

Internet addiction and resilience among parents and children during lockdown in the pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Background- Implementation of lockdown has resulted in increased dependence on Internet for both parents and children. **Aim-** To compare the child and parent's participants on the variables Resilience and Internet Addiction. **Method-** The present study included total 180 participants (child, N=90 and parents N=90) who were recruited from New Delhi and Sonapat, India. Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire and Young Internet Addiction Test were used for the assessment. **Result-** This study found that children have lower resilience when compared to their parents who had higher Internet addiction than their children. **Conclusion-** Findings of the present research can help the psychologists to understand the behaviour, in terms of internet usage and coping in terms of resilience among people during a pandemic.

Keywords: Internet addiction, Resilience, Child, Parent, Lockdown

Households with kids have been facing a lot of pressure during this lockdown as parents struggle to limit the screen time of their kids while trying to tackle to keep up with their job requirements working from home. With everything going online, from classes to office work, people are finding it hard to turn off their mobiles or laptops fearing of missing out on an important mail or an online class. Under such conditions, communication between parents and their children have become increasingly difficult as both of them try to cope with the change in situation.

Internet Addiction

With the advancement in technology, internet has become a very important part of everyone's life. However, it is also known that too much of anything is bad, similarly, using too much internet on a daily basis can lead to an addiction and Internet Addiction has been identified by many psychologists as an emerging problem among people who upon its deprivation can exhibit withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, palpitations and hyperactivity.

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Types of Internet Addiction

Five sub-categories of Internet Addiction have been identified by various researchers (Khudhair, 2020). These are:

- 1. Net Compulsions:** These are concerned with the type of activities that one engages in online. These can include online shopping, gambling or auctions. Net compulsions can have detrimental effect on a person's financial status, not to mention on his responsibilities at home or at workplace.
- 2. Compulsive Information Seeking:** This is seen as an uncontrollable urge to seek and arrange information online. It can reduce work productivity and can make an individual neglect his daily responsibilities.
- 3. Cybersex Addiction:** It is an addiction to any service online which can cause a damaging effect on a person's ability to form a romantic or intimate relationship in real life.
- 4. Cyber (online) Relationship Addiction:** People with this type of addiction, try to form relationships online on internet and often neglect the ones they have in real life.
- 5. Computer or Gaming Addiction:** As explained by the name itself, a computer or gaming addict is addicted to play games in computer all day long and ignore their responsibilities.

Causes of Internet Addiction

There is no single cause to Internet Addiction except increased exposure to technology and dependence on it even for daily activities like shopping, attending classes in this lockdown and completing the work of office.

Symptoms of Internet Addiction

The warning signs that can be utilized to tell if a person is addicted to internet can be grouped into two categories:

- a) Emotional symptoms:* such as depression, anxiety, losing the sense of time, isolation, feeling euphoric in front of the computer, dishonesty, avoiding doing work, feelings of guilt, dishonesty, etc. and
- b) Physical symptoms:* Sleep disturbance, fluctuation in weight, strained or blurred vision, headache, backache, etc.

Especially during this lockdown, it has become a need to have access to internet to obtain necessary information and updates about the ongoing situation. People who did not have access to internet earlier are now purchasing internet packs and learning the basic functions of internet.

Resilience

Resilience, an upcoming concept in psychology has been defined as adapting positively in the face of diversity (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). Resilience is a lot of adaptable psychological, behavioral and emotional reactions to intense or incessant misfortunes which can be unordinary or basic spot (Neenan, 2009). Resilience is a limit which assists individuals with functioning admirably when confronted with new difficulties, setbacks and even crisis. Older people are known to have higher resilience (MacLeod, Musich, Hawkins, Alsgaad, & Wicker, 2016). In troublesome occasions such as pandemic, strength as an expertise comes convenient. Life is extremely unsure, consistently we hear some random thing going haywire, the pandemic, passings, sickness, sadness, depression and so on throughout the years numerous psychologist have proposed their thoughts of the word resilience. There are some key factors that have been distinguished that make an individual

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stronger. Optimism, confidence, positive attitude, ability to regulate emotions are few to count (Shiner, A., Watson, J., Dooan, N., & Howe, A., 2020.)

Robertson T.W., Ran Z., Yepoza K.A (2018) - research focuses on the defensive factor that may lessen the probability of a person suffer from internet addiction, focusing on the role of resilience. Total 240 participants filled the questionnaire which measures general internet addiction and resilience. The finding reveals that resilience and internet addiction are inversely proportional to each other. More the resilience less will be the internet addiction. More time spend on online gaming will tend to increase the higher level of internet addiction.

Zhou P., Zhang C., Liu J., Wang Z. (2017) - discussed about the relationship between Resilience and Internet addiction. Elementary school students (N=58,756) completed four questionnaires to study the internet addiction and resilience. Result reveals that Resilience is negatively correlated with internet addiction. It was also discussed that improving resilience can be an effective way to lower the behavior of internet addiction.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

To compare child and parent participants on the variables Resilience and Internet Addiction.

Hypothesis

In the present research it is hypothesized that,

H1: Child will show a significantly lower resilience as compared to parent's participants.

H2: Parent's participants will show significantly more Internet addiction as compared to Child participants.

Research Design

The investigation of the present research is based on non-experimental cross-sectional research design. The study is an empirical type study which is quantitative in nature.

Sample

A sample of 180 (90 child and 90 parent's) has been collected through purposive sampling technique. Age range lies between 18-60 years. The participants were recruited from New Delhi and Sonipat.

Selection Criteria for participants

Inclusion Criteria: both child and parents were from the same house, people who have the knowledge and means of accessing internet.

Exclusion criteria- people who don't have the knowledge and means of accessing internet.

Tools

The following two tools were used in this study were,

1. **Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire-** Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ) is a 12 items measure on resilience, created by McBride (2010). It is measured on a five point Likert's scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Examples of test items include "I do not take criticism personally". Scores 0-37 a developing level of resilience, scores 38-43 indicate an established level of resilience, scores 44-48 indicate a strong level of resilience and

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scores 49-60 indicate an exceptional level of resilience. This measure had high reliability with Cronbach's Alpha = .76.

- 2. Young Internet Addiction Test-** Young Internet addiction Test (YIAT) is a 20 items scale, developed by Young K (1998). It is measured on a Six- point Likert's scale, ranging from "rarely" to "does not apply". Total score range from 0 to 100, Scores 20-49 indicates an average on-line user, scores 50-79 indicates experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of internet, scores 80-100 indicates experiencing significant problem in life because of internet usage. The higher the score, the greater level of addiction is. The validity of the IAT has shown strong internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.90-0.93$) and good test-retest reliability ($r = 0.85$).

Procedure

Both the group was approached through both, WhatsApp and face-to-face interaction where they were briefed about the objectives of the study. After taking the consent form they were given the questionnaire, either through Google form or physical paper based on their convenience. They were informed verbally by the researcher that their response will be used only for the purpose of this research and confidentiality was ensured to them. Participants completed both the questionnaires and at the end, their queries regarding their general life that cropped up while responding to the questionnaire items were addressed and they were duly thanked for their co-operation and participation.

Statistical Analysis

To compare the two groups, independent sample T-test has been applied by using SPSS version 20.

RESULT

The purpose of this study was to compare Child and Parent participants pertaining to their Resilience and Internet Addiction and in doing so the following tools have been used: Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire and Young Internet Addiction Test.

Table 1: Comparison of Child and Parent Participants on the variables Resilience and Internet Addiction

Variables	Group	Mean	Standard deviation	Std. error of mean	Std. error of difference	t	P value
Resilience	Child	35.63	6.43	0.68	1.006	4.8496	<0.0001
	Parent	40.51	7.05	0.74			
Internet Addiction	Child	44.81	19.61	2.07	3.555	2.3472	0.0200
	Parent	53.52	27.44	2.89			

Table 1 shows that mean and standard deviation for Resilience of child (35.63 ± 6.43) and parent (40.51 ± 7.05) participants. The Standard error of mean for Resilience child and parent participants came out to be 0.68 and 0.74 respectively. The Standard error of difference for the same variable for both the groups was 1.006. T value and p value came out to be 4.8496 and less than 0.0001. Result shows that children showed significantly lower resilience as compared to parents indicating that the hypothesis, H1 has been supported.

The mean and standard deviation for Internet addiction of child (44.81 ± 19.61) and parent (53.52 ± 27.44) participants have also been depicted in Table 1. The Standard error of mean for Internet Addiction of child and parent participants came out to be 2.07 and 2.89, respectively. The Standard error of difference for Internet Addiction of both the groups came

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out to be 2.3472. T value and p value was to be 2.3472 and equal to 0.0200. According to the result parents showed significantly more Internet Addiction as compared to their child, therefore, hypothesis, H2 has been supported.

DISCUSSION

With almost half of the world forced to remain confined within their homes, COVID-19 has given the humanity a new "normal". Earlier, where making money asked for stepping out of the house and travel to office every day, the lockdown resulting from the pandemic has open the doors for "working from home" where people are now sitting at home with a laptop and a smart phone and still meeting all the deadlines. On one hand where this is a welcome change for everyone in terms of saving travel time and money, on the other, it has made the internet and technology a need with everyone staring at their screens all day long giving rise to physiological problems such as chronic pains and compromised posture. Along with this, they limit one's ability to focus on social relationships outside of internet.

With the change in guidelines issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), where the duration of online classes was limited to just 2 hours per day, children can now limit their screen time and will have ample amount of time left after their classes to engage in other activities such as learning an instrument or reading.

Limit on the duration of online classes has somewhat kept a check on how much children are exposed to internet and screens on a daily basis and their parents too are getting conscious about how much time their child is spending surfing on the internet. A large number of experts are advising the parents to engage their children in activities they enjoy and spend time with them playing some indoor games with the entire family. This not only serves as an effective technique to promote bonding within the family and interpersonal relationship among family members, but it also facilitates the communication within the family system.

On the other hand, parents have no such check on their daily internet usage. Along with the work online, adults are also engaged in watching online movies or videos on various platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, etc., which further adds to their use of internet and as it increases, their dependence on online services and internet increases so much so that they are finding it hard to stay away from their electronic devices (mobile phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) making them vulnerable to get addicted to internet.

Psychological attribute, resilience might come handy to cope during this time. It acts as a shield against addiction to internet and helps in adapting to the change. Owing to the difference in age, parents and children differ significantly in their resilience with parents scoring higher than their children. This was congruent with the findings of Brandstädter (1999) who said that later in life, with experience adaptive resilience and resourcefulness is built through a balanced function of immunization, accommodation and assimilation. Therefore, resilience differ significantly between age groups with older people scoring higher than the younger ones on this construct.

Children with their limited experience and exposure to adversities have somewhat less experience in coping with them therefore have less resilience.

Many parents are using this lockdown as an opportunity to bond with their children by asking them to teach how to use smart phones, trying to remain within the race of development. It not only gives them an insight into the world of their children by engaging

them in activities they enjoy but is also facilitating their attempts to get rid of boredom at home and allows them to have a little change in their monotonous schedules.

CONCLUSION

Condition of Lockdown emerging due to spread of a virus across borders has caused serious concerns not only for physical health but also for the mental health of people. When the gravity of the situation finally sank in among the people, they started talking about the "new normal". A life where work from home is no longer rare; but is a way of life. This pandemic gave people a new opportunity to explore and push their boundaries to adjust to this life. From taking classes online to working while sitting at a remote place even far away from their workplace everything has changed.

In the present study, the authors were able to establish some important findings, parents and children differ significantly on both, internet addiction and resilience. Though this was contrary to some researches, it is also true that over the past few months; a lot has changed, with a virus on loose people are filled with uncertainty about the future and their lifestyle underwent major changes within a short time span. Findings of the present research can help the psychologists to understand the behaviour, in terms of internet usage and coping in terms of resilience among people during a pandemic.

Limitations and Recommendations

The present study has some limitations like small sample size, and the division of sample across two cities, Sonipat and New Delhi. These limitations can be coped up by further researches where the researcher can collect large sample size from a single city. Despite these limitations, the results of this study can be employed to understand resilience among children and their parents.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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