiction on Family Relationships' a study by Dikmen.M (2018) states it was found that internet addiction has weak predictability effect on family relationship. So that internet addiction of individuals were comparatively low and it does not affect family relations. The sample consist of 312 students. The internet addiction scale by young and the family relationship assessment scale adapted to Turkish by bulut was used.

METHOD

SAMPLE

The sample consist of one hundred (N=100) university students from various universities in India. The age range is from 18 to 25 years. There were 50 males and 50 females in the sample. The data was collected using random sampling method.

INCLUSIVE CRITERIA

- Students from various courses were included for the study
- Students from 18 to 25 years of age were included.
- Students from various universities were included for the study.

EXCLUSIVE CRITERIA

- Individuals below the age of 18 years and above the age of 25 years were excluded.

TOOLS

Brief Family relationship Scale (BFRS) developed by Carlotta Ching Ting Fok, Fairbanks James Allen, Fairbanks David Henry and People Awakening Team (2013). It is adapted from the 27-item Relationship dimension of the FES (Moos & Moos, 1994). It consist of Expressiveness, cohesion and conflict subscales. Each contain 9 items. The subscales mainly measure support, expression of opinions and angry conflict within a family.

RELIABILITY

Internal consistency of was acceptable for Cohesion.and Conflict and also for the full scale. These internal consistency values were slightly higher than those reported in the manual on the Cohesion and Conflict subscales, and slightly lower on the Expressiveness subscale.

VALIDITY

The BRFS scores correlated in the expected direction with the CMFS scores the RFLS scores and the YCPFS scores. As expected, the weakest convergent validity correlation, between the BFRS and the YCPFS was significantly greater in magnitude than the strongest discriminant validity correlation, between BFRS and ANCI scores.

SCORING .

Responses on all measures were via a continuous analog scale with a pointer in the shape of a salmon with three semantic anchors placed below the scale ("Not at all, somewhat," and "A lot."). Items marked as R are reverse scored.

Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale developed by Russell, D, Peplau, L. A.., & Cutrona, C. E. (1980). It is a 20 item scale and which measure subjective feelings of loneliness and feelings of social isolation. It is a revised version from the original.

RELIABILITY

The scale was highly reliable, both in terms of internal consistency (coefficient a ranging from .89 to .94) and test-retest reliability over a 1-year period (r = .73).

VALIDITY

Convergent validity for the scale was indicated by significant correlations with other measures of loneliness. Construct validity was supported by significant relations with measures of the adequacy of the individual's interpersonal relationships, and by correlations between loneliness and measures of health and well-being.

SCORING

Indicates "I often feel this way" S indicates "I sometimes feel this way" R indicates "I rarely feel this way" N indicates "I never feel this way" Make all O's =3, all S's =2, all R's =1, and all N's =0. Keep scoring continuous.

Generalized Problematic internet use scale 2 (GPIUS 2) developed by Caplan, 2010 It is a revised scale of 15 item Generalized Problematic internet use scale (Caplan,2002). It mainly focuses on four components. 1.POSI 2. Mood Regulation3. Deficient Self-Regulation 4.Negative outcomes.

RELIABILITY

Reliability for, all four subscales and GPIUS2 total score demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency. With regard to reliability, internal consistency Cronbach's Alpha was .71 (95% C.I.= .67 - .74) for POSI scale; α = .79 (95% C.I. = .77 - .82) for Mood Regulation scale; α = .84 (95% C.I. = .82 - .86) for Deficient Self-Regulation scale; and α = .78 (95% C.I. = .75 - .81) for Negative Outcome scale. When all items are used together to create an overall GPIUS2 composite score, the scale's reliability estimate was .88 (95% C.I.= .87 - .89). That value did not increase when an item was deleted, and all item-corrected total correlations were above .30. With regard to reliability, internal-consistency Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.78 to 0.89 (Fioravanti et al., 2013).

VALIDITY

Concerning validity, correlations between the GPIUS2 scores, gender, age, and online-time in a typical week, and the IAT score were computed. GPIUS2 total score and gender were poorly correlated. GPIUS2 total score and age were not significantly correlated. A moderate correlation was found between GPIUS2 total score and the time spent online in a typical week. The correlations can be considered high according to the recently proposed cut-off values for convergent validity (Muñiz, 2011)

SCORING

The GPIUS2 (Caplan, 2010) contains fifteen Likert-type items rated on an 8-point scale (from "definitely disagree" to "definitely agree")

ADMINISTRATION

The data was collected from various universities in India using scales in Google forms. The samples were selected using random sampling method. The questionnaires were distributed and asked them to fill carefully. The confidentiality of data was made sure. Questionnaire included socio demographic details like name, age, gender, birth order, place etc. the number of participants included 100 university students.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Paired correlation was used to statistically analyze the data.

Correlation: Among several correlation Coefficients Pearson correlation coefficient is most important. Correlation is done to find out whether there is any relationship between two variables. There can be positive correlation as well as negative correlation.

When correlation is in the same direction, it is called positive correlation. When correlation is in opposite direction, this is called negative correlation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study on 'Role of Problematic Internet use on Family Relationship and Loneliness among University students' was conducted to find out how overuse of internet effect family and loneliness of university students in an age range between 18 to 25 years. A sample of 100 students were taken and among them 50 were males and 50 were females. The Brief family relationship scale (BFRS), UCLA Loneliness scale and Generalised problematic internet use scale 2(GPIUS 2) were used to collect the data. The data was collected from various universities in India. After collecting the data, scoring and statistical analysis was completed. The statistical techniques used were, Paired correlation, t Test and Regression Analysis. The results are discussed below:

Hypotheses one states that there is significant relationship between Problematic internet use and Family Relationship. The results in table one indicate that there is significant relationship between Problematic internet use and Family relationship. So that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE 1
CORRELATION BETWEEN PROBLEMATIC INTERNET USE AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIP.

		general scale	Bf scale
general scale	Pearson Correlation	1	-.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Bf scale	Pearson Correlation	-.640**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table one shows that Problematic internet use and Family relationship have significant relationship, were they are negatively correlated. (Pearson correlation = 0.640**, significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

'The effect of internet addiction on Family Relationships' a study by Melih Dikmen (2018) states it was found that internet addiction has weak predictability effect on family relationship.

Hypotheses two states that there is significant relationship between Problematic internet use and subscales of family relationship. The results in table two indicate that there is significant relationship between Problematic internet use and subscales of family relationship. So that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE 2
CORRELATION BETWEEN PROBLEMATIC INTERNET USE AND SUBSCALES OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIP.

Correlations

		general scale	cohesion	exp	conflict
general scale	Pearson Correlation	1	-.427**	-.368**	-.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
cohesion	Pearson Correlation	-.427**	1	-.003	-.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.974	.132
	N	100	100	100	100
exp	Pearson Correlation	-.368**	-.003	1	.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.974		.000
	N	100	100	100	100
conflict	Pearson Correlation	-.371**	-.152	.383**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.132	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table two shows that Problematic internet use and subscales of Family relationship have a significant relationship, significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 3 states that there is a significant relationship between problematic internet use and Loneliness. The results in table three indicate that there is significant relationship between Problematic internet use and Loneliness. So that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE 3

CORRELATION BETWEEN PROBLEMATIC INTERNET USE AND LONELINESS.

Correlations

		general scale	UCLA
general scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
UCLA	Pearson Correlation	.697**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table three shows that Problematic internet use and Loneliness have a significant relationship, were they are positively correlated. (Pearson correlation = 0.697**, significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

'Internet addiction and loneliness' a study by Nikos Zygouris and A.karapetsas A.Fotis (2015) states that students addicted to internet have higher rates of loneliness. It was shown that there is a positive correlation between loneliness and internet addiction. **'Assessment of internet addiction and loneliness in secondary and high school students'** a study by Koyuncu T, et al (2014) states that internet addiction was found as a serious issue and major health problem in middle and high school students. Loneliness and internet addiction is positively correlated.

Hypothesis 4 states that there is a significant relationship between subscales of family relationship and Loneliness. The results in table four indicate that there is significant relationship between subscales of family relationship and Loneliness. So that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE 4
CORRELATION BETWEEN SUBSCALES OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIP AND LONELINESS.

		UCLA	cohesion	exp	conflict
UCLA	Pearson Correlation	1	-.315**	-.295**	-.318**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.003	.001
	N	100	100	100	100
cohesion	Pearson Correlation	-.315**	1	-.003	-.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.974	.132
	N	100	100	100	100
exp	Pearson Correlation	-.295**	-.003	1	.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.974		.000
	N	100	100	100	100
conflict	Pearson Correlation	-.318**	-.152	.383**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.132	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table four shows that subscales of Family relationship and Loneliness have a significant relationship, significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- There is a significant relationship between Problematic internet use and Family relationship among university students.
- There is a significant relationship between Problematic internet use and subscales of family relationship among university students.
- There is a significant relationship between Problematic internet use and Loneliness among university students.
- There is a significant relationship between Subscales of family relationship and Loneliness among university students.

LIMITATION

- Sample size taken was small so that results obtained cannot be generalized.
- The data was collected from few universities in India.

IMPLICATION

It was found that problematic internet use is related with family relationship and loneliness. Problematic internet use and family relationship is negatively correlated. Problematic internet use and subscales of family relationship have a significant relationship. on the other hand it is clear that Problematic internet use affect loneliness and they are positively correlated. When family relationship decreases loneliness increases. This indicate that if problematic internet use is reduced, family relationship can be improved. So that the rate of loneliness can be reduced. Self-control of internet use with the help of rewarding system, reducing the availability of advanced systems and reducing access to internet can help in internet addiction. Some effective methods to treat internet addiction are behavior modification techniques, cognitive Behavioral therapy by using the help of a psychologist.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The study helped to understand role of problematic internet use on family relationship and loneliness among university students. The research can be done by extending the sample size. The study can also be extended to understand the effect of problematic internet use on academics of students. The study can be done to understand how decrease in family relationship lead to loneliness and depression among students.

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