

Impact of Internet Addiction on the Psychological Well-Being of College Students

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ABSTRACT

Internet addiction is when a person has a compulsive need to spend a great deal of time on the Internet, to the point where other areas of life (such as relationships, work or health) also suffer as a result. Psychological well-being² is used to describe an individual's emotional health and overall functioning. Internet addiction is associated with many mental disorders, including low self-esteem, impulsiveness, poor sleep, mood disorders, depression, and suicide. The aim of the study is to study the impact of internet addiction on the psychological well-being of college students.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Psychological well-being, College Students*

Internet addiction is the condition in which a person compulsively needs to spend a lot of time online, to the extent of other aspects of their lives (such their relationships, job, or health). The person develops an addiction to the Internet and has to use it more frequently to feel the same "high." (*Internet Addiction*, n.d.). Internet addiction is a mental condition characterized by excessive internet use, typically at the user's expense. Most people think of addiction as a mental illness characterized by compulsive behavior. Someone may be said to be addicted to the internet if they are online all the time. Professionals are divided about whether to classify the phrase as a different type of addiction, despite the fact that it is acknowledged as a problem. Several other names, such as internet addiction disorder, pathological internet use, internet dependency, problematic internet use, pathological internet use, and compulsive internet use, are also used to describe internet addiction. Finding a precise technical definition that everyone can agree on is tough. The ambiguity is explained in a blog post titled "Can You Be Addicted to the Internet?" on the American Psychiatric Association website. "There is still much uncertainty and disagreement among experts about overuse of the internet, the symptoms, how to measure it, and even the language used to describe it," the blog notes. The phrase has been pushed for inclusion in the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" by numerous psychiatric specialists. However, it was not listed as a diagnosis in the DSM-V, the publication's fifth edition, which was released in 2013. (*Internet Addiction*, 2017).

Similar to other substance use disorders, addictive social media use can cause mood modification (i.e., a positive change in emotional states as a result of social media use),

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salience (i.e., a behavioral, cognitive, and emotional preoccupation with social media), tolerance (i.e., constant, increasing use of social media), and withdrawal symptoms (i.e., unpleasant physical and emotional symptoms when social media use is curtailed or stopped) (i.e., addicted individuals quickly revert back to their excessive social media usage after an abstinence period). Social networking sites' dopamine-producing social contexts are largely to blame for the phenomenon of social media addiction. To keep users using their products as much as possible, social media companies like Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram alter neuronal circuitry in a similar way to how gambling and recreational drugs do. According to studies, the constant barrage of retweets, likes, and shares from these sites causes the same kind of physiological reaction to occur in the brain's reward center as drugs like cocaine. (*Social Media Addiction*, n.d.)

The term psychological well-being (PWB) refers to a person's level of psychological health and happiness, which includes emotions of accomplishment and life satisfaction. It is important to stress that physical well-being includes physical health, including illness states, fitness level, and the capacity to carry out activities of daily life, at the risk of being dualistic and separating PWB from physical well-being (ADL). PWB comprises a person's outlook on life, taking into account not only perceptions of physical health but also of self-worth, self-efficacy, interpersonal relationships, and overall happiness. It is desirable to adopt a monistic viewpoint in which it is acknowledged that PWB and physical well-being are closely intertwined. (2016)

The absence of the human experience's crippling factors—depression, anxiety, anger, and fear—as well as the presence of factors that help people live fulfilling lives—happy emotions, meaningful relationships, environmental mastery, engagement, and self-actualization—are both indicators of psychological well-being. Beyond the absence of psychological ill-being, psychological wellness takes into account a wider range of concepts than what is typically thought of as happiness. (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2011).

Subjective well-being (SWB), —good mental states, including all of the various evaluations, positive and negative, that people make of their lives and the affective reactions of people to their experiences, is part of psychological wellbeing (OECD, 2013). It is often conceptualized as a set of two interrelated elements:

1. Life evaluation – a reflective assessment on a person's life or some specific aspect of it.
2. Affect – a person's feelings or emotional states, typically measured with reference to a particular point in time.

In psychological literature, the idea of subjective wellbeing (SWB) is currently the most prevalent conception of happiness. There are a number of models with empirical foundations that try to predict SWB structure. According to Bradburn's (1969) research, general positive and negative affectivity are independent factors that influence SWB. Since then, this concept of SWB has been expanded, and it is now thought of as a multidimensional construct that refers to a number of different but connected characteristics that are regarded as a single theoretical construct. The concept of subjective well-being (SWB) includes how individuals assess their own lives in terms of both emotional (how we feel) and cognitive components (what we think). (Diener et al., 1999; Diener, Scollon and Lucas, 2003; Veenhoven, 1994). (Huang, 2017) The association between social networking site use and psychological well-being variables like depression, loneliness, and life satisfaction is examined in this meta-

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analysis. There were 61 studies found, comprising 67 distinct samples with 19,652 participants. At $r = 0.07$, the average relationship between social networking site use and psychological health was weak. While there was little to no link between time spent on social networking sites and good indicators (such as life satisfaction and self-esteem), there was a slight correlation between time spent on social networking sites and negative indicators (such as sadness and loneliness). The impacts of publication source, site visited, amount of time spent, participant age, and participant gender were not statistically significant. Further investigations should be done because the majority of the listed studies used student samples.

(Twenge & Campbell, 2019) Teenagers spend a significant amount of time on digital media (such as smartphones, computers, social media, gaming, and the Internet), and this time is only getting longer. However, the results of the available research are divided on whether or not this time is negatively related to adolescents' psychological wellbeing (including happiness, general well-being, and indicators of low well-being such as depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts). The psychological well-being of light users of digital media (1 hour per day) was significantly higher than that of heavy users (>5 hours per day) across three large surveys of adolescents in two countries ($n = 221,096$). When evaluated with the same methodology, datasets that were previously offered to support opposing findings had effect sizes that were comparable. Heavy consumers of digital media (vs. light users) were 48% to 171% more likely to be sad, to have low wellbeing, suicide attempts were twice as likely to be reported by heavy users (compared to light users). The level of well-being was highest among light users (as opposed to non- or moderate-users), and for the majority of digital media users, the biggest decline in well-being occurred between moderate and heavy use.

(Doğan, 2016) This study sought to determine whether high school students' use of social networking sites (SNS) predicted their levels of psychological health, happiness, and life satisfaction. How frequently do you use Facebook and Twitter in a day? This question, along with the hours spent on SNS, were used to calculate SNS usage. 459 high school pupils in Turkey's Bolu area participated in the study. SNS use was found to be a predictor of levels of happiness, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction via structural equation modelling. The findings show that high school students' use of social networks is a significant predictor of their happiness, psychological wellbeing, and sense of fulfilment in life.

(Joshi et al. 2023) Internet-related problems are becoming more prevalent, and growing cell phone social media use may be a contributing factor. This paper seeks to investigate the psychological and social elements of cell phone social media behaviors in order to better comprehend internet-related diseases. According to humanistic theories of positive functioning, it was hypothesized that undergraduate students' psychological wellbeing would be positively correlated with their use of social media on their cell phones, specifically their sense of engagement, interest, pleasure, and accomplishment. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it was also predicted that undergraduate students' social media connectedness (affiliation, feeling rewarded, being liked by others, and contributions to others' well-being) would have a favorable impact on their psychological wellbeing. 523 (75.4% female) undergraduate students from a major public institution took part in this study in the fall of 2019 by completing verified quantitative surveys about their use of cell phones and psychological health. To analyze the results, Spearman's rho and ordinal logistics were used. According to correlational data, undergraduate students' psychological

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wellbeing was favorably correlated with their use of social media on their cell phones, both for connecting with others and for connecting with themselves. Ordinal logistics revealed that being linked to oneself and others on social media using a cell phone increased the likelihood of psychological wellbeing. While cell phone social media connectivity to others was not a significant predictor of undergraduate students' psychological well-being, it did strongly predict connectedness to one's own social media accounts using the medium effect. Undergraduate students' psychological wellbeing was enhanced by their increased use of social media on their cellphones, both for connecting with others and for connecting with themselves. Undergraduate students' psychological wellbeing was significantly predicted by their cell phone social media connectedness to themselves, but not by their cell phone social media connectedness to others. This finding may have implications for the study of behavioural addiction and may aid in a better understanding of disorders linked to the internet.

(Cardak n.d.) The goal of the study is to examine the link between Internet addiction and psychological health. Participants were 479 college students who answered questions from a questionnaire package that included the Scales of Psychological Well-Being and the Online Cognition Scale. Correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to evaluate the links between Internet addiction and psychological health. The findings showed that decreased impulse control, loneliness/depression, social comfort, and distraction negatively influenced psychological well-being. Higher Internet addiction among students is associated with lower psychological well-being. The findings demonstrated that Internet addiction severely impacted psychological well-being and gave insight into how these two factors relate to one another.

(Wood & Parenteau, 2016) Previous studies have found a strong correlation between social media use and psychological well-being. The current study looked into whether spirituality or religion mediates the link between psychological adjustment and social media intrusion. The Religious Commitment Inventory-10, Spirituality Index of Well-Being, DASS-21 Scales, and the Facebook Intrusion Questionnaire—which was slightly modified to encompass all forms of social media—were all completed by participants. The findings showed that social media intrusion was considerably negatively correlated with spiritual well-being and the self-efficacy component of spiritual well-being, and significantly favorably associated with despair, anxiety, and stress. Additionally, the relationship between social media intrusion and psychological stress was partially mediated by the spiritual well-being dimension of self-efficacy. These findings suggest that increased social media use may be able to reduce certain components of spirituality, which may therefore have a negative impact on psychological adjustment.

(Bagroy et al., 2017) College students' psychological suffering, which manifests as depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues, is a major public health concern. Intervention and mitigation efforts on college campuses face substantial obstacles due to the lack of precise, ongoing, and multi-campus data on mental health. This study investigates the possibility of social media as a fresh "barometer" for measuring college populations' mental health. We first develop and assess a transfer learning-based classification strategy that can detect mental health expressions with 97% accuracy using student-contributed data from Reddit communities of more than 100 universities.

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Need and Significance

With the rising use of technology internet addiction has had some really big impact on every individual's life. The need for this study is to understand if internet addiction has any impact on the psychological well-being of college students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample size: The sample size of the study is 60.

Population: The present study consists of 60 participants. In this research participant age group ranges from 18-25 years. The samples were collected from Karnataka and Assam. The impact of internet addiction on the psychological wellbeing of college students was tested. Convenience sampling (also known as availability sampling) is a sampling that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in study.

Questionnaires

Internet Addiction Test was used to measure the level of social media use among college students. It was developed by Young (1998) to measure the presence and severity of the Internet dependency, in a North American population sample. The IAT measures self-reported compulsive use of the Internet and assesses symptoms of Internet addiction in a variety of settings. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was used to measure their level of psychological wellbeing. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a scale of 14 positively worded items for assessing a population's mental wellbeing. WEMWBS is suitable for adults aged 16 and above and also for use at a population level in teenagers aged 13 years and over in samples of over 100.

Objective

To determine the impact of Internet Addiction on Psychological Well-being of College students.

Hypothesis

H1: there is a significant relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being in college students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to study the impact of social media addiction on the psychological well-being of college students. This subheading deals with the results and discussion of the results obtained from data collected using different tools. The data was consolidated and scored. The data was statistically analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS 25).

Table 1: Relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being

		internet addiction	psychological wellbeing
internet addiction	Pearson Correlation	1	-.179
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.172
	N	60	60
psychological wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	-.179	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.172	
	N	60	60

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Table 1 shows the relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being. As we can see after using Pearson correlation method, that there is no significant relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being.

This study was conducted on college students aged 18 to 25. The results show that internet addiction for this age group doesn't not have an impact on their psychological well-being. This cannot be generalized for other age groups as the sample population was limited to certain group of age.

The data was calculated using SPSS, and the correlation between both the variables were analyzed. On analysis of the data, the results show that there is no significant relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being among the college students. The Pearson correlation shows that for internet addiction the value is 1 and for psychological well-being it is -0.179. The reason for no significant relationship may be as the number of respondents were too less to test the correlation. There might also be no direct and immediate impact of internet addiction on the psychological well-being in college students. There are also limitations of the study as this study was conducted on a brief period, and the number of participants were too small to understand. As the data was collected online, there was no possibility of meeting the participants in person. There is also a probability for bias, as the respondents may not have been true with their responses.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present study on the impact of internet addiction on the psychological well-being of college students was conducted to understand if there is any significant relationship between the two variables. The results show that there is no significant relationship, thus rejecting the hypothesis. A further study can be conducted using a larger sample and different method to approach the topic. The study can also be conducted on different age groups.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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