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Internet Addiction, Family Communication Pattern and Perceived Social Support among Adolescents

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Abstract

The present study shows internet Addiction, Family Communication Pattern and Perceived Social Support among adolescents. It was aimed to assess the relationship between internet addiction, family communication pattern and perceived social support and gender differences on internet addiction among adolescents. The sample included 154 adolescents (71 males and 83 females), aged 13-18 years of age. This was done by using Internet Addiction Test, Family Communication Pattern Scale and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. The results were calculated using Correlation, Simple Linear Regression and t-test. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between Internet Addiction and Perceived Social Support in terms of Family. Perceived Social Support in terms of family significantly predicted Internet Addiction. Further, it was also found that there was a significant gender difference among males and females on Internet Addiction.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, Family Communication Pattern, Perceived Social Support, Gender Differences.

Introduction

Nowadays internet is widely been used by everyone in all spheres of life, be personal or professional. It is being used for educational, financial purposes, for research, for news updates, socializing and many more. While doing any of the work on internet individual might lose their track of time or what they were actually doing it. The term for this excessive usage was termed as Internet Addiction by Goldberg in 1996. Internet Addiction is known to be the online- related, compulsive behaviour which interferes with the social and occupational functioning of the individual. Internet Addiction affects our daily life functioning. It also affects our professional as well as personal relationship. Indulging excessively into internet use affects an individual sleep pattern, psychological and physical well being, and academics, to name a few.

Review of Literature

According to various researches done Internet Addiction has been found most common among adolescents. It has been found that males are more addicted to internet as compared to females (Tajalli and Zarnaghash, 2016). Because of its growing prevalence among adolescents it has now been considered as a serious issue. The environment adolescents are living in plays a major role. This can include family, friends or any other significant person. But the most important role comes up is of the family. In India, family is given the utmost importance. Adolescents are dependent on their families for monetary support, emotional support or any other kind of support they need. Family is there to support all the basic needs or requirements of each and every family member (Bhagat& Sehgal, 2011).

Family Communication is one of the most integral parts of a happy and healthy family. The way each and every member communicates to each other, helps bond the family member well. It also helps to improve the family's psychological well being. According to Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2000), there are two fundamental orientations that distinguish on how families communicate. These are conversation orientation and conformity orientation (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994). Conversation orientation is the degree to which how much people communicate within the family members. The kind of family environment that is created to encourage any kind of conversation. Families with high conversation orientation are more

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enjoyable and freely communicate their ideas and view point with the family members. Parents who encourage communication within family tend to make their children more independent and help them socialize well. On the other hand, families with low conversation orientation, do not value their children's views and opinions. And also want them just to obey their parents as to what they say. Conformity orientation refers to the degree to which family communication patterns are characterized by emphasis on homogeneity of values, beliefs and attitudes. Families with high conformity orientation emphasis more on uniformity of attitudes and belief of each family member. Families with low conformity orientation focus more on individuality and diverse variety of beliefs and attitudes of family members. The type of Family Communication Pattern that is present in a family determined by the high and low end combinations of the two fundamental orientations – conversations and conformity. The types of families are Consensual Families, Pluralistic Families, Protective Families and laissez – faire families. Consensual Families are those with high conversation and conformity orientation. Pluralistic Families are those with high conversation orientation whereas low conformity orientation. Protective Families are low on conversation orientation and high on conformity orientation. The laissez-faire family type has low conversation and conformity orientation (Koerner& Fitzpatrick).

Just like family communication pattern, social support is also very important in an individual's life. Social support is referred to the various ways in which people can help each other. Social support can be any form such as materialistic, informational or emotional given to an individual. Perceived Social Support is how an individual perceives that he or she will get social support from other people, regardless that the support is actually present or not. The perceived social support can be available for an individual in terms of family, friends and significant others (Zimet, et. al, 1995).

Aim of the Study

The research paper aims to study the relation between internet addiction, family communication pattern and perceived social support among adolescents. The present study hypothesise that there will be a significant relationship between Internet Addiction and Family Communication Pattern.There will a significant relationship between Internet Addiction and Perceived Social Support in terms of family.Perceived Social Support will significantly predict Internet Addiction.Males will have significantly higher Internet Addiction than females.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 154 adolescents' age 13 to 18 years from Delhi NCR regions. The sample was divided among males and females (m= 71 and f= 83). The tools used were Internet Addiction Test, Family communication Pattern Scale and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support.

Tools

Internet Addiction Test was developed by Kimberley Young (2000). The test consists of 20 items that are rated on a 5 point likert scale (1: rarely; 2: occasionally; 3: frequently; 4: often and 5: very often). The scores of an individual ranges from 20-49 average, 50-79 above average and 80-100 significant levels of internet addiction. For internet addiction test, its internal consistency reliability has been established which is 0.95 and its concurrent validity has also been established. The revised version of Family Communication Pattern Scale was developed by Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (2002). The scale consists of 26 items. The items are rated on 7 point likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Item numbers 1 to 15 are related to conversation orientation and item numbers 16 to 26 for conformity orientation. The scores are calculated on both the orientations separately. Further the combinations of these scores on the two orientations leads to the Family Communication Pattern. The scale's test-retest reliability has been established i.e. 0.99 for conformity orientation and 0.73-0.93 for conversation orientation. The content validity (0.89) has also been established. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support was developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet and Farley in 1988. It is a brief self report measure with 12 items. The items are rated on a 7 point likert scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. The scale is designed to measure the social support they get from their family, friends and significant others. The higher the score higher is the social support on that particular dimension. The scale's internal reliability ranged from 0.81-0.90 for the family subscale, 0.90-0.9 for the friends subscale and 0.83-0.98 for significant others subscale and 0.84-0.92 for the scale as a whole. The scale has also developed good construct validity.

Techniques

To assess the relationship between Internet Addiction, Family Communication Pattern and Perceived Social Support Pearson's correlation was calculated. To assess Perceived Social Support as a predictor of Internet Addiction Linear Regression was calculated. To assess gender differences on Internet Addiction t-test was calculated.

Procedure

A brief introduction was given about the study to the participants and their volunteer agreement was ensured. Participants were also assured about the confidentiality of the test results. Each participant was contacted personally and rapport was formed to break the ice and to make the participant feel at ease. It was made sure that the participant was enthusiastic and true responses were elicited from them. Before handling them over with the questionnaires, the instructions about each of them were made clear to the participant. Any other further help was also assisted. To undergo the process of the study, the data were collected from 154 adolescents from 13 to 18 years of age, studying in class 8th to 12th. The scales used for the study were Internet Addiction Test, Family Communication Pattern Scale

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and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. There was no time limit for the completion of tool. The tool was of paper pencil format.

Results

Table: 1 Descriptive Analysis

N= 154

Variable	Mean	S.D
Internet Addiction	40.70	14.94
Conversation	66.40	14.84
Con Formity	48.48	11.48
Family Communication Pattern	1.91	1.23
Family	20.59	5.70
Friends	20.72	5.15
Significant Others	18.53	7.36
Total	59.45	14.16

According to Table: 1 it has been observed that the mean and Significant Difference for Internet Addiction Test came out to be 40.70 and 14.95 respectively. For Family Communication Pattern Scale's conversation orientation mean was 66.40 and Significant Difference was 14.84 whereas for conformity orientation mean came out to be 48.48 and Significant Difference 11.48. The mean and Significant Difference for Family Communication Pattern came out to be 1.91 and 1.23 respectively. The mean and Significant Difference for Perceived Social Support in terms of family was 20.59 and 5.706 respectively; for friends it was 20.72 and 5.15 respectively whereas for significant others was 18.53 and 7.36 respectively. For the Total of Perceived Social Support mean was 59.45 and Significant Difference 14.16.

Table: 2 Correlation among Variables

Variable	Correlation	P Value	N
Internet Addiction & Conversation Orientation	-.156	053	54
Internet Addiction & Confrmity Orientation	-.157	052	54
Internet Addiction & Family Support	-.222**	006	154
Internet Addiction & Friends Support	.030	714	54
Internet Addiction & Significant Others Support	.015	850	54
Internet And Total Perceived Social Support	-.075	353	54

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

According to Table: 2 there was a significant relationship between Internet Addiction Test and Perceived Social Support in terms of Family support (r= -.22**). However, there was no significant relationship between Internet Addiction Test and conversation orientation of Family Communication Pattern Scale, Internet Addiction Test and conformity orientation of Family Communication Pattern Scale and Internet Addiction Test and Perceived Social Support in terms of friends, significant others and total Perceived Social Support among adolescents.

Table: 3 Family as a predictor of Internet Addiction

Predictor Variable	R	R.Square	F	Beta
FAMILY SUPPORT	.22	.05	7.89**	-.22**

Dependent Variable: Internet Addiction
** Significant at 0.01 level

According to Table: 3, from the table it can be observed that F value (7.89) and Beta value (-.22) is significant at 0.01 levels. This means that high perceived social support in terms of family will lead to low levels of internet addiction among adolescents.

Table: 4 Gender Difference on Internet Addiction

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t
Male	71	43.79	15.42	2.41**
Female	83	38.06	14.08	

** Significant at 0.01 level.

According to Table: 4 there is a significant difference between among males and females on internet addiction. The significance is found at 0.01 level.

Discussion

The present study hypothesized that there will be a significant relationship between Internet Addiction and Family Communication Pattern. According to the results, no significant relationship was found between Internet Addiction and Family Communication Pattern among adolescents. The correlation between Internet Addiction and Conversation Orientation was found to be r = -.15 and correlation between Internet Addiction and Conformity Orientation was r = -.15. A negative correlation was observed between the two variables. Thus the hypothesis 1 was not proved.

Another hypothesis stated that there will be a significant relationship between Internet Addiction and Perceived Social Support. According to the results, significant relationship was found between Internet Addiction and Perceived Social Support in terms of family. According to the Table 2, the relationship between Internet Addiction and Perceived Social Support in terms of family was to be significant at .01 level (r = -.22). The results also showed that no significant correlation between Internet Addiction and Perceived Social Support of friends and significant others.In a study done by Shah, I., Siddiqui, F. and

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Ansari, S. (2016) to study the relationship between internet addiction and social support in undergraduates students. The sample included 164 students of an undergraduate college. The research findings showed that there was a negative correlation found between internet addiction and social support.

The study also hypothesized to assess Perceived Social Support as a predictor of Internet Addiction.According to the result analysis, it was found that Perceived Social Support in terms of family significantly predicts Internet Addiction among adolescents. The F value and beta value were significant at .01 levels. According to the Table 3, results have indicated that Perceived Social Support in terms of family support explained variance in predicting Internet Addiction (R^2 = .05). This could be better explained as when there is high family support it leads to low levels of internet addiction among adolescents. In a research done by Esen, B.K. &Gündoğdu, M. (2010) on relationship between peer pressure and internet addiction.It was found that when the support from family and teachers increased so the levels of internet addiction decreased in adolescents.Also in a study conducted by Dogan, H., Bozgeyikli, H. &Bozdas, C. (2015), it was found that parenting style predicted the levels of internet addiction among adolescents.

Another hypothesis stated that males will have significantly higher Internet Addiction than females. According to the Table 4, results showed that there is significant difference between Internet Addiction of males and females. The t value (2.41) was significant at .01 level. Thus, the hypothesis was confirmed. According to a research conducted by Goswami and Singh, it was found that males were more addicted to internet as compared to females.In a study conducted by Salehi, M., Ahmadi, M.S. &Noei, R. (2012) on the relationship between family communication patterns and internet addiction. The results showed that there is a meaningful relationship between the internet addiction in male and female university students and the male students were more addicted to the internet than the female ones.

Conclusion

Thus it was found that there is a significant relationship between internet addiction and perceived social support in terms of family. This was found out because in Indian context, family plays a major role in controlling the activities of the each family member. The role of parents comes very important in this context as they control and keep a check on all the activities their children indulge in.

The present study will help adolescents know their level of Internet Addiction. So that adolescents can control their excessive internet usage. The study will also help them identify their type of family so that further communication pattern within the family can be enhanced. The present study also has useful implications in terms of family support being an important factor responsible for the less amount of internet usage among adolescents.

Limitation

The current study has some limitations. The sample collected for the study was limited. A wide variety of sample could be collected from Delhi as well as other state. Also other demographic variables such as socio-economic status etc could also be taken into account.

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