A study of connection between Loneliness and Internet Addiction among Adults

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Abstract:- Internet addiction is a behavioural addiction in which an individual becomes completely reliant on the use of the Internet, or other related devices. We can see that everyone around us is addicted to the internet and that they are not aware of what is happening around them. Without the internet, they feel restless, bored, irritable and lonely. This createdinterest to understand if there is a relationship between variables such as loneliness, social support, and internet addiction among adults. For this purpose convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from 70 adults and Ex – Post Facto research design was used. The tools used in the study were the Internet Addiction Test (Young,1996), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al, 1988)and UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al,1978). Pearson's Correlation was used to assess the relationship between the variables. Based on the results of the SPSS analysis, it was found that there is no significant relationship between internet addiction, Loneliness and perceived social support. The results of this study can be helpful to understand internet addiction among adults and also for people whoare in the field of mental health for future research.

Keywords:- Loneliness, Internet Addiction, Social Support.

I.   INTRODUCTION

The Internet has become an essential part of our life. The Internet has made life easy as everything we want is just a touch away. We depend a lot on the Internet from shopping to socializing online. Many people cannot stay idle and they demand the internet as they feel out of place and less confident without it. Many individuals use it so much that they forget people around them and spend most of the time using the Internet. Internet addiction is a behavioural addiction during which an individual happens to be hooked into the use of the internet or other related devices. We can see that many people around us are addicted to the internet and they are not aware of what is happening around them.

Internet addiction means "compulsive overuse of the Internet and irritable or moody behaviour when deprived ofit" (Douglas et al., 2008). Internet users are increasing around the world day by day and it has become a crucial part of our lifestyle. The Internet is used for education, entertainment, social networking, and information sharing (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). It is also used in the field of

healthcare and medicine, it helps in the preparation of evidence-based medicine, access to medical, research and learning, and online databases, academic and managing patients in remote areas, and also for leisure purposes (Swaminath,2008) (Dargahi & Razavi, 2007). Majority of the Internet users are from China followed by India. India is the second-highest in the number of Internet users. That is around 540 million people approximately. Interestingly, theage range of Internet users in India ranges from 12-29 years.

The prevalence of internet addiction varies in different populations. Surveys have shown a prevalence of 0.3-0.7% in the general population (Sadock & Sadock, 2009). A recent study reported a prevalence of 0.7% among Indian adolescents (Goel. Et al, 2013). Young individuals (i.e., between 18 and 24 years old) were more susceptible to become internet addicts than old individuals (Soule et al, 2002).

Internet addiction affects various aspects of lives having a negative impact on relationships, occupation, academics, health, etc. Too much internet use can replace the precious time that people devote to family and friends, which leads to reduced social circles and greater levels of stress and loneliness (Nie et al., 2002). Similarly, avoiding domestic responsibilities, work, and education, disturbance of relationships, monetary problems, and social isolation can be seen because of excessive Internet usage (Griffiths, 2000; McKenna & Bargh, 2000).

Research studies have suggested that Internet addiction could be a multifaceted psychological phenomenon affected by several factors, such as peer relationships (Zhou et al., 2017), family environments (Li et al., 2014), and psychological factors such as loneliness (Özdemir et al., 2014; Sharifpoor et al., 2017). Socialsupport is a very important aspect of everyone's life. Good social support can contribute to high self – esteem, good coping skills, decision making, etc. Poor social support can lead to Loneliness, low self – esteem, helplessness, inferiority etc. We can notice that without the internet the adults tend to feel restless, bored, irritable, anxious, worried, and lonely, etc. This created interest to understand if there is a relationship between variables such as loneliness, social support, and internet addiction among adults.

Sadoughi & Hesampour (2017) did a study to investigate the association between perceived social support and loneliness among college students. Multistage sampling method was used and 327 students were selected. The tools used in this study are Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988) and the UCLA Loneliness scale (1980) questionnaires. Regression analysis was used in the study and the results of the study show that social support from important other people, family and friends predict loneliness in students, respectively. Hence, students with low social support scores are more likely to feel lonely.

Najafi, et al. (2018) did a study to understand the association between Internet addiction and loneliness and sleep quality among students of the Nursing and Midwifery Faculty. It is a cross-sectional study, stratified random sampling technique was used and 216 participated in the study. The data was collected using Young's Internet Addiction Test, demographic form, Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index and the UCLA Loneliness Scale. The findings were that there was no relationship between loneliness and Internet addiction.

Hussaina (2019) did a study to understand the association between shyness, loneliness, resilience and Internet addiction among undergraduate students of Hyderabad, India. The sample size consisted of 50 female and 50 male of under-graduate students who were between the ages of 19-21 years. The tools used in this study are the UCLA Loneliness Scale, Child and Youth Resilience Measure CYRM, Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale (RCBS) and, Internet Addiction Test (IAT). The data was collected from students in Hyderabad. From the study, it was found that there is a relationship between shyness and internet addiction in individuals. It was also found that there is a negative correlation between individual resilience and internet addiction. Further, loneliness and internet addiction are not correlated.

II.   METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

A. Aim

To find the relationship between the variables such as loneliness, social support, and internet addiction in adults.

B. Objectives
➢ To find the relationship between Loneliness andInternet Addiction among adults.
➢ To find the relationship between Social Support andInternet Addiction among adults.

C. Hypotheses
➢ There will be no significant relationship betweenLoneliness and Internet Addiction (Hypothesis 1)

➢ There will be no significant relationship between Perceived Social Support and Internet Addiction (Hypothesis 2)

D. Research Design

The present study is an ex- post facto survey research where the researcher examined the operation of variables without actually manipulating them to assess theassociation between variables loneliness, social support, and internet addiction.

E. Sample Description

The sample consists of 70 young adults, among which43 are female and 27 are male between the ages 20 to 26. The mean age of the sample was 22.95.

F. Sampling Technique

Convenient sampling technique was used in the study.

G. Inclusion Criteria
➢ Participants between the ages of 18 to 35 are included
➢ Participants who can read and write in English areincluded
➢ Only graduates are included
H. Exclusion Criteria
➢ Participants above the age of 35 are excluded
➢ Participants who cannot read and write in English areexcluded
I. Tools Used
➢ Internet Addiction Test (IAT; Young, 1998): IAT consists of 20 items that measure the level of Internet Addiction in the following levels: mild, moderate and severe. The level is found by summing the scores for all items. Interpretation of the scores: 20 – 49 indicates a normal on-line user. They may perhaps use the net a little longer at times, but they can regulate their use. 50
– 79 indicate that they may be going through random or recurrent issues because of the Internet. 80 – 100 indicate that Internet usage is affecting major complications in their life.
➢ Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al, 1988): This scale comprises items which measure the

sources of the social support, namely family (Fam), friends (Fri) or significant other (SO). Perceived Social Support is interpreted by the sum of all 12 items.

➤ UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al, 1980): UCLA Loneliness Scale consists of 20 items which measure the feelings of loneliness among individuals. Reliability of the scale is reported as .96. Out of 20 items, 10 items are positive statements and the other 10 are negative statements. The total score ranges from 20 to 80. A higher score indicates a higher degree of feelings of loneliness.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Variables		Internet Addiction	Loneliness	Perceived Social Support
Internet Addiction	Pearson Correlation	1	.130	-.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.284	.978
	N	70	70	70

Table 1:- Relationship between Loneliness, Social Support, and Internet Addiction

Table 1 shows the Relationship between Loneliness, Social Support, and Internet Addiction among adults. The correlation values show Loneliness and Internet Addiction are not related. Similarly, Perceived Social Support and Internet Addiction are not related. But variables such as Perceived Social Support and Loneliness are negatively related. Hence, it can be understood that when Perceived Social Support increases, Loneliness decreases and vice versa. Therefore the hypothesis 1 (There will be no significant relationship between Loneliness and Internet Addiction) is accepted, and Hypothesis 2 (There will be no significant relationship between Perceived Social Support and Internet Addiction) was accepted.

The results of this study are in coordination with the results of the studies conducted by Najafi, et al. (2018) and (2019) who reported that there is no significant relationship observed between Internet addiction and loneliness.
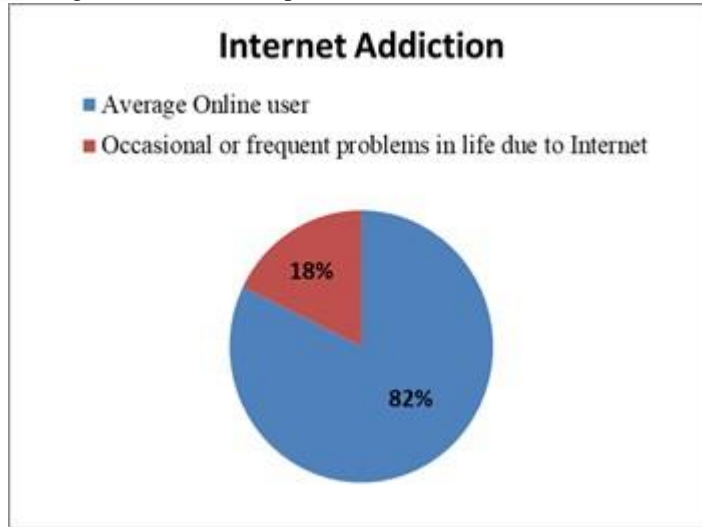

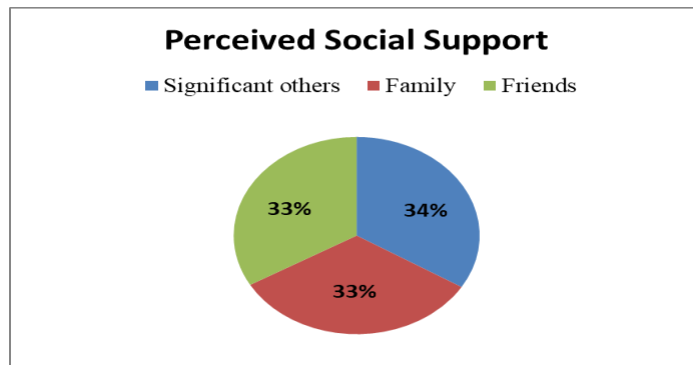Fig 1:- Indicates the Internet Addiction Level of 70 Adults.

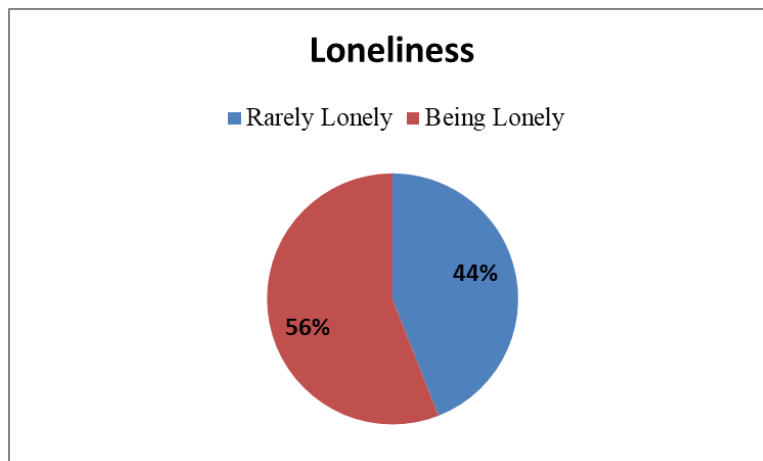Fig 2:- Indicates the Perceived Social Support of 70 Adults.

Hussaina

Fig 3:- Indicates the Loneliness Level of 70 Adults.

IV.   CONCLUSION

There is no significant relationship between Loneliness and Internet Addiction, and Perceived Social Support and Internet Addiction among adults.

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