Research Paper

To Compare the Self-Esteem of Internet Addicts and Non Addicts among University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to compare the self-esteem levels of university students classified as internet addicts and non-addicts. A sample of 100 young adults aged 18-25 years from various universities in Delhi NCR was utilised, employing convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) and the Internet Addiction Test. Analysis revealed a nonsignificant difference in self-esteem variations between internet addicts and non-addicts. However, the t-test illustrated significantly lower self-esteem levels among internet addicts compared to nonaddicts ($t(98) = -1.72$, $p = 0.04$). These results suggest a clear association between internet addiction and diminished self-esteem among university students. Interventions targeting internet addiction may aid in enhancing self-esteem and overall well-being in this demographic. Further research is warranted to explore the underlying mechanisms linking internet addiction and self-esteem, facilitating the development of tailored intervention strategies. This study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between internet addiction and self-esteem, highlighting the importance of addressing internet addiction in promoting positive psychological outcomes among university students.

Keywords: *Self-Esteem, Internet Addicts, Non Addicts, University Students*

In today's digital era, the internet has become an integral part of our lives, revolutionizing the way we communicate, work, and access information. However, along with its benefits, excessive internet use can lead to problematic behaviors known as internet addiction. This phenomenon has attracted considerable attention due to its potential impact on various aspects of psychological well-being, including self-esteem. Self-esteem, reflecting an individual's overall evaluation of their worth and capabilities, holds significant importance in psychological health. Understanding the relationship between internet addiction and self-esteem is crucial for comprehending the potential psychological consequences of excessive internet use. This study seeks to examine and compare the self-esteem levels of individuals identified as internet addicts with those who do not exhibit addictive internet behaviors. By investigating potential differences in self-esteem between these two groups, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological implications associated with internet addiction. Such insights are essential for

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developing effective interventions and strategies to promote healthy internet usage and enhance overall well-being in today's digitally connected society.

Self-esteem refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of their own worth and value as a person. It encompasses feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and self-acceptance. Self-esteem influences how individuals perceive themselves and their abilities, impacting their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. People with high self-esteem typically have a positive self-image, believing in their capabilities and feeling deserving of love, respect, and success. On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem often experience self-doubt, negative self-perceptions, and feelings of inadequacy. Self-esteem develops through various factors, including childhood experiences, social interactions, achievements, and feedback from others. It plays a vital role in psychological well-being, influencing mental health outcomes such as resilience, coping strategies, and overall life satisfaction. Cultivating healthy self-esteem is essential for promoting confidence, resilience, and a positive sense of self in individuals.

Low self-esteem can have profound psychological effects across various domains of an individual's life, influencing their thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and social interactions. These effects can manifest in behavioural, cognitive, and social domains, contributing to a range of challenges and impairments.

Psychological theories of self-esteem, including Social Comparison, Self-Discrepancy, Social Identity, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Determination, illuminate its development and impact. Social comparisons influence perceptions of worth, while self-discrepancies between actual, ideal, and ought selves can affect satisfaction. Social identity ties self-esteem to group membership, while self-efficacy beliefs shape goal attainment and resilience. Self-determination theory underscores intrinsic motivation and autonomy's role in fostering self-worth. These theories collectively deepen our understanding of self-esteem's complexities and inform interventions to promote well-being.

Internet addiction, or problematic internet use, entails excessive and compulsive internet usage resulting in negative life consequences. It encompasses preoccupation, loss of control, withdrawal symptoms, tolerance, negative outcomes, and escapism. Impacting academic, social, physical, and mental well-being, it can cause social isolation, sleep disruptions, concentration issues, and financial troubles, along with psychiatric conditions like depression or anxiety.

While not formally recognized in diagnostic manuals, internet addiction is a significant public health concern. Psychological effects span behavioral, cognitive, and social realms, affecting functioning and relationships. Addressing it necessitates a multifaceted approach targeting psychological factors, promoting healthier online behaviors, and balancing digital engagement with real-life activities.

Psychological theories of internet addiction include the Reward Pathway, Cognitive-Behavioral, Self-Medication, Social Learning, and Dual Process theories. Reward pathways hijack the brain's reward system, reinforcing compulsive internet use. Cognitive distortions fuel addictive behaviors, while the self-medication hypothesis suggests internet use as an escape from emotional distress. Social learning theory highlights peer influence and reinforcement, and dual process theory explains the conflict between impulsive urges and self-regulation. Understanding these theories informs interventions targeting maladaptive

beliefs, coping strategies, social influences, and self-regulatory processes to address internet addiction effectively.

Overcoming internet addiction involves commitment, self-awareness, and a comprehensive strategy. This includes setting boundaries, developing coping mechanisms, fostering offline activities and relationships, and seeking support. By raising awareness, providing resources, and addressing underlying psychological factors, individuals can regain control and lead more balanced lives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chen et al. (2020) examined the relationships between a variety of psychological and family characteristics and early adolescent internet addiction. Their investigation revealed significant relationships between internet addiction and family functioning, sadness, self-efficacy, and self esteem. These findings highlight the intricacy of internet addiction and raise the possibility of early adolescent correlations. Understanding these relationships could improve treatments focusing on personal and family factors to lower the risk of internet addiction in this vulnerable group, highlighting the importance of comprehensive support strategies.

Mo et al. (2020) employed structural equation modeling to examine the relationship between adolescent internet addiction, self-esteem, and academic objectives while accounting for gender variations. Their analysis highlighted distinct gender-specific connections between these parameters, revealing separate trends. These results shed light on the complex dynamics of teenage internet addiction, self-esteem, and academic objectives and emphasize the need of considering gender when understanding and addressing these issues within educational settings.

Kumar, M., and Mondal, A. (2018) conducted a study on internet addiction in college students and its relationship to psychopathology and self-esteem. Their findings demonstrated a substantial link between internet addiction, psychopathology symptoms, and low self-esteem, highlighting the need for comprehensive interventions that address both psychological discomfort and self-esteem issues in college populations.

Yucens and Ãœzer (2018) examined the relationship between internet addiction, social anxiety, impulsivity, depression, and self-esteem in a sample of Turkish undergraduate medical students. Their findings showed a substantial correlation between internet addiction and social anxiety, impulsivity, low self-esteem, and depression, illuminating the complex relationships between psychological factors and problematic internet usage patterns among medical students.

Perrella and Caviglia (2017) investigated relationship dynamics, self-worth, and teenage internet addiction. Their findings highlighted the need for treatments that address both online addiction and issues with self-worth in this population, since their research revealed a connection between teenage internet addiction and lower levels of self-esteem as well as disrupted relationship patterns.

METHODOLOGY

Aim
To compare the self-esteem of internet addicts and non addicts among university students.

To Compare the Self-Esteem of Internet Addicts and Non Addicts among University Students

Objective
- To assess and compare the levels of self-esteem among university students classified as internet addicts and non-addicts.

Hypothesis
- Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference in the levels of self-esteem between university students classified as internet addicts and those classified as non-addicts.
- Alternate Hypothesis (H1): University students classified as internet addicts have significantly lower levels of self-esteem compared to those classified as non-addicts.

Variables
- Independent Variable: - Internet addiction (Internet addicts vs. non-addicts)
- Dependent Variable: - Self-esteem

Sample
- In the current research a sample of 100 university going young adults (18-25 years), participants are from different universities in Delhi NCR.
- Convenient Sampling technique was used.

Tools
In this study, data was collected using ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE (1965) and INTERNET ADDICTION TEST.

Statistical Design
Data Analysis: Inferential statistics independent samples t-test to compare the mean self-esteem scores between internet addicts and non-addicts.

RESULTS

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	NON-ADDICTS	ADDICTS
MEAN	21.31	23.30
VARIENCE	28.89	25.80
OBSERVATION	70.00	30.00
T CRITICAL ONE-TAIL	0.04	
P(T<=T) ONE-TAIL	1.66	

The t-statistic obtained is -1.72. The p-value associated with this t-statistic is 0.04 for the one-tailed test. The critical t-value at the one-tail significance level of 0.05 is 1.66. Since the p-value (0.04) is less than the significance level (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis.

The results suggest that university students classified as internet addicts have significantly lower levels of self-esteem compared to those classified as non-addicts. We reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This implies that there is evidence to suggest that university students classified as internet addicts have significantly lower levels of self-esteem compared to those classified as non-addicts.

DISCUSSION

Comparing the self-esteem levels of college students classified as internet addicts and those who were not was the aim of this study. Through our research goal, we sought to assess and compare the degrees of self-esteem in these two student groups. Our hypothesis suggested that there would be no appreciable difference in the levels of self-esteem between internet addicts and non-addicts, contrary to the alternative hypothesis, which suggested that online addicts would have lower levels of self-esteem than non-addicts.

To achieve our aim, we conducted a study involving 100 university-going young adults aged between 18 to 25 years, recruited from various universities in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) using a convenience sampling technique.

Our study revealed fascinating new details regarding the relationship between internet addiction and university students' self-esteem. The self-esteem score variability was comparable in both internet addict and non-addict groups, according to the F-test for variances, which showed no statistically significant difference in the self-esteem score variability between the two groups. However, the means of the two groups' self-esteem scores differed significantly, as indicated by the t-test for means. Specifically, internet addicts had significantly lower levels of self-esteem than non-addicts.

These findings suggest that there is indeed a relationship between internet addiction and self-esteem among university students. The lower self-esteem observed among internet addicts could potentially be attributed to various factors associated with excessive internet use, such as social isolation, negative self-comparison, and reduced real-life social interactions. Internet addicts may rely on online interactions for validation and social connection, leading to a decline in their self-esteem over time.

Our study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence between internet addiction and low self-esteem among college students. This highlights how important it is to address internet addiction as a potential risk factor for decreased psychological well-being and self-worth in this population. Interventions aimed at promoting positive self-esteem and encouraging responsible internet use behaviours may be useful in addressing these issues.

It is critical to acknowledge the limitations of our research. Because convenience sampling was used in our study, the results might not be as generally relevant to the total population of university students. Additionally, response biases can lead to an underestimation of the complexity of the internet addiction and self-esteem phenomena in self-report measures such as the Internet Addiction Test and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Our study provides valuable insights into the relationship between internet addiction and self-esteem among university students. The significant difference in self-esteem levels between internet addicts and non-addicts underscores the need for targeted interventions to address internet addiction and promote healthy self-esteem among young adults. Further research employing longitudinal designs and more diverse samples could enhance our understanding of these complex relationships and inform more effective intervention strategies in the future.

CONCLUSION

Our study aimed to explore the correlation between internet addiction and self-esteem among university students. Our analysis revealed that there was no notable distinction in the variations of self-esteem scores between students categorised as internet addicts and those classified as non addicts, as determined by the F-test. This suggests a similarity in the range of self-esteem levels across both groups. However, the t-test demonstrated that individuals labelled as internet addicts displayed significantly lower self-esteem levels compared to their non-addict counterparts. Consequently, we reject the null hypothesis and affirm the alternative hypothesis, indicating a clear association between internet addiction and diminished self-esteem among university students. These findings underscore the significance of addressing internet addiction as a potential contributor to reduced self-esteem among young adults. It emphasises the necessity for interventions aimed at curbing internet addiction and fostering healthy online behaviours to enhance self-esteem and overall well-being among university students. Further investigation is warranted to delve into the underlying mechanisms and potential causal links between internet addiction and self-esteem, alongside the development of tailored intervention strategies for this demographic.

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