



A study on Internet Addiction, Happiness and Sleep Quality among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Internet addiction is one of the most prevalent problems that is being seen in today's times. Internet addiction impacts many aspects of a person's life including personal, social, economic and many more. The purpose of the current research was to study the relationship between internet addiction, happiness and sleep quality among young adults. A sample size of 102 was taken between the age range of 18-25 years. Standardized scales including Internet Addiction Test, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and Sleep Quality Scale were used to measure the variables. The results found out that there exists a negative correlation among Internet Addiction and Happiness. There is a negative correlation between happiness and acute sleep problems. Additionally, there is a significant positive correlation between Internet Addiction and acute sleep problems.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Happiness, Sleep Quality, Young Adults*

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has now become an integral part of everyday life. It is not only with teenagers but also among adults and middle-aged individuals. The Internet works both as a boon and bane. It is often said that overuse or misuse of anything is always disastrous, same is the case with the internet. Now-a-days, people are becoming addicted to the internet, and they can't resist using it. The Internet acts as an effective tool for research, for staying updated in almost every aspect of our lives but it also indulges people into pornography, addiction for games and gambling which affects a person physically as well as psychologically.

Happiness is a state of contentment and satisfaction. It is a concept of social psychology. Happiness leads to a state of well-being and joy. A person feels elated and full when he or she is in a state of happiness. These days many individuals are in search of true happiness. To be honest, this state is missing in the current generation due to many reasons. One of the reasons is lack of interpersonal relationships and familial interaction. A person might feel physically or psychologically unfit if he or she is unhappy.

Sleep is one of our basic needs. Sleep not only helps our body to rest but also makes the brain feel relaxed and at ease. Like food and water, sleep is a fundamental need for human survival. After a sound sleep, a person feels energetic and zestful. Sound sleep helps in clear thinking and in good decision making. These days, many people find it difficult to have a comfortable sleep and face sleep disorders. There are many reasons behind it and one of them is stress. This ultimately leads to many physiological and psychological problems.

Internet Addiction

Goldberg (1995) defined internet addiction as “a pathology, a disorder, an overuse of this technology, including a wide range of behaviors and impulse-control.” Internet addiction is particularly seen in college and school going students. It is found that around 73% of college students use the internet at least once a day and spend around 8.1 hours daily (Scherer 1997). UC Davis Student Health and Counseling Services (2019) states that Internet addiction is an “unhealthy behavior that interferes with and causes stress in one's personal, school, and/or work life. Like other addictions, compulsive Internet usage completely dictates a person's life, leading to a sense of despair and dependency on cyberspace.”

Excessive internet usage is directly linked with psychological problems. Studies also show that higher the internet addiction, lower would be the psychological well-being of an individual. Thus, psychological well-being is negatively associated to internet addiction (Cardak, 2013).

Happiness

According to Hills and Argyle (2001), happiness is a multidimensional concept which includes both emotional and cognitive elements. Happiness is defined as “the subjective assessment of whether a person is happy or unhappy and can be evaluated as a psychological state of well-being or contentment” (Lyubomirsky, 2001).

Cohen (2002) states that happiness leads to a healthy immune system and contributes to the overall health of an individual. Happiness is a state of subjective well-being. In a study done by Gavin and Mason (2004), it was found that a person reaches the level of happiness when all his/her desired wishes are fulfilled. Mukherjee and Basu (2008) stated happiness is directly correlated with secure attachment patterns and meaningful life.

Sleep Quality

It is found that the quality of sleep is lower in young adults, and it tends to worsen with age (Choi et al., 2013). Sleep is an important predictor of health. Sound sleep enhances security and health whereas lack of sleep leads to adverse quality of life, memory loss, lack of concentration, drowsiness and many more (Edéll-Gustafsson et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2015). Alqahtani et al. (2021) found that around 65% Americans were subjected to sleep disturbances during the pandemic. To enhance the sleep quality various techniques can be used including physical exercise, reducing stress, maintaining consistent sleep schedules, balanced diet and reducing stress.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose is to study internet addiction, sleep quality and happiness among young adults.

Hypotheses

- There will be a significant relationship between internet addiction and happiness.
- There will be a significant relationship between happiness and sleep quality.
- There will be a significant relationship between sleep quality and internet addiction.

Sample

The sample consisted of 102 young adults between the age of 18-25 years.

Measures

The following standardized tools were used to measure internet addiction, sleep quality and happiness among young adults.

- ***Internet Addiction Test***

The scale as developed by Young (1998) was used to measure the presence of Internet dependency among adults. The scale consisted of 20 items with a response scale of 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Rarely” to “Always” where 100 is the highest score indicating severe dependency on Internet and 20 is the lowest score indicating normal level of internet usage.

- ***Oxford Happiness Questionnaire***

The scale as developed by Argyle and Hills (2002) was used to measure happiness in adults. The scale consisted of 29 items with a response scale of 6-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Items 1,5,6,10,13,14,19,23,24,27,28,29 were reverse scored.

- ***Sleep Quality Scale (SQS)***

The scale as developed by Yi et al. (2006) was used to measure the sleep quality in adults. The scale consisted of 28 items with a response scale of 4-point Likert scale ranging from “few” to “almost always” where 84 is the highest score indicating acute sleep problems and 0 is the lowest score indicating normal sleep problems.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose and the questionnaires were filled through Google forms. Each participant received gratitude for their cooperation. Standardized psychological tools were administered to the participants.

Analysis of Data

The scoring of each test was done as per the scoring instructions given in the respective manuals. Considering the objective of the study, Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Analysis was conducted. Inter-correlation was done to analyze the relationship among Internet Addiction, Happiness and Sleep Quality.

RESULTS

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation scores of 102 Young Adults with variables Internet Addiction, Happiness and Sleep Quality

	N	Mean	SD
Internet Addiction	102	41.94	15.28
Happiness	102	44.09	12.08
Sleep Quality	102	4.08	0.68

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of Internet Addiction, Happiness and Sleep Quality among Young Adults

	Internet Addiction	Happiness	Sleep Quality
Internet Addiction	-	-0.162	0.641**
Happiness	-	-	-0.116
Sleep Quality	-	-	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The aim of the present study was to investigate the correlation among internet addiction, sleep quality and happiness. The study population's age ranged from 18-25 years. The widespread usage of internet and modern technology has led to a problem of wide range of psychological issues. Various studies support that excessive internet usage impact the quality of life negatively. There are many areas of a person's life that are being impacted. One of them is sleep quality. Internet addicts are usually reported to suffer with acute sleep problems which later impacts negativity the mental health. One does not sit or interacts with family or peers and stay isolated which ultimately affects the happiness and well-being of an individual.

Based on correlation statistical analysis, the results found that there is a negative correlation between internet addiction and happiness ($r = -0.162$). To support this, a study was conducted by Muusses et al. (2014) to study the long-term effects of excessive internet usage. It was found that excessive use of internet lead to increased levels of stress, loneliness and depression and lower level of happiness and well-being at the same time. This study also states that as the time spent on internet decreases, level of happiness increases in an individual.

Moreover, based on correlation statistical analysis, the results found that there is a significant positive correlation between internet addiction and sleep quality ($r = 0.611$, $p < 0.01$). The pattern of results is consistent with the previous literature of Mahmoud et al. (2022) who conducted a study on 525 students at Sohag University to examine the correlation between internet addiction and sleep quality. Young Internet Addiction Test (YIAT) was used to assess the internet addiction whereas Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index was used to examine the sleep quality among the students. It was found that people with internet addiction have poor quality sleep and face acute sleep problems.

Additionally, based on correlation statistical analysis, the results found that there is a negative correlation between happiness and sleep quality ($r = -0.116$). Blagrove et al. (2004) found that frequent nightmares reported by people also report negative effects on mood including anxiety, stress and low level of happiness.

CONCLUSION

Young adulthood is a complex stage where young people are transitioning out from adolescence and are entering into adulthood with a lot many responsibilities and pressures. The research study concludes that there exists a substantial relationship between internet addiction, happiness and sleep quality. Internet addiction leads to various difficulties in a person's life which ultimately affects the well-being and happiness. The study also shows the inverse relationship between internet addiction and happiness. Higher the internet dependency, lower would be the happiness and vice versa. Talking about internet addiction and sleep quality, results show that there exists a positive relationship between addiction and poor sleep quality. Higher the internet addiction in a person, more acute would be the sleep problems in an individual. Whereas happiness is negatively correlated with sleep quality. Higher the level of happiness, lower would-be disturbed sleep patterns in an individual. Overall, the present study gives a comprehensive understanding of problematic internet usage being linked with dysfunctional sleep patterns and overall disruption of well-being and happiness.

Recommendations

Excessive internet usage leads to worsening of interpersonal relationships and overall health of an individual. Internet usage can be limited by substituting it with physical exercise and

increasing the level of social interactions with peers and family members. Being on the other side of the screen makes an individual lethargic and unproductive. It is important to come out of the virtual life of the internet and to start living in the physical world by making the efficient use of resources available including books. It is important to keep a check and limit the number of hours one spends on screen by keeping the notifications off or by setting timers while using the internet to avoid binge watching.

Happiness is a pleasant emotional state. Happiness is either the presence of positive emotions or absence of negative emotions. Making conscious choices in life is the key to happiness. Happiness can be attained by surrounding oneself with positive people and by developing the skill of resilience in life. It is very important to make one's life meaningful. Healthy lifestyle also improves the quality of life which includes physical exercise, healthy food intake, yoga and meditation and practicing various mindfulness techniques.

Sleep is the basic requirement of human beings for survival. Without a proper amount of sleep, a person might feel nausea, headache, body ache, dizziness and other related symptoms. This ultimately leads to lowering the productivity of an individual. To have a sound sleep, it is important to have a proper sleep schedule. The physical environment should be such and the number of distractions and disturbances must be taken care of. Physical exercise and meditation techniques help in improving the dysfunctional sleep along with a balanced diet.

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