

Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among Young Adults from North East, India

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to analyse the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among young adults ranging from 15 to 25 years of age from Northeast India. The sample includes 144 participants (F=71, M=73) under study. The tool used for measuring Emotional Intelligence was The Emotional Intelligence Test by Emily A. Sterrett (2014) and the tool used for measuring Internet Addiction was the Internet Addiction Test by Kimberly Young (1998). Descriptive statistics, Pearsons' correlation and independent sample t-test was used to study the data. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction. The study further showed that there was no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and also there was no significant gender difference in Internet Addiction among young adults.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Internet Addiction, Young Adults, Gender*

Emootional Intelligence

Individuals' capacity to understand their own and others' feelings is referred to as emotional intelligence. As said by Daniel Goleman, human beings have two distinctively different brains. The emotional brain consists of the amygdala and the limbic system, while the thinking brain is making up the neocortex and the cortex. If human's emotional brain only worked, we would be overwhelmed with sensitive information whereas if human's neocortex only worked, we would be cold heartless computers. Sensory input is sent to the thalamus, then through a single synapse to the amygdala, before being sent individually to the neocortex. But if the input to the amygdala triggers an emotional memory before the thinking brain has a chance to switch the feeling an individual can become stirred with emotions.

When it comes to controlling emotions, there are two types: excitement emotions and emotions that slow down or suppress. Depression and grief are examples of feelings that slow down. The intra-personal skills that enable a person to develop an accurate image of himself, access his or her own feelings, and use emotions to direct actions, and the inter-personal skills that allow a person to comprehend others and to note and react appropriately

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to their moods, temperaments, motives, and desires. Before moving to inter-personal emotional intelligence, intra-personal emotional intelligence is needed. Mayer and Salovey (1997) proposed an emotional intelligence model to address an increasing demand in psychology for a systematic way to research individual differences in emotional abilities. (1) The capacity to interpret and translate emotions in faces, pictures, voices, and cultural artefacts, as well as the ability to recognise one's own emotions, is known as perceiving emotions. (2) The ability to control one's emotions to promote different cognitive processes like reasoning and problem solving is known as using emotions. (3) Understanding emotions entails being able to decipher emotion language and appreciating the complexities of emotional relationships; (4) controlling emotions implies having the capability to control our own and others' emotions.

Internet Addiction

The Internet is a type of information and communication network that consists of computer devices linked together by communication networks to receive and transmit data between users. In today's world, internet is one a very essential source in our day to day lives because it is one of the most powerful and efficient ways to communicate through platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, emails, etc. It is even more essential during the Covid-19 pandemic, because most of us operate from home, and students and teachers use cell phones and computers to take classes online. Internet addiction is becoming recognized and acknowledged worldwide. It has been declared a public health issue in countries such as South Korea and China. In Asia, there has been a lot of studies on internet addiction. Excessive Internet use is seen by some researchers and mental health professionals as a symptom of other conditions such as anxiety or depression. It can lead to neurological issues, psychological issues, and social issues. The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and the Problematic Internet Usage Questionnaire (PIUQ) are two screening measures used to diagnose IAD. A study was done by Dr. James Donald from University of Sydney Business School who tested two theories. It was discovered that while internet addiction can lead to emotional problems in adolescents, it is not caused by pre-existing emotional problems. School-provided programs aiming to teach adolescents about common emotional regulation skills are not that effective for reducing compulsive behaviour online and limiting the time spent on internet.

This study aims at finding the relation between Internet Addiction and Emotional Intelligence among young adults and also the gender difference between them.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Salovey and Mayer (1990) found that when a group of people watched a sad movie, those who scored high in emotional clarity recovered faster than the others. People who excelled at correctly perceiving, understanding, and assessing others' emotions were able to adjust to alterations in their public settings and shape encouraging social networks (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer, 1999).

In a research conducted by Ahmad et al. (2009) at the NWFP Agricultural University on emotional intelligence and gender disparities, 160 subjects (N=160) were divided into two classes. Eighty males (N=80) and eighty females (N=80) were present. Reuven Baron's (1997) Emotional Quotient Inventory was used to assess the subjects' emotional intelligence. Males have higher emotional intelligence than females, according to the gender disparity on the Emotional Quotient Inventory ($t=4.522$, $p.01$).

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Gender role in the relationship between Internet Addiction and Depression was investigated in a study conducted in China among adolescents in grades 6-8. A total of 1715 adolescents were used in the study, which used cross-lagged structural equation modelling. Concurring to the findings, depression in male adolescents was found to predict Internet addiction significantly, implying that depression is the cause of Internet addiction. Female adolescent internet addiction was revealed to be a strong predictor of depression, implying that internet addiction causes depression. These findings suggested a significant gender difference in the relationship between depression and Internet addiction. It was also revealed that males and females had different internet use behavioural habits and motives. Males were found to be more often than females to go online with mates.

METHODOLOGY

As we know, in today's world, almost everyone has access to internet and it is also a necessity for some to do their daily jobs. However, too much of internet may have a can be detrimental to a person's emotional intelligence. Hence, it is important to know whether there is a relation between internet addiction and emotional intelligence.

Objectives of the study

- To find the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among young adults
- To find the gender difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults
- To find the gender difference in Internet Addiction among young adults

Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among young adults
- H₀₂: There is no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults
- H₀₃: There is no significant gender difference in Internet Addiction among young adults

Tools used for the study

Emotional Intelligence Test by Emily A. Sterrett (2014) - The scale was adapted from Emily A. Sterrett. The scale measures four different area: Self-Assessment, Social Awareness and Relationship management. The scale consists of 20 items which is a Likert scale, never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), usually (4) and always (5). Emotional Intelligence can vary from a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 25. If your score is below 18 in any area, you may improve yourself in that area. This tool has been found to be used in some studies such as correlation of dermatoglyphics amongst medical students with intelligence (Suresh & Padmalatha, 2019) and (Daud, 2015) on Pupil's Emotional Quotient Academic Performance and Class behavior.

Internet Addiction Test by Kimberly Young (1998) - In the test for the reliability and validity, 20 items were grouped under 4 factors: Cronbach α , internal consistency coefficient for the first factor - 0.91; second factor - 0.87; third factor - 0.89; fourth factor - 0.90; and for the whole scale - 0.90. Spearman Brown value for the scale - 0.86.

Statistical analysis

In the study SPSS was used to analyse the data. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among young adults. Independent sample t-test was used to find the significant for gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among young adults.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among the age range 15 to 25. The data was collected through google form using the Emotional Intelligence Test by Emily A. Sterrett (2014) and the Internet Addiction Test by Kimberly Young (1998). A total of 144 participants were selected for the sample. The sample includes young adults (both male and female) from NorthEast, India. The data was entered into Microsoft Excel for scoring and for statistical analysis.

H₀1: There is a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among young adults

Table 1 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction among young adults

	N	M	SD	r	p
EI		67.87	10.004		
IAT	144	46.87	16.465	-.114	.174

Note: EI- Emotional Intelligence, IAT- Internet Addiction Test

Table 1 shows that the number of participants was 144 young adults. The mean score for Emotional Intelligence was found to be 67.87 and the mean score for Internet Addiction Test was found to be 46.87. Emotional Intelligence has a standard deviation of 10.004 and Internet Addiction Test has a standard deviation of 16.465.

To check the correlation between the two variables, Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction the scores were subjected to Pearson’s correlation test. The results shows that the pearson correlation coefficient ‘r’ was -.114 and the significant value was .174 which was not statistically significant.

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction Test among young adults is rejected.

H₀2: There is no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults

Table 2 Independent sample t-test for gender difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults

	N	M	SD	SE	df	t	p
Female	71	67.58	11.176	1.326	142	-.343	.732
Male	73	68.15	8.6784	1.028	132.782	-.342	.733

Table 2 shows that the number of female participants were 71 and 73 were male participants. the independent sample t-test for gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction. The mean score of female was 67.58 and standard deviation score of 11.176 with

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standard error score of 1.326 while the mean score of male was 68.15 and standard deviation score of 8.6784 with standard error score of 1.028.

In order to test the mean differences, the scores were subjected to independent sample t-test and for female it was found to be -.343 with significant level of .732 which is not statistically significant. Independent sample t-test for male was -.342 with significant level of .733 which is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults is accepted.

H₀₃: There is no significant gender difference in Internet Addiction among young adults

Table 3 Independent sample t test for gender difference in Internet Addiction among young adults

	N	M	SD	SE	df	t	p
Female	71	46.82	15.787	1.874	142	-.037	.971
Male	73	46.92	17.208	2.104	141.522	-.037	.971

Table 3 shows that the number of female participants were 71 and 73 were male participants. the independent sample t-test for gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction. The mean score of female was 46.82 and standard deviation score of 15.787 with standard error score of 1.874 while the mean score of male was 46.92 and standard deviation score of 17.208 with standard error score of 2.104.

In order to test the mean differences, the scores were subjected to independent sample t-test and for female it was found to be -.037 with significant level of .971 which is not statistically significant. Independent sample t-test for male was -.037 with significant level of .971 which is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant gender difference in Internet Addiction among young adults is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Emotional Intelligence is very important for a person to improve his or her interpersonal and intra-personal skills and lead a socially satisfying life. Likewise, the internet is important in a person's day to day activities. However, it can be quite addictive, which may sometimes have a negative impact on a person. In an attempt to study the relation between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction, a study was conducted among young adults from NorthEast, India. According to the outcome of the data analysed, the first result showed that there was no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction Test among young adults. The second result showed that was no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults and the third result showed that there was no significant gender difference in Internet Addiction Test among adults.

Limitations of the study

- As the sample size was small (N=144) it cannot be generalized for the whole population.
- The age range (15 to 25) of the participants was too small therefore the findings cannot be taken into consideration among other ages.

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- The participants were only from NorthEast India, thus, the findings may not be true for other parts of India.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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