

Positive Psychology Interventions on Internet Addiction and Quality of Interpersonal Relationships in Young Adults

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to see how effective positive psychology treatments (PIs) are at preventing internet addiction and improving people's relationship quality. The suggested hypothesis therefore proposes that "positive psychology intervention would reduce internet addiction, leading to better interpersonal relationships." For this reason, 40 students with Internet addiction and low interpersonal relationship were selected using a purposive convenient sampling technique for non-probability purposes. This study is based on quasi-experimental, pre-post quantitative design, for which nine sessions of PI-based treatment were conducted. Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988) and Internet Addiction Test (Young, 2009) were the selected measures. According to the results, PI is an effective method for treating Internet Addiction and hence there is significant change in the pretest and posttest value ($p < 0.05$) in reducing Internet use ($P = 0.01$) and improving the quality of Interpersonal relationships ($p = 0.01$). For data analysis, SPSS version 22 was used. The findings of the present study provide evidence that positive psychology interventions are relevant with the culture of Pakistan and reflect on the needs of young adults.

Keywords: Positive Psychology Interventions, Internet Addiction, Interpersonal Relationships

Introduction

The worldwide Internet-using population has grown to nearly 2.5 billion over the last 2 decades. The fact that the internet brings many advantages to our lives is an empirical fact. Emerging data associated with different negative effects, however, suggests that increased internet usage may be troublesome for certain people (Jia et al, 2017). As the phenomena of extensive Internet browsing grows, experts are now attempting to determine what the effects of heavy Internet usage, particularly among young adults, are (Morahan & Martin, 2005). The problem most people have with internet addiction is that they are no longer able to maintain face-to-face conversations or connect easily in person because they have become so engrossed in online-based activities (Shuhail & Bergees, 2006). The negative effects of Internet addiction include the impact on interpersonal relationships, when an individual's interaction with his or her surroundings is deteriorating (Morahan-Martin, 2005). In addition to other problems, Loneliness is linked to Internet addiction in adolescence, suggesting that lonely people who go online to replace social voids and emptiness are more susceptible to Internet addiction (Huan et al. 2014; Tabak and Zawadzka 2017; Shettar et al. 2017). Internet addiction can prohibit people from having good

social contacts, leading to feelings of loneliness (Yao&Zhong 2014, zdemir et al. 2014; Bachnio et al. 2016, Papacharissi & Rubin 2000, Shettar et al. 2017).. According to Li and Chung (2006). Furthermore, the feeling of isolation that arises from excessive Internet usage might be used to diagnose interpersonal issues (Wellman & Gulia, 1999; Shuhail & Bergees, 2006). Individuals may experience behavioural issues as a result of excessive Internet use, in which they react differently than usual (Kubey, Lavin & Barrows, 2001). Long-term Internet use may result in another bodily concern. Migraine or headaches, sleep disturbances, and other bodily issues are examples (Yang & Tung, 2007). One of the key psychological challenges that college students must deal with, according to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, is intimacy vs. isolation (Moore and Abell 2017). It appears that college students who have less committed relationships than others may get estranged from conventional social interactions and turn to the Internet for more virtual socialisation, resulting in decreased social interaction. Food, water, and sex, all of which are essential for survival, ordinarily activate the reward circuit in the brain. Hence, unnatural reinforcers drugs, alcohol, gambling, and the internet can be more strong prompting people to disregard sex, grooming, job, and even food and health. The Internet can be viewed as a specific social media to meet specific requirements, according to the uses and gratifications paradigm (Phua et al. 2017; Papacharissi and Rubin 2000). In some ways, the Internet provides a safe and secure environment for shy and avoidant people to visit social networking sites while remaining anonymous (Huan et al. 2014). However, the Internet's benefits allow college students to avoid face-to-face social interactions or to use it as a refuge when they have bad real-world social ties and are having difficulty forming social bonds (Milani et al. 2009). So, when the person is addicted to the internet, he appears to ignore the outside world and focuses on the computer they use, so they reach the state of flow where they lose their self-consciousness and enjoy themselves, to reduce this positive psychology intervention will be used which will raise positive feelings, positive cognitions and positive behavior and to reduce symptoms and problems related to internet addiction hence the quality of their social relationships can also be improved. According to positive psychology theorists (Layous et al., 2011), positive techniques improve well-being and reduce negative emotions both directly and indirectly (by encouraging positive feelings, positive attitudes and positive emotions). The goal of interventions based on the positive psychology paradigm is to recognise and build on an individual's strengths, with the development of wellbeing as a main goal. As a result, positive psychology treatments (PPIs) employ techniques aimed at promoting people's positive traits and feelings, with the ultimate goal of improving happiness (Seligman, 2010; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology interventions, or PPIs, are a set of research tools and approaches aimed at improving happiness, well-being, and positive thoughts and emotions (Keyes, et al, 2012). The quality of social relationships, which is linked to rich social interaction, life satisfaction, and online activities, might be considered a significant indicator of feeling socially connected (Hawkey et al. 2005). Positive psychology interventions can improve social relations (O'Connell et al, 2016). They evaluated participants from three perspectives: relationship-focused, self-focused, and control-oriented. Only those in the relationship-focused condition thought their existing connections had improved after the intervention ended. As a result, Positive psychology interventions can boost pleasant feelings and emotional well-being, as well as social interactions (O'Connell et al, 2016) However, research into positive psychology interventions (PIs) has been minimal so far. PIs help to strengthen social relationships and can be used to treat Internet Addiction (Song, 2004).. Hence, mentioned figure illustrates that positive psychology can have positive impact in decreasing internet addiction and increase interpersonal relationships Following the theoretical values, we hypothesized the following

- Intervention of positive psychology would reduce internet addiction leading to better interpersonal relationships in young adults

Methodology

Research Design

The current study used a pre-post quasi experimental within-group design, in which the same group of participants was compared before and after a combination intervention that included positive psychology interventions.

Participants

The sample for the study was 40 students (20 males and 20 females) with an age range of 20 to 25 years studying in the bachelor's and master's programs. Convenient purposive sampling was used to collect data.

Inclusion criteria:

Anyone between the ages of 20 and 25 who has some prior educational experience and can understand Basic English was eligible for this study; additionally, the person must have a low score on the quality of interpersonal relationships scale and a high score on the internet addiction test for the eligibility of this study.

Exclusion criteria:

Individuals who had already participated in other therapeutic interventions or had been diagnosed with another mental disease were also excluded from this study, as did those who were involved in other types of addiction or had prior understanding of psychology or positive psychology.

Measure

This research is comprised of the following of consent form, Demographic form, and Internet Addiction Test (Young, 2009) and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988)

Internet Addiction Test(Young,2009)

Internet Addiction Test – IAT to test internet addiction has been applied. The test is made up of 20 questions that range from 0 to 5 (for example, how often do you stay online longer than you intended?). (0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = occasionally, 3 = frequently, 4 = very often, and 5 = always). In this study, the coefficient of internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) is 0.91.

Multi Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988)

MSPSS was developed by (Zimet et al., 1988) to assess the quality of one's relationships with significant others. The questionnaire originally consisted of 12 items, and scored from 1 to 7 on the Likert scale. The MSPSS applied here consists of three subscales, including family (4 items), friends (4 items) and significant others (4 items). The alpha coefficient of Cronbach was 0.85, 0.75 and 0.72 for family support, friends and significant other respectively.

Procedure

The study began with taking the permission from the authors for scales. The sample population was first selected for the purpose of this study, and then individuals who thought they had symptoms of Internet addiction were encouraged to participate in the study to meet the researcher for final diagnosis. In order to validate the diagnosis, clinical interviews, the Internet Addiction Test and MSPSS were then performed. The subjects were chosen for the study with a positive scoring. The research was facilitated by Umeed e Nau Clinic, Institute of Professional Psychology. In the next step, the therapist conducted sessions of PIs for the participants, there were 9 sessions adapted for participants, each session was of 60 minutes and the intervention was for 2.5 months long. At the end of the analysis, the samples were administered with the MultiDimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and the findings of the Internet Addiction test were analyzed as a post-test. The scoring of the questionnaire was carried out according to the directions supplied by the scales' writers in their respective manuals. The data was analysed with SPSS to determine the nature of the relationship between the variables.

Ethical Considerations

The informed consent form contained all of the information that the participants needed to know. They were told verbally that they could choose whether or not to participate in the study and that their responses would be kept private. There is no risk to anyone in this study. The authorities were also able to benefit from this research. After completing the questionnaire, the participants were debriefed on the study. They were given an email address to contact in the future if they had any questions or concerns about the study.

Results

This chapter represents a statistical analysis of investigating the impact of positive psychology interventions on internet addiction and quality of interpersonal relationships in young adults. The data was coded and analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) respectively and the hypotheses were tested using inferential and descriptive statistical methods.

5.1 Description of the Data

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and paired sample t-value of changes in internet addiction before and after of positive psychology intervention.

Description	N	After positive psychology intervention		Before positive psychology intervention		T	df	p
		M	SD	M	SD			
internet addiction	40	1.300	.483	3.00	.000	11.12	9	0.01*

*p=<.001

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of participants in the positive psychology intervention, before and after therapy for change in internet addiction. The results are significant which shows that the therapy was effective in decreasing internet addiction significantly before and after training.

Table2: Descriptive statistics and paired sample t-value of changes in interpersonal relationship before and after of positive psychology intervention

Description	N	After positive psychology intervention		Before positive psychology intervention		t	df	P
		M	SD	M	SD			
Interpersonal relationship	40	2.600	.516	1.000	0.00	-9.79	9	0.01*

*p=<.001

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of participants in the study, before and after positive psychology intervention for change in interpersonal relationship. The results are significant which shows that the therapy was effective in increasing interpersonal relationships significantly before and after therapy.

Table 3 Pre-test and Post-Test Scores of internet addiction after positive psychology intervention

		M	SDt	f	d	p	95% CI	
							LL	UL
Pair 1	Pre-Test-internet-addiction Post-Test-internet-addiction	1.700	.483	11.12	9	0.01	1.354	2.04

The findings of paired samples t-test depicts the difference in the pre and post scores of positive psychology intervention. Table 3 provides the mean difference in the levels of internet addiction between pre-intervention and post-intervention data. It shows that there is statistically significant difference in reduction in internet addiction after using positive psychology intervention.

Table 4 Pre-test and Post-Test Scores of interpersonal relationship after positive psychology intervention

		M	SDt	f	d	p	95% CI	
							LL	UL
Pair 1	Pre-Test interpersonal-Relationship Post-Test interpersonal-Relationship	.516	-9.798	9	0.01	-1.969	-	1.230

The findings of paired samples t test depicts the difference in the pre and post scores of positive psychology intervention. Table 4 provides the mean difference in the levels of social relationship between pre-intervention and post-intervention data. It shows that there is statistically

significant difference in the increase of social relationships after using positive psychology intervention.

Table 5: Cronbach's alpha of Internet Addiction Test Questionnaire before and after positive psychology intervention treatment for all the participants

Treatment	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
Before positive psychology intervention	0.89	20
After positive psychology intervention	0.90	20

Table 5 presents the internal consistency of the Internet Addiction Questionnaire before and after positive psychology intervention treatment for all the participants.

Table 6: Cronbach's alpha of MultiDimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Questionnaire before and after positive psychology intervention treatment for all the participants

Treatment	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
Before positive psychology intervention	0.613	12
After positive psychology intervention	0.97	12

Table 6 presents the internal consistency of the Quality of Relationships Inventory Questionnaire before and after positive psychology intervention treatment for all the participants.

Discussion

The purpose of the present research is to provide Intervention of positive psychology to reduce internet addiction and enhance interpersonal relationships in young adults. Internet addiction is linked to other illnesses including depression, loneliness, and social anxiety (Caplan, 2001; Shapira et al., 2000). As a result, determining the cause of Internet addiction is challenging. Indeed, the impact of Internet addiction is recognized as a slew of issues including psychological, interpersonal, physical, occupational, and behavioral issues (Young, 2004). A statistical analysis of the relationship between internet addiction, depression, and family conflict was conducted on 8941 newly pubescent adolescents around the age of 20, which accounts for 94 studies in 22 countries (Huang & Deng 2009; Lin et al. 2009), South Korea (Bayon et al. 2009), Norway (Bakken, 2009), and others. The findings of all of the research demonstrate a strong link between

internet addiction and sadness, loneliness (which is a result of a lack of social connection), and family disputes.

The findings of the present study support the hypothesis ($p=0.001$). Demonstrating the positive efficacy of positive psychology intervention on reducing Internet Addiction among young adults. These findings are consistent with studies that show Positive psychology Interventions promote social relationships (O'Connell et al. 2016) and communication frequency and efficiency (Yao & Zhong, 2014). They believe that Internet Addiction can be reduced by increasing the frequency and efficiency of face-to-face social contacts. A Positive psychology based treatment that focuses on increasing the quantity and quality of face-to-face social interactions may result in a reduction in Internet Addiction. Internet Addiction, on the other hand, is associated with a variety of negative emotions (King et al. 2016) and can be triggered by negative emotions such as parental marital conflict (Yang et al. 2016) and negative passion (Yang et al. 2016). On the other hand, Positive psychology Interventions that boost positive emotions (Layous et al. 2011) can be considered an effective. Similarly, data from studies by (Koch & Pratarelli, 2004), (Engelberg & Sjöberg, 2004), and (Lee & Stapinski, 2012) show that internet addiction and social adjustment are linked. In fact, there is a negative relationship between internet addiction and social adjustment, with more internet use leading to less social adjustment. The importance of Positive Psychology Interventions in Internet Addiction care is growing because to their health benefits, which include increased frequency and quality of social connections (Park et al. 2016).

Furthermore, various studies have been published that examine communication issues as a result of Internet addiction (such as Moraham & Martin, 2000; Whang et al. 2003; Nalwa et al. 2003). Internet addiction has been linked to problems with social contact and relationship effectiveness in studies. Relationship consistency is a high-level system with many diverse yet interconnected dimensions. The importance of confidence, fulfilment, and dedication is extensively highlighted when it comes to relationship quality.

The research also revealed that there is a direct association between age and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Anderson (1969) and Cox (1972) discovered that adults are more trustworthy than college students when using the Philosophy of Human Nature (PHN) scale. However, as Wrightsman (1974) points out, the PHN scale has never been tested on a representative sample of the general adult population. In addition, the PHN assesses trust in the abstract. Participants are asked to respond to questions about individuals in general, not the specific people with whom they engage. Furthermore, Birren (1960) regarded chronological age as one of the most valuable pieces of information about a person. Numerous conclusions about a person's anatomy, attitudes, and social behaviour can be formed based on age. Furthermore, there are strong societal expectations and preconceptions about the behaviour of various age groups (Neugarten, 1977).

Conclusion

The obtained result of the study verifies the hypothesis, depicting the impact of intervention of positive psychology on reduction of internet addiction and improvement in quality of interpersonal relationship. The study suggested that Intervention of positive psychology would reduce internet addiction leading to better interpersonal relationships in young adults. As a result, it is reasonable to argue that Internet addiction is linked to the loss of social relationships. Although several treatments for this illness have been offered, none of them use a specialized Positive Intervention method to improve interpersonal communication. Positive psychology, which focuses on improving social communication, could be an effective treatment for Internet addiction. As a result, the goal of this research is to explore if positive psychology interventions can increase interpersonal compatibility, improve the quality of interpersonal connections, and lower the degree of internet addiction in people who use it. Furthermore, the research findings show that there is a clear association between age and the quality of interpersonal relationships.

Limitations

The present study has certain limitations that may be valuable to overcome in future Researches. It is also crucial to recognize the limitations of the current study. The outcomes of this study were not evaluated in other social classes because it was only conducted on students with Internet addiction. This limits the ability to assess situational distinctions. Since the measures were administered at the start of treatment and the end of treatment, there is the potential that the changes in symptom severity and functioning levels could be influenced not only by the interventions of positive psychology, but also natural maturation or changes in students' own life circumstances that may also have occurred during the time period. Another limitation could pertain to the generalizability of the sample. The participants were all collected from same department of university where they are provided with same education. Since education is an important positive resource, it is probable that these results may not be generalizable to those participants who do not get a chance to go to university. Furthermore, most of the participants were in their early adolescents and generalizability issues may arise when applying research findings on older adolescents. The small sample size of Pakistani students impacts the power of this study. The limited statistical power may impact the study's results not reaching statistical significance.

Implication

Despite these limitations, the findings of the current study will extend the literature on Internet addiction, since it is often correlated with deteriorated interpersonal relationships and increased contact disputes, such that it is inevitable to interrupt social relationships in people with Internet addiction so this study will help to reduce the addiction and leads to better social relationship. The findings of the present study provide evidence that positive psychology interventions are relevant with the culture of Pakistan and reflect on the needs of young adults. Therefore, it can be incorporated with contemporary interventions while dealing with emotional and psychological problems of individuals.

The findings show that this study is beneficial in reducing internet addiction and improving interpersonal interactions. As a result, the session plan can help psychologists boost psychological wellness by increasing positive emotions and cognitions. Another benefit of reducing internet addiction is that people's self-esteem and self-concept improve. Positive psychotherapy, according to this study, enhances self-concept and self-esteem.

This research suggests a path that can help people uncover their strengths, strengthen their bonds with themselves, promote self-awareness, and self-acceptance. School counsellors can also be taught how to lead productive group psychotherapy sessions.

It could be incorporated into classroom instruction. Such sessions should be included in school counselling programs for children and adolescents on a regular basis. Positive psychotherapy ideas can be applied creatively by relevant organizations in the creation of student-oriented publications and magazines.

Furthermore, the findings of this study can facilitate establishing various dimensions for therapists to gain direction in session and set goals. Similarly, multiple organizations, such as schools, can provide parental psych-education for enhancing the quality of relationship among families.

Recommendations

Students from a single university in Karachi made up the sample. As a result, the sample size is limited. Increasing the sample size and including participants from other working adults in different parts of Karachi is recommended to boost the study. To understand the changes in before and post-Internet addiction behaviour, longitudinal research using both quantitative and

qualitative methodologies are required. It is suggested that the number of participants be increased in the future research and comparison should be done between people with high social support and low social support. For future analysis, it is highly recommended to conduct the research on a larger scale to increase generalizability of the research. Furthermore, the socioeconomic level of participants should be included and differentiated in further studies. It is expected from other researchers to do surveys on different age groups to contribute to this area of research. Researchers should look at the comorbid diseases of Internet addiction in the future. Furthermore, because addiction is a problem caused by a disturbed lifestyle, treatments based on changing one's lifestyle could be the subject of future research. In future, it is imperative that a follow up should be conducted after three, six and twelve months of post intervention to check the delayed effects of the intervention specifically on social support and internet addiction.

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