



## Impact of Internet use on psychological well-being

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### Abstract:

*The Internet is creating a huge impact on different aspects of our life and more specifically the psychological and psychological well-being of our life. The present research is analyzing Internet communication and its impact on the psychological well-being of the youth population. In the present study, 200 youth population has been studied about their different usage pattern of the Internet. The data was collected through a random sampling technique and analyzed in the light of different objectives and hypothesis of the present study. To understand the impact of Internet communication mainly quantitative techniques have been used. The findings of the present study indicate that there are significant negative correlations of Internet addiction scores with various dimensions of psychological well-being. This implies that as the use of the Internet among participants is increasing, their psychological well-being among dimensions namely, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth, self-acceptance, and personal relations is decreasing.*

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**Keywords:** *Internet, Internet communication, and Psychological Well-being*

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### 1. Introduction

Although several studies in western countries already proved that a negative impact of the Internet on the psychosocial and psychological well-being of the users. In the Indian context, the use of the Internet is increasing drastically over some time. So, there is a need to understand the extent and levels of impact of Internet usage on psychological and psychosocial well-being. Nalwa K and Anand A.P (2003) claimed that the Internet had become a medium of addiction in students.

In another study according to Ko et al. (2009) association was significant among adolescents in junior high schools than in senior high/vocational schools. Online chatting, adult sex web viewing, online gaming, online gambling, and bulletin board system were associated with aggressive behaviours. The results suggest that prevention programs for aggressive behaviours should pay attention and be conducted among Internet addict adolescents.

In the Indian context, Cherry (2012) in a study examined people with Internet addictive behaviours and their overall psychological well-being. Findings also suggested that people with higher levels of Internet addiction are more likely to have higher levels of depression. These findings demonstrate that Internet addiction is associated with a decline in psychological well-being.

Barthakur (2012) conducted a study to find out the connection between Internet use and mental health problems. In a total of 268 respondents, 24.6% testified frequent problems due to the use of the Internet. Heavy users of the Internet felt loneliness, depressive, anxious, and other disorders. The researchers recommended that Internet users at the college and workplace should be screened and interventions should be planned to prevent mental health problems.

In this regard, the present study attempted to understand the status of internet usage and psychological well-being. And how the internet is influencing different dimensions of psychological well-being.

## 2. Internet in India

The measurement demonstrates the number of overall web clients in those nations as of June 2017. China was positioned first with more than 738 million web clients, more than twofold the measure of third-positioned United States with 287 million web clients. Generally speaking, all BRIC markets had more than 100 million web clients, representing four of the seven nations with more than 100 million web clients.

With more than 460 million web clients, India is the second biggest online market, positioned just behind China. By 2021, there will be around 635.8 million web clients in India. Regardless of the huge base of web clients in India, just 26 percent of the Indian populace got to the web in 2015. This is a huge increment in contrast with the earlier years, considering the web entrance rate in India remained at around 10 percent in 2011. Besides, men overwhelmed web utilization in India with 71 percent to ladies' 29 percent.

## 3. Concept of Well-Being

“Well-being is the state of happy, healthy, and prosperous.”  
(<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionar/well-being>)

Wellbeing is recognized as people's life quality. It is a dynamic status which is attained when people can achieve their goals and social goals. It is comprehended both in addition to objective values, such as household income, educational resources, and health state; and subjective measures such as happiness perceive life quality and life satisfaction. Adolescent's wellbeing usually is made up of physical, psychological, social, and cognitive wellbeing. Psychological well-being means the mental and emotional status of individuals. It addresses how adolescents think about themselves and their future and how they handle and cope with situations. Social well-being refers to how well an adolescent can get along in the social ecology or social relationships. It includes basic social skills, time use, and the ability to contact emotionally to people.

Ryff's concept of well-being a final hall-mark of well-being is the concept focuses on enduring states not just the momentary mood of good feeling (Sharma, 2002). So those researchers who are working in the field of well-being they are looking for the enduring feeling of the well-being, not only swinging emotions (Diener, Suh, Oishi, 1997).

- Autonomy- Autonomy is the regulation of one's behaviour through the internal locus of control (Ryff,1989; Ryff&Keyes.1995).
- Personal growth- Personal Growth is the ability to develop and expand the self, person ability to self -actualized and accomplish goals (Ryff,1989; Ryff&Keyes.1995).
- Environmental mastering - It refers to choosing and controlling through physical and mental actions. (Ryff,1989; Ryff&Keyes.1995).
- Positive relation- Positive Relation refers to have positive relations with others is an essential component in the development of trusting and lasting relationships as well as belonging to a network of communication and support. (Ryff,1989; Ryff&Keyes.1995).
- Self-acceptance-Self Acceptance is the most recurring aspect of psychological well-being. feature of mental health and an element of optimal functioning. (Ryff,1989; Ryff&Keyes.1995).

## 4. Method

The present study was conducted on a total sample of 200 adults, college-going students of the different colleges of Delhi University. I have used convenience sampling techniques to collect data. The age range of the sample participants was 18-25 years. There was a total of 164 females and 36 males participated in the present study.

The data for the present study were collected from the different colleges of Delhi University. Firstly, participants were briefly explained about the present study. Participants were also ensured that their personal information will only be used for research and all information will remain confidential. They were asked to fill the consent form also if they ensured to participate in the study. After that participants were asked to fill their demographic information. Responses on both the questionnaires were taken during college hour of the participants, their consent was taken for the participation in the present study and was asked to fill the questionnaire whenever they were ready to give the response.

Procedure.

The individual subject was assessed in the present study whenever they were free & intended to fill the questionnaire. The consent of the participants was taken. For starting the pilot study, the researcher visited the different colleges of Delhi University, after details about the purpose of the study to every participant, the researcher, collected the information related to the questionnaire. In this way, all 200 participants' data were collected for the present study.

## 5. Tools and Measures

In the present research following tools and measures have been used:

1. Young's Internet Addiction Test.
2. Ryff's Psychological well-being scale.

### 5.1 Young's Internet Addiction Test

Young's questionnaire contains 20 items is one of the popular questionnaires. It is constructed to assess the dependency of the participants on the Internet or in other words their addiction level on the Internet. The credibility of the test can be illustrated by its application in different branches of psychology and another field of social sciences. The standardization of the test is as follows:

#### 5.1.1 Reliability and validity of Young's Internet Addiction Test

In the present study 1998 version of the above-mentioned test was used. To check the reliability of the present test extensive study has been done. In the Indian population, a study has been done by Devellis (2003) and Tavalkol & Dennic, (2011) in their study found the reliability of IAT satisfactory, Chronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=.88$ ).

They have also assessed the validity of the IAT satisfactory. Chronbach alpha (.88) shows satisfactory internal consistency and constructs reliability. The Cronbach's alpha value for the IAT is .88, which is considered very good and satisfactory (Hair et al., 2006).

The face, construct, and concurrent validity of the IAT was also found to be satisfactory. A significant positive correlation ( $r=.30$ ,  $P<.01$ ) among the items has been found.

The present 20 item test is based on a 5- point rating scale, (ranging from 1 to 5). Factor analysis of the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) revealed six factors- excessive use, salience, neglecting work, lack of control, anticipation, and neglecting social life. These are the factors showing good internal consistency and concurrent validity, with salience being the most reliable. The present test is having the marking range of 0 to 100. Here the higher mark shows greater dependence on the Internet. Once the final mark is completed, it is interpreted according to the following:

20-49- Normal users

50-70- Slight addiction

80-100- Severe addiction.

### 5.2 Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale

This is scale was developed by Carol Ryff (Ryff & Singer,1998) to measure dimensions of well-being namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, personal relation, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

**5.2.1 Reliability and Validity of Ryff's (RSWB) well-being scale**

Ryff's scale of well-being consists of 6 dimensions of well-being. RPWB was originally validated on a sample of 321 socially connected, well-educated, financially comfortable, and physically healthy men and women (Ryff 1989b). In this study, a 20-item scale was used for each of the six constructs. On this scale, there was an equal number of positive and negative items. The internal consistency coefficients were satisfactory (between 0.86 and 0.93) and 5 coefficients for a subsample test-retest reliability over six weeks were also high (0.81-0.88). Examining the intercorrelations of RPWB subscales gives a cursory test of the multidimensionality of RPWP. In Ryff's (1989b) study, the subscale inters correlations ranged from 0.32 to 0.76. The highest correlations were between environment mastery and self-acceptance (0.76), purpose in life and self-acceptance (0.72), personal growth and purpose in life (0.72), and environmental mastery and purpose in life (0.66). the present scale is also having high construct validity.

**6. Results**

**6.1 Correlation between Internet addiction with dimensions of well- being**

Table 1 correlations between internet addiction and well-being

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1. Internet Addiction Score	-	1							
2. Autonomy	-	-.164*	1						
3. Environmental Mastery	-	-.372**	.346*	1					
4. Personal Growth	-	-.315**	.394**	.316*	1				
5. Personal Relations	-	-.373**	.281**	.448**	.569**	1			
6. Purpose in Life	-	-.211**	.414**	.376**	.601**	.409**	1		
7. Self-Acceptance	-	-.313**	.409**	.546**	.424**	.544**	.456**	1	
8. Overall Well Being Score	-	-.399**	.646**	.676**	.748**	.761**	.741**	.789**	1

N=200, \*p>0.05-Significant, \*\*p>0.01-Significant

**6.2 Correlation of Higher Internet addiction score group with dimensions of well-being**

Table 2: correlation of higher internet addiction score group with dimensions of well-being

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1. Internet Addiction Score	-	1							
2. Autonomy	-	-.142	1						
3. EnvironmentalMastery	-	-.185	.351**	1					
4. Personal Growth	-	-.213	-.308**	.239*	1				
5. Personal Relation	-	-.313**	.212*	.396**	.523**	1			
6. Purpose in Life	-	-.165	.297**	.191*	.521	.263**	1		
7. Self-Acceptance	-	-.246**	.377**	.4378**	.278**	.487**	.292**	1	
8. Overall Well Being Score	-	-.316**	.640**	.623**	.690**	.729**	.621**	.732**	1

N=88, \*p>0.05-Significant, \*\*p>0.01-Significant

**6.3 Correlation of Low Internet Addiction scores group with dimensions of Well-Being**

Table 3: correlation of low internet addiction score group with dimensions of well-being.

Measure		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Internet Addiction Score	-	1							
2. Autonomy	-	.014	1						
3. Environmental Mastery	-	-.098	.275**	1					
4. Personal Growth	-	.169	.473**	.226*	1				
5. Personal Relation	-	-.054	.317*	.362**	.519**	1			
6. Purpose in Life	-	-.173	.544**	.492*	.633	.496**	1		
7. Self-Acceptance	-	-.039	.415**	.579**	.473	.522**	.564**	1	
8. Overall Well Being Score	-	-.038	.668**	.640**	.744	.739	.839**	.831	1

*N=112, \*p>0.05-Significant, \*\*p>0.01-Significant*

#### 6.4 Sowing T-Test results for High Internet Addiction and Low Internet Addiction score groups on various dimensions of Well-Being

Table 4: t-test results for high and low internet addiction group on various dimensions of well-being.

Measures	Internet Addiction Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Internet Addiction Score	Low scorers	112	30.83	8.02	32.43**
	High scorers	88	62.99	5.98	
Autonomy	Low Internet addiction	112	28.53	5.39	1.98*
	High Internet addiction	88	27.11	4.48	
Environmental Mastery	Low Internet addiction	112	28.58	3.96	5.15**
	High Internet addiction	88	25.70	3.88	
Personal Growth	Low Internet addiction	112	30.51	4.15	4.72**
	High Internet addiction	88	27.64	4.43	
Personal Relation	Low Internet addiction	112	31.47	5.71	4.69**
	High Internet addiction	88	27.74	5.44	
Purpose in life	Low Internet addiction	112	30.66	4.75	3.13*
	High Internet addiction	88	28.45	5.27	
Self-acceptance	Low Internet addiction	112	30.64	5.51	3.98**
	High Internet addiction	88	27.44	5.81	
Over all well-being Score	Low Internet addiction	112	180.44	19.93	5.50**
	High Internet addiction	88	164.09	21.92	

*\*\*p> 0.01 – Significant; \*p> 0.05- Significant; two-tailed, df-198*

The result indicates that there is a significant correlation between Internet addiction and different dimensions of the psychosocial well-being of the youth population. Results indicate significant negative correlations of Internet addiction scores with various dimensions of psychological well-being. This implies that as the use of the Internet among participants is decreasing their psychological well-

being among dimensions namely, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth, self-acceptance, and personal relations is decreasing. Thus using results, it can be said that participants (youth) are not defining or deciding their standards rather are submitting themselves to the social pressures of using the Internet and being updated, their Internet usage is also affecting their everyday life management, they are not able to take charge of situations and are not able to use opportunities for the development of self and skills, lack/interference in personal growth is being experienced and the quality of personal relationships in terms of affection, empathy, and intimacy is also being affected. Internet usage is also negatively affecting their goals, sense of direction, and obstructing their self-acceptance. The findings of the present research are consistent with the findings of the previous study done by Cardak (2013) who found out; students who have more dependence on the Internet or would likely have so, their psychological well-being will be influenced negatively. Another study done by Waldo (2014) has also found similar results that there is a significant relationship between Internet addiction and psychosocial well-being. Smahel et. al (2012) also found in their folding bed study that a higher level of logic to Internet use has a negative correlation with psychosocial well-being. The finding indicates that a higher level of pathological Internet use is associated with a low level of psychosocial well-being. Another study also indicated that higher usage of the Internet is associated with low self-esteem (Akin and Iskender,2011; Karaut et al.,1998). It found that social interaction anxiety is the most severe impact on Internet users who had shown severe dependence on the Internet (Erwin et al.,2004; Wolfradt, and Doll,2001). So, we can say that result of the present study is consistent with the result of previous studies. It appears that to enhance psychological well-being, youth should decrease their dependency on the Internet.

The correlational results also indicate that the high Internet user group or the group whose Internet use is higher, their well-being dimensions are more negatively correlated in comparison to the lower Internet-addicted group. Participants scoring high on Internet addiction are hampering their two crucial aspects of well-being personal relationships and self-acceptance. However, the results obtained for low score groups show approximately zero correlation meaning nothing can be conclusively said about the relationship or that participants who are low on Internet addiction their psychological well-being remains unaffected. Alam, et al. (2014) through their study also reported that five negative impacts of excessive Internet usage such as interpersonal problems, behavioural problems, physical problems, psychological problems, and work problems of young adults. Thus overall, it can be concluded that the psychological well-being of participants high on Internet usage is getting negatively influenced and is alarmingly affecting their two dimensions of personal relations and self-acceptance especially. Nalwa K and Anand A.P (2003) also reported that the dependent group found to delaying works when time spent online, and they lost sleep due to late-night online habit. Some of the respondents accepted that without the Internet their life would be boring. The dependent group spent more hours on the Internet compared to the non-dependents group. On the loneliness amount, the dependent group scored higher than the non-dependent group.

The second objective of the present study was to examine the difference of psychosocial well-being between high Internet addiction group and low Internet addiction group. The result of the study on the second hypothesis shows that those participants who were in the category of high Internet addiction group, their different psychosocial well-being dimensions are negatively influenced by Internet use. The Internet addiction score of the higher group was found to be negatively correlated with different dimensions of well-being. High Internet addiction groups' relation, self-acceptance, and overall well-being in the score are significant at  $P < 0.001$  level. Although some studies have shown contrary results, for instance, a study of Sahmel et., al (2012) shown that high Internet use is positively correlated with social interaction. But the present study has shown that high use of the Internet is negatively correlated with the personal relation of the participants. The research was done by Moraham, Martin, and Schumacher, (2003) inconsistency with the present study results indicated that high use of the Internet will increase the level of loneliness individuals. As visible in the result of the present study, the higher

use of the Internet will affect the personal relationship of the participants. A study was done by Berkowsky (2012) also indicated that Internet users are more involved in social interaction, it was found that Internet users, on average visit their friends more frequently than non-Internet users. It was also found that participants were more involved in social gatherings and more likely to visit clubs and organizations. Anderson (1998) also reported that dependents averaged 229 min a day compared to non-dependents who averaged 73 min a day and were prone to more negative consequences compared to the low user participants. In the second part of the same objective it was found that those participants who were low on the Internet addiction group, no significant correlation have been found because none of the dimensions of well-being is negatively correlated significantly. In the account of a higher Internet addiction group and lower Internet addiction group, significant differences have been found. Different dimensions of psychosocial well-being have been found significantly different in both groups.

On the dimension of Autonomy significant difference has been found which is significant at  $P < 0.05$  level. This indicates that people using the Internet more are unable to experience or find it difficult in experiencing autonomy in terms of their decisions, choices, opinions, and goals as compared to people using less of the Internet. On the second dimension of psychosocial well-being which is environmental mastery both the groups were found significantly different which is significant at  $P < 0.01$  level. This also means that participants differ in terms of managing their daily life situations. It might be so that people using the Internet more are afraid of handling situations or are unable to manage their daily life situations well as compared to people who use the Internet less. Quite a possibility that they find an escape from dealing with issues of life in using the Internet more. Participants also differ significantly on the 3rd dimension personal growth of well-being which might indicate that using the Internet often interferes with the personal growth of individuals. Participants using the Internet more may not invest their time in experiencing or widening their horizons rather would spend/waste their time online. Participants also differ significantly on the last two dimensions of well-being too. This means that the experience of personal relations and self-acceptance of participants who are high users of the Internet and low users of the Internet is different. Quite a possibility that investing time more online in the virtual world has affected social life, relations, and self-development. Egger and Rauterberg (1996) also found that respondents who self-reported as addicts reported negative consequences of Internet use, complaints from friends and family over the amount of time spent online, feelings of anticipation when going online, and feeling guilty about their Internet use. Greater use of the Internet is associated with negative effects on individuals, such as a diminishing social circle, and increasing depression and loneliness (Kraut et.al 1998). Nalwa and Anand (2003) also reported similar results, they found among Indian students significant behavioral and functional usage differences were revealed between Internet-dependent and independent students. Dependents were found to delay other work to spend time online, lose sleep due to late-night logons, and feel life would be boring without the Internet.

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