

Problematic Internet Use among College Students in Relation to Anxiety and Depression

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ABSTRACT

The present research was executed to elucidate the role of anxiety and depression on problematic internet use of college students. The sample consisted of 60 students studying degree courses in a college. They were assessed by anxiety scale, depression scale and problematic internet use scale. The results of correlation coefficient indicated that all of the studied variables were positively significantly correlated with problematic internet use. Also, the regression analysis showed that anxiety and depression could predict problematic internet use significantly. The implications and limitations of the research are discussed.

Keywords: Anxiety, Depression, Problematic Internet Use And Students In College

Students are the greatest resource of a nation. They are to be given appropriate guidance and counseling so that they can lead their lives successfully. Problematic internet use is a widespread problem among the youth. Prolonged internet use contributes to several interpersonal and psychological issues. The present study is an attempt in ascertaining the predictors of problematic internet use among college students.

Anxiety

Anxiety is the body's natural response to stress. It is a feeling of fear or apprehension about what is to come. If a person's feelings of anxiety are extreme, last for longer than six months, and are interfering with life, the person has an anxiety disorder. In the case of an anxiety disorder, the feeling of fear may be with you all the time. It is intense and sometimes debilitating. Anxiety disorders are the most common form of emotional disorder and can affect anyone at any age. According to the American Psychiatric Association, women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder.

Depression

Depression is a mood disorder. It is feelings of sadness, loss, or anger that interferes with a person's everyday activities. People experience depression in different ways. It may interfere with daily work, resulting in loss of time and lower productivity. It can affect relationships and some chronic health conditions.

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Received: March 2, 2019; Revision Received: March 26, 2019; Accepted: March 31, 2019

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Depression can be temporary or it can be long-term. Treatment doesn't always make depression go away completely. But treatment often makes symptoms more manageable. Managing symptoms of depression is finding the right combination of medications and therapies.

Problematic internet use

Problematic internet use is an addictive behaviour regarding computer use and internet access that lead to impairment or distress. The problem is more prevalent in adolescent males than females. Internet addiction is a world- wide problem. Youth have been identified as particularly at risk of developing problems with excessive internet use. A young person could be at risk if they:

- Suffer from depression and/or anxiety
- Have been diagnosed with an ADHD
- Have been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome
- Lack social support and have few friends
- Are bored or stressed
- Have a physical disability
- Broken family or social bonds

Signs of problematic internet use:

- Having difficulty in completing homework or household chores on time
- Isolation from family and friends
- Feeling guilty or defensive about the time they spend online
- Only feeling happy when in the gaming environment.
- Physical symptoms include dry eyes or strained vision, back and neck aches, headaches, sleep disturbances, pronounced weight gain or loss.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Review of related literature is an important pre-requisite for actual planning and carrying out of any research work. The present section represents a brief review of the researches done in the area related to the present investigation.

Erozkan, Atilgan (2017) examined the relationships between sub-dimensions of anxiety sensitivity and anxiety. The results indicate that there were significant positive associations between sub-dimensions of anxiety sensitivity and anxiety. The results also indicated that the fear of cognitive dyscontrol sub-dimension of anxiety sensitivity was the most important predictor of the anxiety for emerging adults.

Tekinarslan, Erkan (2017) examined the relationships among PIU, depression and quality of life levels of Turkish undergraduate students. Furthermore, this study sought to investigate whether correlated variables; if any, simultaneously predicted students' quality of life levels on different domains of WHOQOL-BREF-TR in a significant manner. The results indicated that the students' PIU and depression levels were negatively associated with quality of life levels and positively associated with each other in a significant manner. Moreover, the results of hierarchical regression analysis revealed that PIU levels of the students on the "diminished impulse control" dimension partially mediated the relationships between depression and quality of life levels on all domains of WHOQOL-BREF-TR.

Ceyhan, Aydogan Aykut (2011) carried out a study to investigate whether the levels of university students' problematic internet use and of perceived communication skills differ with respect to their basic internet use purposes. The findings revealed that university students' perceived communication skill levels did not differ with respect to their main internet use purposes but that the levels of their problematic internet use did. In this respect, it was found that in terms of basic internet use purpose, the problematic internet use levels of the university students who "use the internet for entertainment purposes" and of those who "use the internet to establish social relationships with unfamiliar people" were significantly higher than that of those who "use the internet to obtain information." This result points out

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that the use of the internet for entertainment and social interaction constitutes an important risk factor for the emergence of the problematic internet use symptoms.

Objectives:

- To study the relationship between anxiety, depression and problematic internet use among students in college.
- To assess the role of anxiety and depression on problematic internet use among students in college.

Hypotheses

- There is a positive and significant relationship between anxiety, depression and problematic internet use among students in college.
- There is a positive and significant contribution of anxiety on problematic internet use among students in college.
- There is a positive and significant contribution of depression on problematic internet use among students in college.

METHODS

Sample

Participants: Sample of the study consisted of 60 students; their age range was 20 to 25. There are 30 males and 30 females. They were selected by snowball sampling technique from a college.

Tools

- 1 Problematic internet use Scale:** This scale consists of 18 statements related to internet usage among students. There are 5 options for each statement namely never, rarely, sometimes, often and very often.
- 2 Hamilton Anxiety Scale:** The scale consists of 14 items, each defined by a series of symptoms, and measures both psychic anxiety (mental agitation and psychological distress) and somatic anxiety (physical complaints related to anxiety).
- 3 Beck Depression Scale:** The scale consists of 21 statements related to the level of depression in people of all age groups. Higher the scores, greater is the depression.

Procedure:

The students were approached and asked to complete the questionnaires of self-efficacy, learned optimism and happiness. All the respondents were also told that their anonymity will be preserved and their responses will be confidential. After that questionnaires were collected from the respondents and scored manually.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ha₁: There will exist a positive correlation between anxiety and problematic internet use among college students.

Table 1: Pearsons correlation coefficient between anxiety and the problematic internet use in college students (n=60)

Measures	Anxiety	Problematic internet use
Anxiety	1	0.446**
Mean	19.03	22.82
SD	3.474	6.611

** Significant at the 0.01 level * Significant at the 0.05 level

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The Pearson's coefficient of correlation was computed to measure the relationship between anxiety and problematic internet use in college students. It was found that anxiety had a significant positive correlation with problematic internet use ($r=.446$, $p<0.01$). The mean and SD scores on anxiety ($M=19.03$ & $SD=3.474$) and problematic internet use ($M=22.82$, $SD=6.611$). Thus the hypothesis that there will exist a positive correlation between anxiety and the problematic internet use in college students.

Table 2: Pearsons correlation coefficient among the depression and the problematic internet use in college students (n=60)

Measures	Depression	Problematic internet use
Depression	1	0.678**
Mean	22.08	22.82
SD	5.113	6.611

** Significant at the 0.01 level * Significant at the 0.05 level

Ha2: There will exist a positive correlation between depression and the problematic internet use in college students.

The Pearson's coefficient of correlation was computed to measure the relationship between depression and problematic internet use in college students. It was found that depression had a significant positive correlation with problematic internet use ($r=.678$, $p<0.01$). The mean and SD scores on depression ($M=22.08$ & $SD=5.113$) and problematic internet use ($M=22.82$, $SD=6.611$). Thus the hypothesis that there will exist a positive correlation between depression and the problematic internet use in college students.

Table 3: Stepwise multiple regression analysis predicting the problematic internet use from anxiety and depression (N=60) Predictors

	β	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R	t-value	F
Anxiety	-0.444	0.693	0.481	0.463		-1.506	0.138
Depression	1.115					5.562	0.001*

* Significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3 showed that stepwise regression revealed a significant model of problematic internet use, $F=26.388$, $p=.000$, which explained 69% of the variance ($\text{Adjusted } R^2=0.481$). In the model, Anxiety ($\beta=0.444$), $t=1.506$ ($p>0.01$) and Depression ($\beta=1.115$), $t=5.562$ ($p<0.01$) emerged as a significant predictor for problematic internet use. Thus the hypothesis that there will exist a predictive value of Depression in relation to the problematic internet use in college students is proved.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed at predicting problematic internet use from anxiety and depression. As expected the results of the correlation analysis showed that anxiety and depression were positively correlated with problematic internet use. Also, the multiple regression model predicted that both the variables anxiety and depression significantly predicted problematic internet use. A person high in anxiety will have more tensions and thus have more problematic internet use and vice versa. Similarly, a person with high level of depression will be sad and thus have more problematic internet use.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, it is concluded that anxiety and depression are positively correlated with problematic internet use. Both the independent variables are having significant variance on the

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problematic internet use of college students. The people with high levels of anxiety and depression are having higher levels of problematic internet use.

Suggestion

The findings of study show a glimpse of the impact of student's anxiety and depression on problematic internet use. However, more researches are needed to study the moderating factors of problematic internet use among different professions, culture as well as age groups. The findings of students could be compared with those found in other area of the world to decode similarities and differences.

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Acknowledgements

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be mentioned.

Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

How to cite this article: Chamuah. A, & Sankar. R (2019). Problematic Internet Use among College Students in Relation to Anxiety and Depression. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(1), 1067-1071. DIP:18.01.119/20190701, DOI:10.25215/0701.119