IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON INTERNET ADDICTION: A STUDY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Internet has revolutionized our lives. It has made the world a global village. Although internet has positive aspects but the emerging negative aspects cannot be ignored. The young generation is affected the most by the negative impact of the internet. The excessive use of internet is now known as an internet addiction. The various studies in the past had shown that internet addiction is causing a lot of psychological disorders and behavioral problems among the students. The prominent problems are lack of interest, academic failure, family conflicts, depression and suicidal tendencies. Psychological capital (PsyCap) is defined as one's being hopeful, resistant, self-confident and optimistic (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Psychological Capital is an inner resource which has the positive outputs like success, satisfaction, well-being, health etc. and is evaluated on these parameters. The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of psychological capital on Internet addiction among university students. A random sample of 130 was selected among the University students. Internet Addiction Inventory (Young, 1998) and PsyCap Questionnaire (Luthans et al., 2007) were administered for data gathering. The obtained data were summarized using descriptive statistical methods. The relationship between the variables was explored by using t-test, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regressions analysis. The results showed that

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Psychological Capital and Internet Addiction were significantly associated. Regression analysis indicated that Psychological Capital was able to predict the variance of Internet addiction to some extent. It may be important to evaluate Psychological Capital in students with Internet addiction. This variable should be targeted for effective cognitive behavioural therapy in students with Internet addiction.

Introduction

Internet has revolutionized our lives. It has made the world a global village. Although internet has positive aspects but the emerging negative aspects cannot be ignored. The young generation is affected the most by the negative aspects of the internet. The excessive use of internet is now known as an internet addiction. Increasing use of the Internet, curious and non-targeted searches, not only students away from their main mission, but also a waste of time can have adverse effect on educational performance and mental health. The studies in the past had shown that internet addiction is causing a lot of psychological and behavioral problems among the students. The prominent problems are lack of interest, academic failure, family conflicts, depression and suicidal tendencies. Internet Addiction among adolescence has a negative impact on social, academic and family functioning, as well as being associated with an increased risk for recurrence and impairment in social-emotional functioning that extends into adult life. It is not simply a disorder of mood regulation but involves alterations in physiological and cognitive functioning. The study of internet addiction requires careful attention to developmental issues especially the challenges of adolescence.

As pointed out by the positive psychology literature, individuals sometimes are not able to curb the psychological impact of various disorders which led to their physical and psychological health problems (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Few have no impact of such symptoms and have the capacity to rebound having no change in their capacity to function. According to Tugade & Fredrickson (2004), these latter individuals have psychological resiliency which is an effective adaptation and coping factor in the face of adversity. Individuals who do not have the belief that they can do something about their stress are less likely not to rebound back than those who have such beliefs (Roddenberry & Renk, 2010). With the emergence of positive psychology and positive organizational schools the Psychological Capital emerged as new concept in the domain of positive psychology. Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2006) concluded that Psychological Capital is the concept that

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meets all the properties of positive organizational behaviour. It is a concept that has resulted from the individual's personality characteristics such as hope, resilience, self-efficacy, optimism which are open to development. The combination of these personality characteristics are the foundation of Psychological Capital.

Psychological Capital

Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007) had defined psychological capital as an individual's positive psychological state of development characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when faced by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success". Psychological Capital as well as its component capacities are considered to be state-like as opposed to trait-like. (Luthans and Youssef, 2007) describe this distinction along a trait-state continuum. Whereas trait-like constructs refer to relatively stable psychological characteristics, at the other end of the continuum, Psychological Capital and its components tend to be malleable and open to development (Luthans et al., 2007; Avey, Luthans & Youssef, 2009).

Psychological capital is based on positive psychology and as a construct emerged from positive psychological literature and the study of Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB) (Luthans, Avey, Avolio & Norman, 2007). (Luthans 2002) defined POB as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement".

The various dimension of Psychological Capital are:

Hope: Peterson and Luthans (as cited in Cooperider & Sekerka, 2003) indicated that hope is a positive emotional state based on the possession of willpower and pathways to attain goals. (Snyder, Thompson, Shorey and Heinze, 2003) suggested that hope is divided into pathways and agency. Pathways point to how the individual is going to achieve the goal, whereas agency considers the individual's motivation to begin and continue towards their goal. Research indicates that high levels of hope typically result in high performing work units, greater employee satisfaction and lower levels of turnover (Cooperider & Sekerka, 2003).

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is defined as a person's confidence in his or her ability to perform at a required level and leads to acceptance of challenges and being involved with the task

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(Bandura, 1997). He further stated that it increases effort and motivation to complete a task and leads to perseverance in the face of obstacles.

Resilience: It is having the capacity to bounce back from adversity, failure and uncertainty (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007). (Evenson 2007) suggested that resilience is a critical quality to possess in the demanding working environment of customer service.

Optimism: Optimism is the inclination to always see the best in every circumstance, while expecting the best outcomes (Seckinger, Langerak, Mishra & Mishra, 2010). It does not require that the event is influenced by an individual's own actions, but rather it is the belief that the situation is likely to turn out reasonably well (Semmer & Meier, 2009).

Internet Addiction

Internet addiction is a psychological addiction which is having no chemical or behavioural addiction. Internet addiction, as an impulse control disorder which is similar to pathological gambling that does not involve the use of an intoxicating drug (B. Young, 2006). It is defined as a human-machine interaction having no chemical or behavioural addiction which can be either passive, such as viewing movies or active, such as playing computer games (Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006). Moreover, Internet addiction is also defined as a social and functional impairment due to maladaptive use of the Internet for a long time (Solomon, 2009). Internet addiction can be seen from various aspects such as lack of ability of individuals to control their use of the Internet, which can lead to psychological, social, school, and/or work difficulties (Davis, Flett and Besser (2002) and Shapira, Goldsmith, Keck, Khosla and Mcelroy (2000). The psychological point of view argues that individuals are dependent on internet because of excessive investment of sources on internet and related activities; having feeling of unpleasantness when off-line and problematic behaviour due to lack of control Kandell (1998). A number of various online activities have been categorized involving numerous models. These models have similarity with respect to interactive and information gathering functions. Internet addiction is a kind of psychological social, academic or occupational problem in individual's life. Internet addiction is a complex issue affected by cognitive, social, and psychological problems and can only be explained by a structure or multiple structures (or models).

Psychological Capital and Internet Addiction

The positive psychology paradigm is focused on developing the individual strength by identifying its various strengthening aspects. The internet addiction has become a

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psychological, behavioural or psychiatric disorder is the current view of conventional medicine and psychology paradigm. But positive psychology approach evaluates internet as a case which prevents the individual's happiness. The dependency on the internet is not because of psychological or psychiatric disorder but due to individual's unhappiness. It is that spending more time on internet makes the individual avoid the unhappiness factors in his life. The prominent reasons for unhappiness are mainly lack of self-confidence, hope, interests, and relationships. Internet addiction is prominent among those who lack self-control and have low social interaction in their lives Durak-Batigun and Kilic (2011). A sense of disorder which is created in the personality of an individual is the cause behind the internet addiction. The various health problems, lack of performance and unhappiness might be associated with Internet addiction (Sally, 2006). A lower grade averages (GPA) is found among the adolescent students which were having increase in pathological use of internet (Bayraktar & Gun, 2007). The problems like academic, interpersonal and physical are all found to be in relation with Internet addiction (Ozcinar, 2011). The depression is also related with excessive and inappropriate uses of internet among university (Orsal, Orsal, Unsal, & Ozalp, 2012), Further various studies have shown that anxiety (Azher et al., 2014), stress (Akin & Iskender, 2011), obesity, psychosomatic symptoms (Cao et al., 2011), suicidal ideation (Kim et al., 2011), mental health problems (Xiuqin et al., 2010), loneliness (Eroglu, Pamuk, & Pamuk, 2013), divorce, child neglect (Young, 1998) all are related to internet addiction. The combination of all these factors led to one single factor of unhappiness. Internet addiction is the result of some psychological problem Young and Rogers (1997). Internet addiction has become a psychological escape mechanism that helps in avoiding problems or perceived personal beliefs such as low self-esteem, hope, confidence and optimism.

Authentic happiness theory of Seligman (2007) is based on pleasure, engaged and meaningful life experiences. Happiness is achieved by balancing these three elements. There is minimum effect of pleasure on happiness in comparison to meaningful engagement. The experience of virtue and signature powers led to the happiness among individuals. Thus an individual can be as much as happy by using his strengths and virtues by experiencing more meaningful activities or flow. In contrast individuals who spend more time on the internet are spending only for pleasure which is having no affect on their happiness. This resulted in various problems like fatigue, failure in interpersonal relationships and family conflicts (Young, 1999). Thus internet addiction led to no use of individual's inherent powers which increased his unhappiness. Further, internet addiction has affected the individual in terms of emotional and cognitive processes. Lack of resiliency, hope, self-control and optimism are

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the emotional and cognitive problems due to internet addiction. The use of internet creases a sense of reward in the individual which is the cause of its addiction (O'Brien, 2010). The prominent reasons for usage of internet are entertainment, interaction and satisfaction (Yang & Tung, 2004). This addiction creates the feeling of power, control, self-worth and belongingness. The internet addiction is way of escape from various psychological, emotional and cognitive problems for a shorter time but the problems become prominent after some time (Young, 1999). It is yet to be evaluated that by developing the psychological capital (in terms of hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism) of the individual the internet addiction can also be minimized.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the relationship between Psychological Capital and Internet Addiction among University Students.
2. To study the gender differences in Psychological Capital and Internet Addiction among University Students.

Hypotheses of the study

The following are the hypotheses of the study.

1. H1: There is significant relationship between the Psychological Capital and Internet Addiction.
2. H2: Psychological Capital leads towards lower level of Internet Addiction.
3. H3: There is significant difference between male and female students with respect to Psychological Capital
4. H4: There is significant difference between male and female students with respect to Internet Addiction.

Research Methodology

The sample size was consisted of 130 respondents from different streams of students of management of Panjab University, Chandigarh. The survey was conducted by distributing the questionnaire among the respondents. All questions were explained to the participants before giving the questionnaire so they may easily complete it and give the relevant response. Each respondent had only one questionnaire. Due to time and budget constraints, distribution of questionnaire to a large number of respondents was very difficult; hence, the convenient sampling method was used. The questionnaire was composed of three sections, the first section solicited general information about respondents i.e. gender, age, stream of

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management etc. In the second part was associated to Psychological Capital and in the third part Internet Addiction having total of forty four items. To explore the relationship between independent variable (Psychological Capital) and dependent variable (Internet Addiction), various statistical methods like Percentage analysis, Independent Sample t-test, Pearson Correlation, and multiple regressions were used. Internet Addiction Inventory (Young, 1998) and Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans et al., 2007) were employed as data gathering tools.

Analysis of Results for Psychological Capital and Internet Addiction

The overall mean of Psychological Capital is 4.42. From the four constructs of Psychological Capital, the mean for the construct of Psychological Capital with respect to self-efficacy (4.63) and least for optimism (4.12). Thus it can be concluded that Psychological Capital with respect to self-efficacy is high and optimism is low among the university students.

Impact of Gender on Psychological Capital and its factors

To find out the impact of Gender on Psychological Capital and its factors t-test is performed. It is inferred that significance value for Psychological Capital, having the p-value .38, which is greater than the significance value ($p < 0.05$), states that there is no significant relationship between the Psychological Capital factor with gender among students. However, from the mean rank scores it can be inferred that males are having higher level of Psychological Capital than female students. Thus Hypothesis H3 is accepted.

Impact of Gender on Internet Addiction

To find out the impact of Gender on internet addiction and its factors t-test is performed. It is inferred that significance value for internet addiction, having the p-value .08, which is greater than the significance value ($p < 0.05$), states that there is no significant relationship between the internet addiction with gender among students. However, from the mean rank scores it can be inferred that females are having higher level of internet addiction than male students. Thus Hypothesis H4 is accepted.

Correlation between Psychological Capital and Internet Addiction

Pearson correlation is worked out to see whether there is any relation between Psychological Capital and internet addiction among the University Students. Findings revealed that

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Psychological Capital is inversely related with the variable of internet addiction (-.39). The finding is in the accordance of hypothesis, which states that higher the Psychological Capital shall be responsible for lower internet addiction among students. Thus the Hypothesis H2: Psychological Capital leads towards lower level of internet addiction is accepted.

Further, the relationship among Psychological Capital and internet addiction is measured through regression analysis. The result of regression analysis reveals that the model is significant ($p<0.05$), R-Square is 0.217 and F-statistics is 3.467. It is proved that there is negative and significant relationship between Psychological Capital and internet addiction among students. The value of RSquare shows the fitness of the model as Psychological Capital contributes 21% of internet addiction among students. Thus, the Hypothesis, H1: There is significant relationship between the Psychological Capital and internet addiction is accepted.

Conclusion

On the basis of the results, it is concluded that Psychological Capital has negative and significant impact on internet addiction. Also, there is significant difference of Psychological Capital and internet addiction levels among the students across gender. This study confirms that higher Psychological Capital leads towards lower level of internet addiction. The present research reveals the role of positive psychology in avoiding internet addiction among the youth. Having the positive perception towards the self-efficacy, optimism, self-resilience and hope are meaningfully linked with the psychological capital and lowers the internet addiction among the students. The positive impact of Psychological Capital reduces the effects of internet addiction, suggests that this higher-order concept can improve the student immunity to internet addiction, or can motivate them to the redefine and reframe various threats in their lives. As the Psychological Capital constructs can be developed in the individual it is one of the emerging positive psychological aspects which can lower the internet addiction among students. Further the constructs have to be developed in totality rather than in isolation by which there common factors can yield better results. Future researches are required to further strengthen and generalize the findings and also to find out the role of mediating variables.

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