

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

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ABSTRACT

For the purpose of pursuing education, students stay in hostel to carry out their desired course. During hostel life, they gain experience and learn various things from their teachers and inmates. In addition, as they are staying away from their family, they go through certain enduring experiences like loneliness, lack of social support, and other issues. The present study examined the relationship between loneliness, social support internet addiction, and life satisfaction among day scholars and hostel students. The sample consisted of 200 college students out of which 100 were day scholars and 100 were hostel students. The students were selected from 3 colleges in Chennai city. The students were administered Internet Addiction Test (IAT) by Dr. Kimberly Young (1996), UCLA Loneliness Scale by Russell, D. (1978), Social Support Questionnaire by Sarason et al., (1987) and Life Satisfaction by Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). Pearson correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between internet addiction, loneliness, social support and life satisfaction. Independent samples t-test was used to examine the difference between day scholars and hostel students. The analysis revealed that internet addiction and loneliness were significantly positively correlated. There was no significant relationship between internet addiction and social support. Internet addiction and life satisfaction were found to be significantly negatively correlated. Loneliness and social support were found to be significantly negatively correlated. Loneliness and life satisfaction were found to be significantly negatively correlated. There was a significant positive correlation between social support and life satisfaction. Also, results indicated that there were no significant differences in internet addiction and life satisfaction among day scholars and hostel students. There were significant differences in loneliness and social support among day scholars and hostel students. Hostel students tended to have higher loneliness and experience lesser social support.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, college students.*

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Received: June 28, 2018; Revision Received: July 16, 2018; Accepted: August 5, 2018

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

The hostel is a place of residence where students stay away from their homes for pursuing their education. The hostel generally consists of students from different cultural, social, ethical, geographical, and financial backgrounds. Living in hostel gives an experience of learning various things from their inmates as well as with their teachers. It enhances students' personal abilities like decision making, taking responsibility, compromising with other roommates and students, and they also learn how to live independently. It may also contribute character building as well (Mishra, 1994). It is a common belief that, hostel life has distinct impact on students' pattern of life. It makes them behaviorally and socially different from others. Hostel life influences the students' personality, views and perceptions about various things, cognition, behavior, and dressing as well.

As the hostel students are living away from their family, they go through certain enduring experiences in their life. They may feel lonely and lack social support. Studies have also reported that people who feel lonely and lack social support tend to use internet to get connected with others through online, and receive support from online forums and supportive groups. A study by Sharma and Sharma (2017) assessed the relationship of internet addiction with loneliness and academic performance of the secondary school students. Results indicated a significant and positive relationship of internet addiction with the loneliness among secondary school students. Loneliness is caused not by being alone but being without some definite needed relationship (Weiss, 1973). Also, they feel they are lacking support. Pascarel la and Terenzini (1991) reported that first year students who are preoccupied with friends from home struggle to adjust. Peer support and peer networks were critical in a person's adjustment into university life (Tao et al. 2000).

Internet addiction is defined as any online-related, compulsive behavior which interferes with normal living and causes severe stress on family, friends, loved ones, and one's work environment. Internet addiction has been called Internet dependency and Internet compulsivity. It is a compulsive behavior which dominates the addict's life completely. The addicts usually prioritize the internet over family, friends, and work. It is said to be internet addiction disorder when the frequent and excessive use of internet interfere with daily life. Commonly, internet addiction disorder is subdivided into various categories which include gaming, social networking, email, blogging, online shopping, and inappropriate pornography use. Many researchers indicate that how the internet being used is considered as troublesome.

Adolescents are attracted to the internet. They may get attracted to internet for several reasons. About 90% of adolescents in the United States have internet access and more than half of them are interacting through social networking (Harvard Mental Health Letter, 2009). They get overly involved with internet due to various stress-related variables (Lam, Zi-wen, Jin-cheng, and Jin (2009). It is also an interesting and attractive aspect for adolescents, as it allows them to involve in activities they might not have access in the real world. Adolescents use internet for information sharing, entertainment such as playing online games, listening music, watching movies, and communication for interacting with others Eastin (2005).

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

Loneliness is an emotional response which results from the absence of interpersonal relationships. Lonely people feel left out of social events, isolated from others, and lacking in close interpersonal relationships (Berg & Peplau, 1982).

Several studies examined the relationship between loneliness and internet addiction among university students. Hasmujaj (2016) found out that internet addiction and loneliness were negatively correlated and there was no gender difference was found between male and female students. In contrast, a study by Sharma and Sharma (2017) showed the significant positive correlation between internet addiction and loneliness.

Albrecht and Adelman (1987) defined social support as “verbal and nonverbal communication between recipients and providers that reduces uncertainty about the situation, the self, the other, or the relationship, and functions to enhance a perception of personal control in one’s life experience”.

There are wide ranges of sources which provide social support, including family, friends, community people, romantic partners, coworkers, and pets. Support received from families during the early stages of life has been considered as an important factor in children’s abilities to develop social competencies. Parental relationships which are supportive also have benefits college-aged students. Online social support is another form of support system which is available among variety of social media platforms.

Life satisfaction is “the global evaluation by the person about his or her life” (Pavot, Diener, Colvin, and Sandvik, 1991). It is one of the indicators of subjective well-being (Horley, 1984). It is the ultimate goal of human beings towards which they strive and want to achieve it.

In one research study, the effects of both social support and self-esteem in the association between gratitude and life satisfaction among undergraduate students was assessed. They found that females with high social support scores reported higher life satisfaction than males (Kong, Ding, and Zhao, 2015).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relationship between internet addiction and loneliness among Albanian students of University of Shkodra was investigated by Hasmujaj (2016). The study also examined the gender differences. The sample consisted of 151 students ages between 18-23 years. Internet Addiction Test and UCLA Loneliness Scale were used to collect the data. Results showed that there is a mild negative correlation between internet addiction and loneliness. Moreover, no gender differences were found with regard to internet addiction and loneliness. Finally, these findings suggested that students who were addicted to internet have significantly lower levels of loneliness.

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

Mahanta and Aggarwal (2013) conducted a research study to examine the effects of perceived social support on the life satisfaction of university students and gender differences were also assessed. 100 postgraduate students were participated in this study. The tools used in this study were Perceived Social Support scales by Procidano & Heller and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin (1985). Analysis revealed that there were no gender differences in perceived social support from family but a significant difference was found out for the perceived social support from friends. Moreover, the female students were found to have higher life satisfaction in comparison with male students. Findings also indicated significant correlation between life satisfaction and perceived social support from family and friends.

The effects of both social support and self-esteem in the association between gratitude and life satisfaction among undergraduate students was investigated by Kong, Ding, and Zhao (2015). Gratitude Questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived social support and the satisfaction with life Scale were administered on 427 Chinese undergraduate students. Analysis revealed that social support acted as a full mediator of the association between gratitude and life satisfaction. The findings also revealed a significant path from gratitude through social support and self-esteem to life satisfaction. Moreover, it was found that males with high level of gratitude were more likely to receive greater social support than females, whereas females with high social support tended to report higher life satisfaction than males. The role of personality traits (extraversion and neuroticism), loneliness, and online social support in Initiating internet addiction and its impact on procrastination was investigated by Malik and Rafiq (2016). The sample comprised of students between 14-33 years of age. The scales used to collect the data included Internet Addiction Test (Young, 1998), Extraversion and Neuroticism subscales of International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg, 1999), Wittenberg Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale (Wittenberg, 1986), Online Social Support Network Scale (Moody, 2001), and General Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986). It was found that there was significant positive correlation between internet addiction and online social support. In addition, internet addiction was found significantly associated with procrastination after statistically controlling the effects of age, gender, neuroticism, loneliness, and online social support.

Samaha and Hawi (2016) conducted a study which aimed at investigating the relationship between risk of smartphone addiction and satisfaction with life mediated by stress and academic performance. They also explored whether satisfaction with life mediated by stress and academic performance facilitates smartphone addiction. The sample included of 300 university students. Smartphone Addiction Scale - Short Version, the Perceived Stress Scale, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale were used in this study. Statistical analysis indicated that smartphone addiction risk was positively related to perceived stress, but perceived stress was negatively related to satisfaction with life. In addition, it was found that

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

smartphone addiction risk and academic performance was negatively correlated, whereas academic performance was positively correlated with life satisfaction.

Objectives

The following were the objectives of the study.

1. To assess potential internet addiction among college students,
2. To determine the relationship between internet addiction, loneliness, social support, and life satisfaction in college students,
3. To examine the difference in internet addiction, loneliness, social support, and life satisfaction among day scholars and hostel students.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated.

1. There will be no significant relationship between internet addiction and loneliness among college students,
2. There will be no significant relationship between internet addiction and social support among college students,
3. There will be no significant relationship between internet addiction and life satisfaction among college students,
4. There will be no significant relationship between loneliness and social support among college students,
5. There will be no significant relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction among college students,
6. There will be no significant relationship between social support and life satisfaction among college students,
7. There will be no significant difference in internet addiction among day scholars and hostel students,
8. There will be no significant difference in loneliness among day scholars and hostel students,
9. There will be no significant difference in social support among day scholars and hostel students,
10. There will be no significant difference in life satisfaction among day scholars and hostel students.

Description of Tools

Internet Addiction Test (IAT) by Dr. Kimberly Young (Young, K. 1996) measures the extent of involvement with the computer and classifies the addictive behavior in terms of mild, moderate, and severe impairment. This is a 20-item questionnaire on which respondents are asked to rate items on a five-point Likert scale. This scale has good internal consistency reliability as well as concurrent validity. The overall Cronbach's alpha value computed from the studies was found to be 0.889.

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

UCLA Loneliness Scale by Russell, D, Peplau, L. A. & Ferguson, M. L. (1978) which measures one's subjective feelings of loneliness as well as feelings of social isolation. It is a 20-item scale, each rated on a four point scale from 'often' to 'never'. This questionnaire is highly reliable and valid. This questionnaire has high internal consistency (coefficient alpha = 0.96) and a test-retest correlation over a two-month period of 0.73.

The Social Support Questionnaire- Short Form (Sarason et al., 1987). It is a 6 item measure of social support. For each of the 6 items, respondents indicate the number of people available to provide support in each of 6 areas and then rate the overall level of satisfaction with the support given in each of the areas. The number scores yielded an inter-item correlation ranging from 0.35 to 0.71 ($m=0.54$). The Cronbach's alpha for internal reliability was 0.97. The inter-item correlations for the satisfaction scores ranged from 0.21 to 0.74, and the coefficient alpha was 0.94. Test-retest correlations of 0.90 for overall number scores and satisfaction scores of 0.83 were obtained.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen and Sharon Griffin (1985) which measures global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. This scale consists of 5 items that are to be rated on 7 point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Reliability has been demonstrated in terms of high internal consistency with a value of 0.87. The test-retest coefficient is found to be 0.82. This scale has adequate criterion validity, good convergent and discriminant validity (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Research Design

The research was an ex-post facto research.

Sample

The sample consisted of 200 college students in the age range of 17-25, in Chennai city. Out of 200 students, 100 were day scholars and 100 were hostel students.

Procedure of Data Collection

For the present study, 200 students were selected from 3 colleges in the Chennai city. Permission was obtained from the Principal of the college to collect data. The questionnaire was verified by the Principal and was distributed to the students with the help of few professors. The purpose of the study was explained to them. Informed consent was taken before initiating the study and the students were given confidentiality for the information collected from them.

Statistical Procedure

1. Pearson product-moment correlation was computed to examine relationship between Internet Addiction, Loneliness, Social Support, and Life Satisfaction.
2. Individual sample t-test was used to assess the difference between day scholars and hostel students.

TABLES AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between Internet Addiction and Loneliness among College students.

Variable	N	Correlation Coefficient
Internet Addiction	200	0.182**
Loneliness	200	

**P<0.01

The correlation coefficient between internet addiction and loneliness is $r(198) = 0.182, p < .01$. This indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between internet addiction and loneliness among college students. Thus, it can be inferred that college students who have internet addiction are likely to experience loneliness. The findings seem to indicate that students who spend more time on internet, avoid going out with others are likely to feel more lonely and isolated. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis stating there is no relationship between internet addiction and loneliness among college students.

Similar findings were reported by Sharma and Sharma (2017) who assessed the relationship of internet addiction with loneliness and academic performance of the secondary school students. Results indicated a significant and positive relationship of internet addiction with the loneliness among secondary school students.

Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between Internet Addiction and Social Support among College students.

Variable	N	Correlation Coefficient
Internet Addiction	200	- 0.116 NS
Social Support	200	

NS Not Significant

The correlation coefficient between internet addiction and social support is $r(198) = - 0.116$, which is not significant. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between internet addiction and social support among college students. Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between internet addiction and social support among college students.

Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between Internet Addiction and Life Satisfaction among College students.

Variable	N	Correlation Coefficient
Internet Addiction	200	- 0.228**
Life Satisfaction	200	

**P<0.01

The correlation coefficient between internet addiction and life satisfaction is $r(198) = - 0.228, p < .01$. This indicates that there is a significant negative correlation between internet addiction and life satisfaction among college students. Since these two variables are

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

negatively correlated, it can be understood that if internet addiction increases, the life satisfaction decreases. Thus, it can be inferred that students who have internet addiction are more likely to have lesser life satisfaction than students who do not have internet addiction. The findings seem to indicate that students whose grades were affected by internet usage, who feel depressed and nervous when they were not using internet are likely to experience less life satisfaction. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between internet addiction and life satisfaction among college students.

Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between Loneliness and Social Support among College students.

Variable	N	Correlation Coefficient
Loneliness	200	- 0.328**
Social Support	200	

**P<0.01

The correlation coefficient between loneliness and social support is $r(198) = -0.328, p < .01$. This indicates that there is a significant negative correlation between loneliness and social support among college students. Thus, it can be interpreted that students who experience loneliness are more likely to get lesser social support than students who do not experience loneliness. It can be inferred that students who feel they were completely alone, think that their social relationships were superficial, feel that they were unable to reach out and communicate with others those around them are more likely to get less social support. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between loneliness and social support among college students.

Table 5: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between Loneliness and Life Satisfaction among College students.

Variable	N	Correlation Coefficient
Loneliness	200	- 0.278**
Life Satisfaction	200	

**P<0.01

The correlation coefficient between loneliness and life satisfaction is $r(198) = -0.278, p < .01$. This indicates that there is a significant negative correlation between loneliness and life satisfaction among college students. Since these two variables were negatively correlated, it can be inferred that students who experience loneliness are likely to have lesser life satisfaction than students who do not experience loneliness. Students who feel that they were isolated and excluded by others, difficult to make friends are more likely to experience less life satisfaction. Hence, we reject, the null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction among college students.

Similar findings reported by Bugay (2007) who examined the relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction among Turkish university students. The results of the study revealed that loneliness was negatively related to life satisfaction.

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

Table 6: Pearson’s Product Moment correlation between Social Support and Life Satisfaction among College students.

Variable	N	Correlation Coefficient
Social Support	200	0.287**
Life Satisfaction	200	

**P<0.01

The correlation coefficient between social support and life satisfaction is $r(198) = 0.287, p < .01$. This indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between social support and life satisfaction among college students. This reveals that college students who get social support are likely to become satisfied with life. This seems to indicate that students who received help when they are in need, who have been accepted with both their best and worst points, are likely to have more life satisfaction. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between social support and life satisfaction among college students.

Table 7: Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation, ‘t’ value for Internet Addiction between Day scholars and hostel students.

Variable	Sample	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	C.R. Value
Internet Addiction	Day Scholars	100	37.03	16.33	0.489 NS
	Hostel students	100	38.09	14.23	

NS Not Significant

The result indicates that there is no significant difference in internet addiction among day scholars and hostel students $t(198) = 0.489$. While, both mean scores fall in the average category of internet addiction, there is no significant difference between these two groups. This shows that both day scholars ($M = 37.03, SD = 16.33$) and hostel students ($M = 38.09, SD = 14.23$) do not differ in the way they use internet. Being average users of internet, they may surf the web a bit too long at times, but they have control over their usage. Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in internet addiction among day scholars and hostel students.

Table 8: Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation, ‘t’ value for Loneliness between Day scholars and hostel students.

Variable	Sample	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	C.R. Value
Loneliness	Day scholars	100	18.76	12.28	2.489*
	Hostel students	100	22.85	10.91	

*P< 0.05

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

The results indicate that there is significant difference in loneliness among day scholars and hostel students $t(198) = 2.489, p < .05$. Hostel students have obtained higher score in loneliness compared to day scholars. It can be inferred from the mean values that hostel students ($M = 22.85, SD = 10.91$) are lonelier than day scholars ($M = 18.76, SD = 12.28$). Hostel students seem to feel unhappy when they are doing things alone, they feel that they lack companionship and think that their social relationships are superficial. They also feel that they are left out and isolated from others than day scholars. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in loneliness among day scholars and hostel students.

Table 9: Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation, 't' value for Social Support between Day scholars and hostel students.

Variable	Sample	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	C.R. Value
Social Support	Day scholars	100	5.34	0.78	3.244**
	Hostel students	100	4.90	1.10	

** $P < 0.01$

The results indicate that there is significant difference in social support among day scholars and hostel students $t(198) = 3.244, p < .01$. It is observed from the table that day scholars have obtained higher score in social support compared to day scholars. It can be inferred from mean values that day scholars ($M = 5.34, SD = 0.78$) get more social support than hostel students ($M = 4.90, SD = 1.10$). Day scholars seem to receive more support when they feel down-in-the-dumps and they get more help from when they are in need. Since, hostel students are staying away from their family members, they seem to receive lesser social support that day scholars. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in social support among day scholars and hostel students.

Table 10: Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation, 't' value for Life Satisfaction between Day scholars and hostel students.

Variable	sample	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	C.R. Value
Life Satisfaction	Day scholars	100	23.80	5.93	0.601 NS
	Hostel students	100	23.35	4.55	

NS Not Significant

The result indicates that there is no significant difference in life satisfaction among day scholars and hostel students $t(198) = 0.601$. Both day scholars ($M = 23.80, SD = 5.93$) and hostel students ($M = 23.35, SD = 4.55$) have almost equal level of life satisfaction. The findings seem to indicate that both day scholars and hostel students have gotten important

Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students

things they want in their life, and on an average level, they feel that their lives are close to their ideal. Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in life satisfaction among day scholars and hostel students.

CONCLUSIONS

The study examined the relationship between internet addiction, loneliness, social support, and life satisfaction among day scholars and hostel students and assessed whether there were any differences in internet addiction, loneliness, social support, and life satisfaction among day scholars and hostel students.

The findings of the study were as follows:

1. There was a significant positive correlation internet addiction and loneliness among college students.
2. There was no significant relationship was found between internet addiction and social support among college students.
3. There was a significant negative correlation between internet addiction and life satisfaction among college students.
4. There was a significant negative correlation between loneliness and social support among college students.
5. There was a significant negative correlation between loneliness and life satisfaction among college students.
6. There was a significant positive correlation between social support and life satisfaction among college students.
7. There was no significant difference in internet addiction among day scholars and hostel students.
8. There was significant difference in loneliness among day scholars and hostel students.
9. There was significant difference in social support among day scholars and hostel students.
10. There was no significant difference was found in life satisfaction among day scholars hostel students.

Limitations

1. The study was conducted with a sample size of only 200 college students.
2. The study was only conducted on female college students.
3. The study was limited to the geographical location of Chennai.
4. The age range was exclusive to students who were studying and age between 17 to 25 years.

Implications

Hostel students were found to experience high loneliness and less social support. Because they feel lonely and lack social support, they use internet as a coping mechanism. It is important that the college/hostel has to provide periodic social support to hostel students. Psychosocial interventions can help them cope with their problems and deal them effectively.

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Acknowledgements

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper is in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be able to be mentioned.

Conflict of Interest

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

How to cite this article: Siyana, S & Zinna A. A (2018). Loneliness, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Internet Addiction among Day Scholars and Hostel Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6(3), 137-148. DIP:18.01.035/20180603, DOI:10.25215/0603.035