



A STUDY ON INTERNET ADDICTION AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN BANGALORE, INDIA

Lophro Saprana¹, Dr. Monalisa Nayak²

¹ Student, Clinical Psychology, CMR University, Bangalore, India

² Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychology, CMR University, Bangalore, India

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between internet addiction and quality of life among young adults in Bangalore. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample, Through an online questionnaire via Google forms, the Internet Addiction scale and the WHOQOL-BREF quality of life were used, 200 respondents in the age group of 18-27 years. Correlation and regression were used to analyze the acquired data. Results indicated a significant negative correlation between internet addiction and all domains of quality of life, including physical, psychological, social relationships, and environmental health. Regression analysis further revealed that internet addiction explained a substantial portion of the variance in quality of life (ranging from 49.1% to 59.8%). These findings align with previous research highlighted the harmful effects of excessive internet use on overall well-being.

KEYWORDS: Internet Addiction, Quality of life, Young Adults.

INTRODUCTION:

The internet has become an indispensable part of modern life, revolutionizing how we access and interact online. With its pervasive influence, particularly among younger generations (Akin and Iskender, 2011), the internet has transformed the way we acquire knowledge, conduct business, and engage socially. Today, accessing information no longer requires physical effort; instead, it arrives effortlessly via computers and smartphones, enhancing convenience and connectivity in our daily lives.

Over the past two decades, the internet has seen explosive growth, with over three billion users globally, representing 40% of the world's population (Brand et al., 2014). India is the world's second-largest online market, boasting over 560 million users (Sandhya Keelery, 2021), underscoring its profound societal impact.

However, alongside its benefits, concerns about internet addiction have emerged. Recent studies indicate a significant prevalence of internet addiction among students in India, ranging from 19.9% to 40.7%, depending on diagnostic criteria (Joseph et al., 2021). This addiction can lead to a spectrum of behavioral, psychological, interpersonal, and occupational issues (Alam et al., 2014).

The term "internet addiction" remains nebulous, lacking a universally accepted definition despite efforts to classify it within frameworks like the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) (Block, 2008). Initially proposed by Ivan Goldberg in 1995 and further elaborated by Young in 1996, internet addiction disorder

manifests through symptoms such as obsessive internet use, failed attempts to cut back, and neglect of personal responsibilities (Block, 2008).

The impact of excessive internet use extends beyond individual health, affecting broader aspects quality of life. The World Health Organization defines quality of life as an individual's perception of his/her position in life relative to cultural and personal values (WHO, 1998). Positive uses of the internet include enhancing education, career opportunities, and social connections (Tran, 2018), however excessive use has been linked to negative outcomes such as sleep deprivation, physical health issues, and decreased work performance (Lachmann, 2017).

RESEARCH PROBLEM:

Internet Addiction is an increasingly worrying phenomenon affecting people and their quality of life. Problematic internet use has been studied over the past 20 years since it has been considered a risk factor for lower quality of life. Teenagers and young adults are especially vulnerable to inappropriately internet use. Therefore ,the purpose of this study is to examine the impact internet addiction on the overall quality of life among young adults.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

This research examines the essential issue of how excessive Internet use affects the quality of life among young adults in Bangalore, India. This is important because it explores a growing problem and its impact on specific demographics. This study explores the negative impacts of Internet addiction on a range of life spheres, including social interactions, mental and physical health, and even environmental factors. Furthermore, this study closes a knowledge gap regarding Internet addiction and quality of life in the Indian context.

HYPOTHESES:

H: There is a significant relationship between Internet Addiction and different domains of Quality of Life.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The theoretical framework that this study used to discuss about internet addiction will be uses and Gratifications theory. UG theory founded by Elihu Katz in 1959, when Herzog examined the reasons people use the radio to listen to quiz programme, and soap operas (Herzog, 1942). According to Katz (1959), the outcomes of media usage depend on why and how they decided use media. Therefore, there are two main components that discuss in U&G theory which are media that choose to be engaged and gratification that get from the media (Ruggiero, 2000). By explaining about the U&G theory, mainly this theory works operationally through the social and the psychological needs for individuals generating motives and expectation of mass media (Katz, 1959), and how individual use media to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals (Patrick, 2010).

It is suggested that internet use and quality of life are related. According to the uses and gratification theory, people use media in a proactive manner to satisfy their social and psychological needs (Katz,1973), which leads them to spend time on particular media in order to get the satisfaction they anticipate (Ku,2013). The self-determination hypothesis states that a person's happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction are positively predicted by the fulfillment of their psychological needs (such as relatedness, autonomy, and competence) (Ryan,2000). As a result, when people use the internet for business or pleasure, their requirements can be met, which will ultimately lead to favorable long-term psychological effects including quality of life (Deci,2000) (Campbel,2000).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

For students and young adults, the internet's pervasiveness in modern life offers both benefits and challenges. The internet can be a useful resource for communication, education, and entertainment, but excessive use can result in internet addiction, which can have a detrimental effect on one's quality of life.

Studies by Zohreh et al. (2022) and Solati et al. (2018) has painted a worrisome picture, showing that internet addiction has a negative influence on a number of quality of life categories. Internet addiction has a negative impact on social interactions, psychological well-being, and the outside world, which includes things like physical health and sleep patterns. This demonstrates how internet addiction has a wide range of effects that go beyond academic ones. Furthermore, Solati et al. (2018) suggested a link between internet addiction and alexithymia, a difficulty in identifying and expressing emotions. This underscores the potential emotional impact of internet addiction on students and young adults. Difficulty managing emotions (alexithymia) might be a key factor that drives both internet addiction and lower quality of life (Geisel et al., 2015).

For a variety of reasons, young individuals are especially vulnerable to internet addiction. Online networks play a big part in social development, and having a natural affinity for technology can lead to overuse of the internet. Lu et al. (2018) also raised the fascinating idea that a person's ethnicity may affect their chance of developing an internet addiction. The results of their study indicated that the prevalence of online addiction was higher in Tibetan students than in Han Chinese students, indicating the need for more investigation into the relationship between cultural background and vulnerability to internet addiction. Furthermore, social media and online platforms serve as a source of social connection and validation for young adults. However, excessive reliance on online interactions for these needs can lead to feelings of isolation and inadequacy in the real world, negatively impacting quality of life (Chern et al., 2018).

The problem of internet addiction and how it affects one's quality of life are global issues. Studies like those by Noroozi et al. (2021), and Gao et al. (2020) (Germany) provide valuable insights into diverse regions. However, the Indian context requires further exploration. While Gupta et al. (2018) investigated internet addiction and quality of life in young Indian adults, their findings revealed a nonstatistically significant negative correlation. This underscores the need for more research specific to the Indian population, considering their unique cultural and social landscape. Notably, the studies employed various quality of life measures, including the WHOQOL-BREF (Solati et al., 2018; Almukhtar et al., 2020) and self-reported scales (Fatehi et al., 2016), highlighting the multifaceted nature of quality of life.

Gao et al. (2020) established a crucial distinction between problematic and balanced internet use. Their findings suggest that balanced work-related internet use may not negatively impact quality of life. This distinction is important for understanding the nuances of internet use and its relationship to well-being. Additionally, Fatehi et al. (2016) delved into the academic implications of internet addiction and found that internet-addicted medical students exhibited lower academic performance. This extends the discussion beyond quality of life to encompass potential consequences for students' educational success.

GAPA IN THE LITERATURE

Limited understanding of causality: Research continuously shows a link between internet addiction and a lower quality of life, but it's not clear if excessive internet use causes a decline in wellbeing on its own or if addiction and a lower quality of life are both caused by underlying mental health issues.

Social and cultural context: Research frequently ignores how social and cultural elements affect internet addiction and life satisfaction. Studies like Gupta et al. (2018) highlight the need for more research specific to populations like India, with unique cultural landscapes that might influence how internet use affects well-being.

Focus on negative impacts: The literature primarily explores the negative consequences of internet addiction. Further research is needed to understand the potential benefits of balanced internet use and its impact on quality of life, as suggested by Gao et al. (2020).

METHODS:**Research Objective:**

To find out the relationship between internet addiction and quality of life among the young adults.

RESEARCH DESIGN;

The study employed a qualitative research to investigate the relationship between internet addiction and quality of life among college students in Bangalore.

SAMPLE SIZE:

A sample of 200 participants (100 male and 100 female) was recruited through an online survey distributed via Google Forms.

TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY:

The survey included two instruments: the Internet Addiction Test Questionnaire (IAT) to measure internet addiction and the WHOQOL-BREF quality of life scale.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Data analysis involved correlation and regression techniques to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables.

RESULTS:**Descriptive Statistic of Internet Addiction**

Table 1 shows, that 29 students(14.5%,)were regular internet users who did not exhibit any signs of internet addiction. Of the respondents, 54 (27.0%) exhibited mild level of internet addiction. Although students may occasionally browse the internet for too long, they are in control of their use. A moderate level of internet addiction was demonstrated by 84 students (42.0%). About 33 (16.0%) of students reported severe have a severe internet addiction, and they face occasional or frequent problems as a result. Their use of the internet is in fact impacting their lives.

Table 1. Descriptive statistic(Frequency, Percentage,Mean, Standard deviation)

	Groups	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation	Total
Internet Addiction	Normal	29	14.5	22.07	7.892	200
	Mild	54	27.0	39.69	5.255	
	Moderate	84	42.0	63.71	7.358	
	Sever	33	16.0	86.06	5.744	

Correlation between internet addiction and quality of life, physical, psychological, social relationship and environment

Table 2. shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between internet addiction, quality of life, physical and psychological health, social relationships, and environment. All correlations were negative and statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Strong negative correlations were observed between Internet addiction and QoL ($r = -.775$, $p < .01$), physical well-being ($r = -.729$, $p < .01$), psychological well-being ($r = -.702$, $p < .01$), Social Relationships ($r = -.730$, $p < .01$).

.01), and environmental factors ($r = -.759, p < .01$). This suggests that higher Internet Addiction levels are associated with lower overall quality of life and well-being across multiple domains.

Table 2. Pearson's correlation coefficient for the research variables

Variable	Internet Addiction	Quality of life	Physical	Psychological	Environment	Social Relationship
Internet Addiction	1					
Quality of life	-.775**	1				
Physical	-.729**	.959**	1			
Psychological	-.702**	.923**	.833**	1		
Social Relationship	-.730**	.952**	.889**	.860**	1	
Environment	-.759**	.977**	.905**	.880**	.927**	1

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

Multiple linear Regression Analysis

Table 3, shows the multiple linear regression results. Internet Addiction is computed as a predictor variable and quality of life, physical, physiological, social relationship and environment are the outcome variables.

The regression results indicate that Internet Addiction is responsible for 57.5% variance in the Quality of life ($r^2 = .600, F = 297.174, p < 0.001$); Internet Addiction is responsible for 52.9% variance in the Physical domain ($r^2 = .531, F = 224.130, p < 0.001$); Internet Addiction is responsible for 49.1% variance in the Psychological domain ($r^2 = .493, F = 192.730, p < 0.001$); Internet Addiction is responsible for 53.1% variance in the Social Relationship ($r^2 = .533, F = 226.226, p < 0.001$); Internet Addiction is responsible for 57.5% variance in the environmental domain ($r^2 = .577, F = 269.705, p < 0.001$).

Table 3. Multiple linear regression analysis showing the effect of internet addiction on quality of life, physical, psychological, social relationship and environment.

Variable	Standardized Coefficients	t	p	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
(Constant)		54.857	.000				
Internet Addiction	-.775	-17.239	.000	.600	.598	297.174	.000 ^b
Dependent Variable: Quality of life							
(Constant)		45.963	.000				
Internet Addiction	-.729	-14.971	.000	.531	.529	224.130	.000 ^b

Dependent Variable: Physical							
(Constant)		56.192	.000				
Internet Addiction	-.702	-13.883	.000	.493	.491	192.730	.000 ^b
Dependent Variable: Psychological							
(Constant)		46.515	.000				
Internet Addiction	-.730	-15.041	.000	.533	.531	226.226	.000 ^b
Dependent Variable: Social Relationship							
(Constant)		50.146	.000				
Internet Addiction	-.759	-16.423	.000	.577	.575	269.705	.000 ^b
Dependent Variable: Environment							

DISCUSSION:

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between internet addiction and quality of life. The findings revealed that there is a correlation between excessive internet use and negative perception of quality of life in all its domains.

Consistent with earlier research, internet addiction was found to be negatively correlated with quality of life. For instance in studies by Solati et al.(2018) in Iran , IA decreased the physical effect of quality of life. Furthermore, a study conducted by Lu et al. found China, it was found that IA had a negative impact on QOL across the physical, psychological, and environmental aspects. Similarly, Fatehi et al.(2016) in Iran demonstrated that IA reduced QOL in the physical, psychological, and social dimensions. The findings of three studies conducted in Taiwan (Chern, K. C,2018), China (Li,L , 2020), and the USA(Geisel O,2015) indicated that IA negatively affected QOL in terms of physical, social, psychological, and environmental aspects.

However, a research study conducted in Saudi Arabia (Almukhtar,2020) a moderately level of internet addiction was found and quality of life among these students scored high in the physical, social, psychological, and environmental sub-domains of the quality of life. One explanation for this discrepancy could be regional differences in internet usage patterns. Compared with other countries, social media and cellphone use may be less ingrained. Additionally, the influence of religious and traditional values in Saudi Arabia may provide students with a stronger support system, potentially mitigating the negative aspects of internet use. A research study conducted by Gupta and Sharma (2016) in the Delhi NCR region demonstrated that excessive Internet use does not have a detrimental impact on an individual's quality of life. It is important to recognize that Internet use is not always negative, and certain internet-related activities have been shown to benefit college students, according to Shields (2011). Additionally, other factors beyond the internet influence an individual's quality of life.

The study's results indicate a relationship between internet addiction and reduced quality of life, but cultural and personal factors may have a moderating effect. Future research should investigate these moderators in greater detail, taking into account regional distinctions and the positive aspects of internet use alongside its drawbacks. By examining how cultural values and support networks intersect with internet use, valuable insights can be gained for interventions and fostering healthy online behaviors among students.

LIMITATIONS:

The study may not be generalizable to the entire population of college students in Bangalore due to the reliance on a convenience or online sample. Self-reported measures of internet addiction and quality of life might be susceptible to bias. The study design cannot establish causality between internet addiction and quality of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Conduct future studies with larger, more representative samples of college students in Bangalore. Utilize objective measures of internet addiction alongside self-reported data. Employ longitudinal research designs to investigate causal relationships between internet addiction and quality of life over time.

CONCLUSION:

The study's conclusions unequivocally demonstrate how internet addiction negatively affects people's general quality of life and well-being in various contexts. It is clear from the correlation and regression analyses that there is a substantial decline in the quality of life in relation to degrees of internet addiction in regard to aspects like physical health, psychological well-being, social interactions, and environmental factors.

In line with earlier studies, this study emphasizes the harmful relationship between excessive internet use and supports the theory that increased online addiction results in a worse sense of well being. Regression research, notably, shows that internet addiction, with percentages ranging from 49.1% to 59.8%, explains a significant amount of the variance in quality of life and related domains.

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