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A study to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and internet addiction among health sciences students in K.G. college of health sciences, Coimbatore

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Abstract

Background of the Study: The ability to understand and manage their own emotions and develop communication skills is essential to provide quality patient care emotional intelligence in health care students is considered to be an great factor to be free from various addiction there by improving their quality of life. Technology improves the lives of people who can avoid being dominate by it and forced into debilitating addictions to it. Internet is a group of computer system connected from all around the world. The proper use of the internet can facilitate communication, access to information and knowledge and can therefore be beneficial for the development of people; however, its multifunctional nature can also cause negative behavior and great difficulty in setting limits for its use.

Objectives: The primary aim of the study is to assess the emotional intelligence and internet addiction among Health science students.

Methods: A descriptive study was conducted in KG College of Health science students, to assess the emotional intelligence and internet addiction in Coimbatore. A total of 40 samples were selected. By using stratified random sampling technique, 18 samples from II-year BSc (N), 07 samples from II-year Physiotherapy, 15 samples from II-year Allied health science students. Demographic variables were collected by using demographic proforma. Schutte emotional intelligence scale and Young's internet addiction scale was used to collect data. The results shows that the distribution of emotional intelligence among health science students 8(20%) belongs to low emotional intelligence, 31(77.5%) belongs to moderate emotional intelligence, 1(2.5%) belongs to high level of emotional intelligence and distribution of internet addiction among health science students 11(27%) belongs to mild internet addiction, 22(55%) belongs to moderate internet addiction and 7 (18%) belongs to severe internet addiction.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence internet addiction and health sciences students

Introduction

Over the year, scholars have shown increasing interest in researching the antecedents of internet addiction. According to Trumello *et al* adolescence and young adults is a key period of transformations in physical and psychological aspects and formation of the personalities. In this process, new technologies play a vital role, which attract young people, as a means to widen social network and to explore a "Whole new world". Emotional intelligence is considered a protective factor against the development of addictive behavior. Emotional field as it favors the psychological wellbeing of students. According to the proponents of emotional intelligence, a person's emotional makeup largely determines his or her professional and personal success.

Apart from the various benefits provided by this communicative device in the improvement of human life, the inappropriate usage of this device could result in undesirable consequences including stunt development, impair mental health and social functioning, and even cause addiction. Nowadays, the phenomenon of internet addiction has turned into an emerging, noteworthy concern for mental health more among students. According to internet world stats the internet users population worldwide had increased from 360 million (Dec 2000) to 4536 million (June 2019) worldwide. Internet penetration rate is 58.8%. A new study, published in the latest issue cysber psychology, behavior and social networking found that a

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shocking 6% of world's population now suffers from internet addiction (12-dec-2022). In India overall internet addiction was observed in 27.4% of the study subject, 24% in government and 30.8% in private colleges. There were about 560 million internet users in June 2019 compared to 5 million in December 2000. As per study states that students spends 2-4 hours per day in internet. The student with high emotional intelligence have better control over their internet use and less likely to become addiction to internet. Conversely those with low emotional intelligence tend to spend more time on the internet which can make them an internet addiction. Emotional intelligence in university students of health related professions such as nursing, physiotherapy and various allied health sciences are considered to be significant, since their activity is directed most of the times to interact with other people, facing situations loaded with emotional information. Therefore emotional intelligence considered to be a significant predictor of internet addiction.

Statement of the problem

A study to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and internet addiction among health sciences students in K.G. College of Health Sciences, Coimbatore.

Objectives

- To assess emotional intelligence among health sciences students.
- To assess the level of internet addiction among health sciences students.
- To assess the correlation between emotional intelligence and internet addiction among health sciences students.
- To associate the findings of emotional intelligence with selected demographic variables.
- To associate the findings of internet addiction with selected demographic variables.

Hypothesis

- H₁:** There will be a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and internet addiction among health sciences students.
- H₂:** There will be a significant association of emotional intelligence with selected demographic variables among health sciences students.
- H₃:** There will be a significant association of internet addiction with selected demographic variables among health sciences students.

Methodology

A descriptive study, non experimental research design and quantitative approach was used. In structured tools section – A dealt with demographic variables age, gender, course of education, type of family, family income, residence, time spent in internet per day, apps used in social media, purpose of using internet, how to describe yourself and section – B Schutte emotional intelligence scale is a standardized tool consists of 33 statements in a five point Likert scale to assess the level of emotional intelligence and section - C Young's internet addiction tool is a standardized tool consists of 20 items 5 point Likert scale used to assess the self reported internet addiction.

A written permission was obtained from principal's of school of Nursing, Physiotherapy, Allied health sciences at

K.G college of Health Sciences. Data collection was done within in the 4 days. The purpose of the study was explained to the samples. The confidentiality of the subjects were assured. By the stratified random sampling, total population was divided into stratum. From each stratum, by using inclusion and exclusion criteria screening was done. After screening, by using simple random sampling technique, 18 samples from II-Year B.Sc. Nursing, 07 samples from II-Year Physiotherapy, 15 samples from II-Year Allied health science students of total 40 samples were selected. Demographic variables were collected by using demographic proforma. Schutte emotional intelligence scale Young's internet addiction scale scale was used to collect data.

Results And Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of demographic variables among health sciences students.

S. No	Demographic variables	Numbers (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	Age		
	a) 18 years	14	35%
	b) > 18 years	26	65%
2.	Gender		
	a) Male	13	32.5%
	b) Female	27	67.5%
3.	Course of education		
	a) Bsc Nursing	18	45%
	b) AHS	15	37.5%
	c) BPT	7	17.5%
4.	Type of family		
	a) Nuclear	33	82.5%
	b) Joint	6	15%
	c) Extended	1	2.5%
5.	Family Income		
	a) < ₹ 25,000	5	12.5%
	b) > ₹ 25,000	35	87.5%
6.	RESIDENCE		
	a) Urban	19	47.5%
	b) Rural	21	52.5%
7.	Time spent in internet per day		
	a) < 4 Hours	14	35%
	b) > 4 Hours	26	65%
8.	Apps used in social media		
	a) Facebook	1	2.5%
	b) Instagram	22	55%
	c) WhatsApp	10	25%
	d) All of the above	7	17.5%
9.	Purpose of using internet		
	a) Browsing	3	7.5%
	b) Communication	27	67.5%
	c) Others	13	32.5%
10.	How do describe yourself		
	a) Introvert	14	35%
	b) Extrovert	14	35%
	c) Ambivert	12	30%

The above table shows the distribution of demographic variables among health sciences students.

- Regarding the age of health sciences students 14(35%) of them were in 18 years, 26(45%) of them were in >18 years
- Regarding the gender 13(32.5%) were male, 27(67.5%) were female.
- Regarding course of education 18(45%) were BSc. nursing, 15(37.5%) were AHS, 7(17.5%) were BPT.

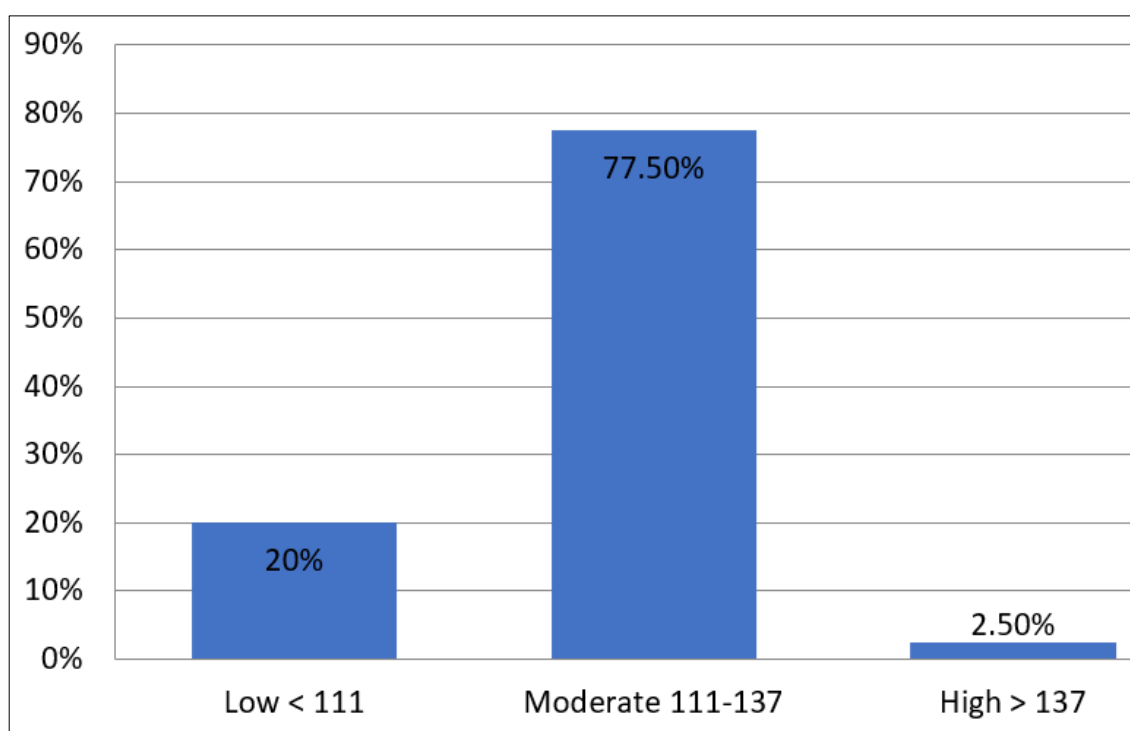
- Regarding the family income 5(12.5%) were < 25000, 35(87.5%) were > 25000.
- Regarding the residence 19(47.5%) were urban 21(52.5%) were rural.
- Regarding time spent in internet per day 14(35%) were < 4 hrs., 26(45%) were 4 hrs.
- Regarding aps used in social media 1(2.5%) is Facebook, 22(55%) were Instagram, 10(25%) were WhatsApp, 7(17.5%) were all of the above.
- Regarding the purpose of internet 3(7.5%) were browsing, 27(47.5%) were communication, 73(32.5%) were others.
- Regarding oneself 14(35%) were introvert, 14(35%) were extrovert, 12(30%) were ambivert.

Table 2: Distribution of emotional intelligence among health sciences students

Si. No.	Level of emotional intelligence	No of samples	Percentage (%)
1.	Low < 111	8	20%
2.	Moderate 111-137	31	77.5%
3.	High > 137	1	2.5%

The above table shows that the distribution of level of emotional intelligence among health sciences students. Regarding the level of emotional intelligence 8(20%) of them (< 111) score is considered to be low emotional

intelligence, 31(77.5%) of them (111-137) score is considered to be moderate emotional intelligence, 1(2.5%) of them (>137) score is considered to be high emotional intelligence.

**Fig 1:** Distribution of emotional intelligence among health sciences students**Table 3:** Distribution of internet addiction among health sciences students

Si. No.	Level of internet addiction	No of samples	Percentage (%)
1.	Mild (20 -49)	11	27%
2.	Moderate (50- 79)	22	55%
3.	Severe (80 – 100)	7	17.5%

The above table denotes the distribution of internet addiction among health sciences students that shows 11(27%) belongs to mild internet addiction, 22(55%)

belongs to moderate internet addiction and 7 (17.5%) belongs to severe internet addiction.

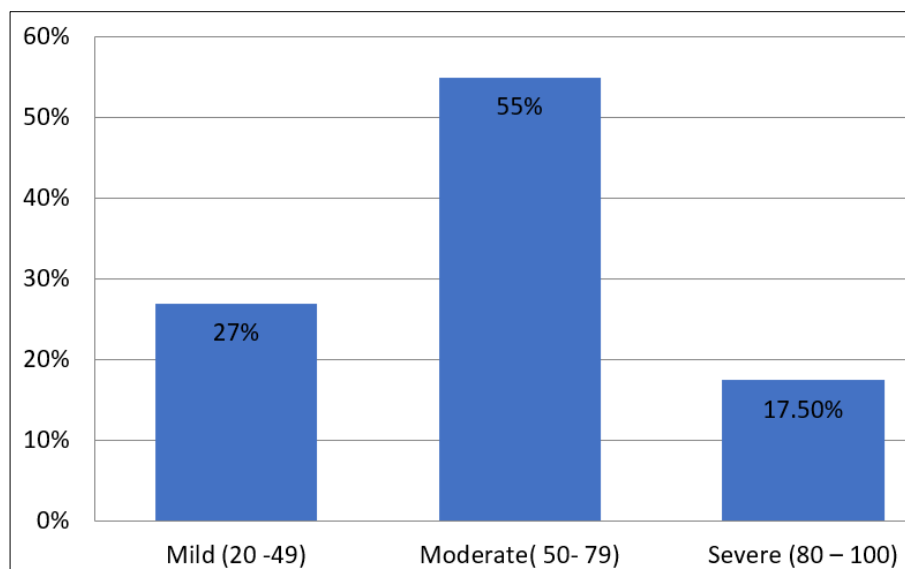


Fig 2: Distribution of internet addiction among health sciences students

Table 4: Correlation of emotional intelligence and internet addiction among health sciences students

Si. No.	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)	Correlation (R)
1.	Emotional intelligence	118.5	9	- 0.52
2.	Internet addiction	63	11.12	

The above table shows that the mean value and standard deviation of emotional intelligence and internet addiction were 118.5, 63, 9, 11.12 respectively and r value is -0.52. It shows that there is correlation between emotional intelligence and internet addiction.

Discussion

The present study aimed to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and internet addiction among health sciences students. The findings reveal important insights into how emotional competencies influence online behavior among young adults in an academic setting.

- **Emotional Intelligence Levels:** The study found that a majority of students exhibited moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence, particularly in areas such as self-awareness and social skills. This aligns with previous research suggesting that health sciences students, due to the nature of their training, often develop strong interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to interact effectively in clinical and educational settings. However, lower scores in emotional regulation indicate that many students may struggle to manage stress and negative emotions, which could affect their coping strategies.
- **Internet Addiction Levels:** The results indicated that a significant proportion of students had mild to moderate internet addiction, with a smaller percentage showing severe addiction. Social networking and entertainment were identified as the primary purposes for excessive internet use, consistent with global trends among young adults. First- and second-year students appeared more susceptible, possibly due to academic transition stress, peer pressure, and unstructured free time.
- **Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Addiction:** A significant negative correlation

was observed between emotional intelligence and internet addiction, suggesting that students with higher EI are less likely to develop problematic internet use. This supports the theory that emotional intelligence, particularly emotional regulation and social skills, helps individuals manage impulses and maintain a healthy balance between online and offline activities. Students with lower EI may resort to excessive internet use as a coping mechanism for stress or emotional difficulties.

- **Gender and Year of Study:** Although male students exhibited slightly higher levels of internet addiction compared to females, the difference was not statistically significant. This may indicate that factors such as individual coping styles and emotional competencies are more critical predictors than gender. Additionally, junior students were more prone to internet addiction, highlighting the importance of early interventions during the initial years of health sciences education.

Implications

The findings emphasize the need for programs that enhance emotional intelligence among students as a preventive measure against internet addiction. Incorporating EI training, stress management workshops, and awareness programs on responsible internet use could promote better mental health and academic performance.

Comparison with Previous Studies: These results are consistent with international studies showing an inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and addictive behaviors. The study adds to the limited Indian literature on this topic, particularly within health sciences education, and underscores the importance of emotional skills in managing digital behaviors.

Conclusion

The present study assessed the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and internet addiction among health sciences students at K.G. College of Health Sciences, Coimbatore. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of students experience mild to moderate levels of internet addiction, while emotional intelligence levels

ranged from moderate to high, with some deficiencies observed in emotional regulation.

A clear negative correlation was found between emotional intelligence and internet addiction, suggesting that students with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage their online activities and are less likely to engage in excessive or problematic internet use. Components of EI, particularly emotional regulation and social skills, were key protective factors against internet addiction. These results highlight the importance of fostering emotional intelligence among health sciences students as a preventive strategy to promote responsible internet use, enhance mental well-being, and support academic success. Interventions such as EI development programs, counseling, and awareness campaigns on healthy internet habits could be beneficial in mitigating the risk of internet addiction in this population.

Conflict of Interest: Not available.

Financial Support: Not available.

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