

Internet addiction among prison staffs and influence of selected demographic variables

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyse the prevalence of Internet addiction among prison staffs with respect to their selected demographic variables. The data collected for this research was accumulated through various prison staffs from various parts of Karnataka and finally a total of 490 samples of prison staff were collected. The Internet Addiction test (IAT) by Dr. Kimberley Young was used in this study. About 38% of the selected sample of prison staff had mild to severe levels of addiction. Male prison staff had higher levels of internet addiction than female prison staff. Prison staffs belonging to 24-26 years had higher level of internet addiction than the other age groups. 39.2% of the prison staff from urban domicile had internet addiction from mild to moderate level as against 25.5% of the prison staff from rural area.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Prison Staff*

Internet has become one of the basic fundamental requirements of present day needs and has surely made a huge impact on the present generation. But the impact being positive or negative is still debatable. The word internet takes a lot of meaning and can be defined depending on its usage and requirements and one such definition of internet according to Collins dictionary is that internet is a network of computer that lets the users of computers to join with different computers present worldwide. Parallel to this definition it can also be seen from addiction point of view which states, a psychological or physical necessity to take, use or do something to an extent where it becomes harmful for the person. It can be related to work, drugs, gambling or even computers or internet. Internet addiction is one of the major addictions which is a disorder where unlike other disorders this does not involve consumption of any substance or an intoxicating drug. The usage of internet is enormous and has lot of applications and is not just limited to social media platforms, but is also a medium to inculcate and indulge in various activities as it acts as a source for data (Chauhan and Maniar, 2018), hobbies and learning.

It can also be compared to that gambling due to similar effects. There are common signs and symptoms of internet addiction which can be seen more often and these include: Frequent

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mood swings, depression, restlessness or irritability and when one tries to cut short internet usage time. People addicted to the internet tend to spend longer time than planned originally. Internet addicts assume that they feel good and satisfied when they use internet in increasing amounts of time, sometimes due to loss in self-control internet addicted people even risk the loss of their job, educational or career opportunities which shape their future and unfortunately addiction has negative effects on relationships. One of the major problems with internet addicts is that they tend to lie to their therapists, family members to hide the amount of internet usage and significantly effects the recovery rate(Musetti et.al 2016). An article by Cash and his fellow researches explained that the level of internet addiction significantly increases with the amount of time spent on internet. A study by Young in 1999 claimed that 'Internet addiction is an extensive term which covers a large variety of behaviours & impulse control problems. According to Lera-Lópeza , Margarita Billonb and María Gilb from their research in 2011, the usage of internet among housewives are much less than other groups of people due to lack of accessibility and connectivity. In another study from Lestari and Sunarto in 2018, they stated that due to the household pressure and restless works, the burden is further increased, thus leaving them with no time for self-care or overcoming the burden. Al-Saggaf et al. in 2017 stated that the dependency of a family member including controversies in long-term relationships had a negative impact on women as they wanted to spend time alone and hence using internet excessively. This study focuses on the levels of internet addiction among female and male prison staff as they would spend most of their time away from their smartphone.

Studies on internet addiction in general have revealed the following. D'Souza, Sukesh and Ravi (2018) found that personality factors Extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness were negatively related to internet addiction, whereas neuroticism factor was positively related to Internet addiction. As the levels of internet addiction increased, shyness in various domains-cognitive/affective, physiological and action-oriented domains increased significantly (Mahadevaswamy & D'Souza, 2018), internet addiction was positively related to academic stress (D'Souza, Manish & Raj, 2018) and negatively related to sleep quality among college students (D'Souza, Samyukta & Tejaswini, 2018). Further, internet addiction lead to decrease in the psychological wellbeing (Mahadevaswamy & D'Souza, 2017a), but not subjective wellbeing (Mahadevaswamy & D'Souza, 2017b).

Correctional officers or the prison staff are law enforcement officers who are accountable for people who are being in judicial custody for the commission of criminal offences, also for those felons who are waiting to be arraigned in a court of law. Their obligation is to ensure the safety and close supervision of inmates under their care. This study focuses on the level of Internet addiction that might be present in the Prison staff across Karnataka. This study also focuses on various demographic variables that can have an influence on internet addiction. There are no studies done on prison staff and internet addiction.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of 490 data was collected from the Prison training institution which consisted of Prison staff from all over Karnataka. Permissions were taken from the official authorities for this research work. There were 217 male samples and 273 female samples who were part of this research study.

Tools employed

Internet addiction Test: To understand and assess internet addition Dr. Kimberley Young developed IAT in 2004 which further helped in analysing the concept precisely. Twenty

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unique questions were formed and was evaluated based on a five-point Likert scale where the scores were distributed from 1 which implied rarely to 5 implying measuring mild, moderate and severe levels of internet addiction. The score range for average internet addiction was set in the range of 20 to 100 and test scores above this range indicated higher dependency and addiction to the internet. It covers the degree to which internet use affect daily routine, social life, productivity, sleeping pattern, and feeling. The instrument has exhibited good psychometric properties in previous researches. The reliability for this questionnaire is 0.899 in Cronbach's alpha the higher the score the greater the level of internet addiction (Pui, 2006). Total IAT scores between 20-39 represent control use of internet with mild addiction, score between 40-69 exhibit users with enormous issues and problems due to excess internet usage but are moderately addicted, and scores between 70-100 exhibit severely addicted users with serious issues and problems caused by their excess use of internet.

Procedure

For collecting data, the third author collected data from the prison training institution in Mysuru which consisted of samples from all over Karnataka. Permissions were taken from the officials before giving the questionnaires. During the interaction for conducting test and before giving the questionnaire, they were assured of confidentiality with the information and details. They were asked to answer all the questions in the questionnaire without any hesitation. The instructions were read out to everyone and the questionnaire was explained and clarified whenever they had difficulty in understanding the item/s, in order to get good and true response. After successful completion of the test, it was evaluated and an equivalent score was provided for each data sheet which was later fed to the computer. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in the present study. Descriptive statistics included mean and standard deviation. Chi-square test was used as an inferential statistic to find out the significance of difference between frequencies of various levels of internet addiction and also find out the association between gender, age, and domicile with levels of internet addiction. Table 1 presents frequency and percent levels of internet addiction by gender, age and domicile and results of chi-square tests.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of sleep quality and demographic variables

Variables		Internet Addiction				Test Statistics	
		Normal	Mild	Moderate	Severe Dependence		
Overall		F	306	118	62	4	X ² = 419.55 P= .001
		P	62.4%	24.1%	12.7%	0.8%	
Gender	Male	F	133	47	33	4	X ² = 8.074 P= .045
		P	61.3%	21.7%	15.2%	1.8%	
	Female	F	173	71	29	0	
		P	63.4%	26.0%	10.6%	0.0%	
Age	23 and below	F	115	35	12	0	X ² = 13.518 P= .036
		P	71.0%	21.6%	7.4%	0.0%	
	24-26	F	136	61	32	2	
		P	58.9%	26.4%	13.9%	0.9%	
	26 and above	F	55	22	18	2	
		P	56.7%	22.7%	18.6%	2.1%	
Domicile	Urban	F	161	60	40	4	X ² = 14.526 P= .024
		P	60.8%	22.6%	15.1%	1.5%	
	Rural	F	113	40	22	0	
		P	64.6%	22.9%	12.6%	0.0%	
	Semi-urban	F	32	18	0	0	
		P	64.0%	36.0%	0.0%	0.0%	

Note: F-Frequency; P-Percent

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Internet addiction: From the table it is visible that, majority of 62.4% of the sample had a normal level of usage of Internet. Out of the overall sample, 24.1% of them showed mild level of internet addiction followed by 12.7% with moderate level of Internet addiction. Only 0.8% of the overall sample was found to be severely dependent on Internet. The Pearson's chi-square test revealed a significant difference between the levels of Internet addiction and overall sample ($X^2= 419.55$; $P= .001$), supporting the difference in the level of internet addiction among Prison staffs.

Gender and Internet addiction: There were about 26% of female samples who had mild level of internet addiction whereas it was 21.7% in male sample. 15.2% of male sample showed a moderate level of internet addiction while there were 10.6% of female samples showing the same. Only the male samples showed severe dependence on Internet addiction scale which was about 1.8% of the overall male samples. However, the Pearson's Chi-Square test revealed a significant difference between gender and Internet addiction ($X^2= 8.074$; $P= .045$) showing that male samples were more prone towards internet addiction.

Age and Internet addiction: About of 26.4% of the sample belonging to the age group 24-26 showed mild Internet addiction, followed by 22.7% sample who were 26 and above leaving 21.6% of the sample belonging to 23 and below age group. It is also clear from the table that 18.6% of the sample belonging to the age group 26 and above showed moderate levels of internet addiction and 2.1% showed severe dependence. About 13.9% of the sample belonging to 24-26 age groups showed moderate internet addiction while 0.9% sample showed severe dependence. Only 7.4% who were 23 and below showed moderate level of internet addiction. On the Pearson's Chi-Square test, it was revealed that there was a significant difference among the age group and Internet addiction ($X^2= 13.518$; $P= .036$) asserting that 26 and above age group had more samples prone to be addicted.

Domicile and Internet addiction: Samples belonging to the urban domicile showed 22.6% against mild, 15.1% for Moderate level of internet addiction and 1.5% for severe dependence. While the Rural domicile samples held about 22.9% for Mild and 12.6% for moderate with no severe dependent samples. The semi-urban sample had mild level of internet addiction 36% while the remaining were Normal users of internet. Further, the Pearson's Chi-Square test revealed a significant difference between domicile and Internet addiction ($X^2= 8.074$; $P= .045$) showing that urban samples were more prone towards internet addiction.

DISCUSSIONS

Major Findings

1. About 38% of the selected sample of prison staff had mild to severe levels of addiction.
2. Male prison staff had higher levels of internet addiction than female prison staff.
3. Prison staff belonging to 24-26 years had higher level of internet addiction than the other age groups.
4. 39.2% of the prison staff from urban domicile had internet addiction from mild to moderate level as against 25.5% of the prison staff from rural area.

The current study's samples are Prison staff workers, there are no studies done on this sample with respect to Internet addiction. A study on gambling was found that 7.7% of military personals showed gambling problems post-deployment (Cowlshaw et.al 2020). A study by Poolsuwan (2018) conducted on military personals to analyse the usage of social

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media, it was found that the overall sample accessed social media about 3 hours every day. In this study, it was found that 38% of the overall prison staff who showed Internet addiction from mild to severe level. This is probably due to the work they have. As the prison staff are restricted to use their phone while they are on work, this leads to need for social interaction which they do through the smartphone. To overcome these needs, they might probably use internet as a key to their social needs.

From a research conducted by Prakash, Yadav & Singh in 2020, they found that male users were comparatively higher with 73.4% than that of female users with 62.8% which supports this study. It is observed that the present findings can be attributed and concluded to the fact that the sample used for this research comprised of well-educated individuals who were well updated with the technological advancements, improvised gadgets and their usage, and could use it with ease and were not dependent on others. However, there are more studies which were conducted in India and other parts of Asia which are in agreement with the findings of the current studies claiming that male samples showed more Internet addiction levels than female samples (Ataee. et.al:2014) and (Hassan, Alam, Wahab and Hawalader: 2020).

Kwon, Kim and So, did a study in 2020, while, a study in Bengaluru was conducted by Krishnamurthy and Chetlapallu who studied the age factors and impact of the addiction in 2015. When respondent with Age factor was evaluated, a significant amount of application who were below the age of 26 were found to have Internet Addiction. The respondents below the age 26 compared to respondents above the age of 26 showed that of Internet Addiction four times higher with odds ratio. This study revealed that prison staff belonging to 24-26 years showed higher level of Internet addiction than Prison staff above the age of 26 years.

A similar finding and results on domicile were obtained in Iran from a study in 2014 by Ataee .et al.; and Jafari, Dadipoor and Haghighi which corresponds to the current study. It was found that the respondents having education and from urban areas had higher proportion of IA. However, this study didn't focus on the education which is certainly a limitation of this study, although the domicile and IA have revealed a significant association. Surprisingly, all the severe internet addicted samples were from the urban domicile, this is possible because of the access to internet is more convenient and easier. The network availability is also better when compared to rural and semi-urban. But, according to latest study conducted in Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan in 2020 by Jain et al., had reported that IA has had an impact and variation depending upon the educational qualification and domicile of the respondents.

Since the study revealed that prison staff are having Internet addiction which certainly has an impact on psychological and administrative factor. Although, the reason behind this addiction can be found out through further research findings. It suggests that future studies can emphasis more on various platforms of internet usage that is leading to Internet Addiction.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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