

Loneliness and Internet Addiction: A Correlative Analysis in the Context of Online Education among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Due to pandemic online education has become the only accessible process to address diverse community in education system. It also compels students to use internet with unprescribed manner which leads to several usage of it at levels that can be called as internet addiction. On the other hand online education has excluded the social interaction process to virtual platforms with changing manner and characteristics. Due to this one can find himself/herself isolated and on the other hand who is reluctant of participation can find he/she secure. Thus with different dimensions of loneliness and a growing amount of internet addiction, the present study aims to find the primary relation between these two variables.

Key Words: Internet Addiction, Loneliness, Social Isolation, Online Education, Young Adults.

ABSTRAK

Karena pandemi, pendidikan online telah menjadi satu-satunya proses yang dapat diakses untuk mengatasi komunitas yang beragam dalam sistem pendidikan. Ini juga memaksa siswa untuk menggunakan internet dengan cara yang tidak ditentukan yang mengarah pada beberapa penggunaan pada tingkat yang dapat disebut sebagai kecanduan internet. Di sisi lain, pendidikan online telah mengesampingkan proses interaksi sosial ke platform virtual dengan cara dan karakteristik yang berubah. Karena ini orang dapat menemukan dirinya sendiri terisolasi dan di sisi lain yang enggan berpartisipasi dapat menemukan dirinya aman. Jadi dengan dimensi kesepian yang berbeda dan meningkatnya jumlah kecanduan internet, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan hubungan utama antara kedua variabel ini.

Kata Kunci: Kecanduan Internet, Kesepian, Isolasi Sosial, Pendidikan Online, Dewasa Muda.

INTRODUCTION

Participation in education system does not only give access to accumulate knowledge but also to create a constant inherently social sphere where participants can form social connections. From individual achievements to the growth of personal identity and its crisis navigates potentiality of a learner. While the predominant feeling in online education is to avail knowledge without being affected by the pandemic; there are more dimensions where shaping personalities of students are changing. Anthony Adea Mba (2020) from Ghana writes, 'Sometimes I have an opinion that I think is right and then I go to the discussion board and I discover that people have different perspectives about it and when I read them all it actually opens my perspective and makes me think in different ways.' In another study by Kotera et al (2021) a participant writes, 'When others are having discussions in the boards and I give up my response, it feels like I am intruding and sometimes people will not respond to my posts. I also felt lonely when I [see] conversations between people who had obviously formed a bond in previous modules and knew things about each other.' In another context of generalization Johanne Mednick Myles (2020) writes, 'We are all

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Recieved: January 28, 2022; Revised: April 1, 2022; Accepted: April 11, 2022

hard wired to be social, cultural, collaborative beings. We develop empathy and compassion for one another by looking into each others eyes. The human vibe plays a key role.'

The accessibility of online education is solely based on internet usage and thus students are compelled to access internet (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). With the broad arguments of participations and social exclusions in education system, the effects of these on personal self can be articulated as an effect of internet usage by the students during online education. Also these effects can have multiple discourses in which one can be social inclusiveness. And for those who do not feel this process to be inclusive for them, can take stand for the argument of isolation.

Due to pandemic students are physically isolated which definitely leads to change of medium in social interactions. These changes can have severe impact to their mental health which may cause a sense of loneliness (Ellis et al., 2020). Here the word loneliness can be derived from two dimensions. One, where it is a feeling of exclusion and being rejected; on the other hand loneliness can be denoted as a trajectory of self consolation process, where one who is not likely to participate among many feels safe and confident by being separated. So there are various dimensions of loneliness with different effects on personality.

The present study intervenes on the main argument whether participation in online education through internet is a cause of loneliness or it is lonely but at the same time the world of knowledge and information is at their finger tips where one can get uncountable interpretations and observations. Also the present study aims to the relationship between the different variables to the primary discourse of loneliness and social isolation in the context of online education.

And further in the engaging process of online education it has been observed that students are spending more time in using internet whereas in offline mode of education it would have been in a standard daily routine prescribed by institutions and more to a form of physical interaction. This excessive usage of internet can be denoted as internet addiction and thus the present study also investigates the impact of internet addiction on loneliness. In this process social isolation is a constant variable.

RESEARH METHOD

Nature of Study

The present study had used the quantitative research method (Sukamolson, 2007).

Null Hypothesis

1. Gender (Male and Female) has no significant impact on the loneliness of young adults.
2. Gender (Male and Female) has no significant impact on internet addiction of young adults.
3. There is no significant relationship between loneliness and internet addiction.
4. The internet addiction cannot be predicted by loneliness.

Samples

A total of 50 young adults, of which 25 males and 25 females were chosen for data collection through simple random sampling technique from various colleges and universities. The age range of the samples was from 17 years to 22 years.

Tools used

The tools being used in this study are –

1. **General Information Schedule:** It consists of items like Name, Address Age, Gender, Educational Qualification, Profession, Income, Type of family etc.
2. **UCLA Loneliness Scale by Russell (1978)** It is a self report measure of loneliness and social isolation. It has 20 items with four choices of answers. The reliability of this scale is 0.73.
3. **Internet Addiction Test by Kimberly Young (2016):** IAT is valid and reliable measure of addictive use of internet. It consists of 20 items that measures mild, moderate and severe level of internet addiction. The reliability of this test is 0.85.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Statistics, One-Way ANOVA, Correlation and Regression Analysis are being used for the verification of hypotheses. All the statistical analysis was carried out in "SPSS-20".

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Group Statistics					
	Subjects	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Internet Addiction	Male	25	19.32	11.834	2.366
	Female	25	16.40	11.849	2.369
Loneliness	Male	25	35.72	17.290	3.458
	Female	25	28.48	15.795	3.159

Source : Processed by Researchers (2022)

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics i.e. the mean and standard deviation of the samples of both the genders, i.e. male and female. It reveals that the mean of internet addiction for males is higher than that of the females and the mean of loneliness is also higher among males than that of females.

Table 2: Summarized Result of One Way ANOVA for Loneliness and Internet Addiction with respect to Gender

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Loneliness	Between Groups	106.580	1	106.580	.760	.388
	Within Groups	6731.440	48	140.238		
	Total	6838.020	49			
Internet Addiction	Between Groups	655.220	1	655.220	2.389	.129
	Within Groups	13163.280	48	274.235		
	Total	13818.500	49			

Source: Processed by the researchers (2022)

The findings of One Way ANOVA indicate that the impact of gender on the loneliness and on the internet addiction have been found to be non significant thus leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis-I i.e. Gender (Male and Female) has no significant impact on the loneliness of young adults and

null hypothesis-II i.e. Gender (Male and Female) has no significant impact on the internet addiction of young adults. And thus the result leads to rejection of the alternative hypotheses.

Table 3: Summarized Result of Correlation for Loneliness and Internet Addiction

Correlation		
Internet Addiction		
Loneliness	Pearson Correlation	.319*
	Sig (2-tailed)	.024
	N	50

*p<0.05

From table 3 it can be seen that Correlation has been found to be significant between the loneliness and internet addiction. Therefore the null hypothesis-III, i.e. there is no significant relationship between loneliness and internet addiction is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4: Regression Coefficient between Internet Addictions with Loneliness

Loneliness (IV)	Internet Addiction (DV)				
	R	R ²	df	F	Sig
	.319	.102	1,48	5.441	.024

Loneliness (IV)	Internet Addiction (DV)			
	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig
	B	Std. Error		
	.454	.194	2.333	.024

*p<0.05

Source: Processed by Researchers (2022)

In table 4 Regression equations have been generated for internet addiction as dependent variable and loneliness as independent variable for the entire sample. The highest Regression Coefficient for the dimension of internet addiction accounts for 10.2 percent variability. The F values are found out to be significant (at 0.05 level of significance) for internet addiction. The Unstandardized Beta Coefficients indicates that loneliness positively predicts the internet addiction. The above analyses of regression coefficients lead to rejection of the null hypothesis-IV, i.e. the internet addiction cannot be predicted by the loneliness.

Discussion

From the study it has been found out that loneliness and social isolation is correlated with internet addiction and internet addiction can be predicted by loneliness and social isolation. In this study it is also found out that gender based impact is not visible for loneliness, social isolation and internet addiction. Development of personality in young adults who are inherently social (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006) by nature can form a sense of loneliness in virtual classes with fellow members. These conditions may not be influenced by existence of other people (Pinquart & Sorensen, 2001), which leads to the findings of the

present study that there may have a significant impact of internet addiction for the feeling of loneliness which can have direct effect on well-being (Diehl et al., 2018). It has been observed that online education is aimed to give accessibility to diverse community by providing compatible opportunity according to their lifestyle irrespective of gender (Garip et al., 2020). Thus the usage of internet is not influenced by gender activity and thus internet addiction can have significant impact on the feeling of loneliness irrespective of gender.

In previous studies an argument has been made that presence of people participating in an interaction is important for accumulating knowledge (Garrison et al., 1999) though there may be tendencies of choosing social isolation by an inferior personality can be modified with a sense of loneliness. With more formal conversations in virtual classes can also instigate these senses (Shu & Gu, 2018; Stodel et al., 2006). The present study gives insights on the relation between the growing feelings of loneliness in online education system. But in broader sense it tries to indicate the measures to form a process where online education system can be postulated in certain structure which can reduce or specify the amount of internet usage from restraining it from being an addiction.

IMPLICATION

In continuation of this study further investigations can be made by exploring other variables like family interference, living standards, social adjustments and difference between individual personalities etc.; to make online education system more effective as well as accessible. Also the impact of online classes on mental health can be investigated in more individualistic as well as in social dimensions.

CONCLUSION

Internet addiction as an effect of online education and social isolation, has considerable impact on the feeling of loneliness in students. This tendency is affected by a several multidimensional factors like absence of real life classroom, body language interactions, effective social communications and a sense of insecurity about life and death. Pandemic has affected mental health of human beings irrespective of gender by which a growing sense of inability of expression and question about survival has been raised in various dimensions. With these predominant experiences students at their early age are restricted to social access and compelled to choose virtual media of interactions where they may not feel comfortable and match the compatibility standards for a healthy conversation. The present study followed by these arguments investigates the correlation of loneliness and internet addiction to provide effective measures for online education system.

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