Internet Addiction and its impact on Marital Adjustment and Quality of Life of Married Women

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ABSTRACT

Internet addiction is becoming a global concern, affecting mental health due to its wide reach and instant access to vast content, even though little is known about it and research is still underway on it. Maintaining a balance between Internet use and other life responsibilities is important to maintain a healthy experience in roles in which couples often face great challenges.Marriage is an important legal and emotional commitment that protects lineage and culture. Managing stress related to Internet addiction is important to maintain emotional health and family unity. Excessive use of the Internet is causing Internet addiction, disrupting social bonds and increasing feelings of loneliness and anguish. These days, it can be difficult for a couple to adjust to marriage and improve their quality of life.

The aim of the present study is to find out the impact of Internet addiction on the marital adjustment and quality of life of married women. The sample for the present study comprised 100 married women with internet addiction and 100 normal healthy married women aged 18 to 45 years. The study involved filling out consent forms, collecting socio-demographic and clinical data, and administering psychological tests such as the Marital Adjustment Scale (Kumar P. and Kanchan R., 1987) and WHOQOL-BRIEF to assess marital adjustment and quality of life.

Statistical analysis was performed with the help of SPSS-21 software and the results showed that married women with internet addiction had poor quality of life (psychological health and social relationship domains) and overall marital adjustment. The findings of this research suggest that excessive internet use may adversely affect the marital adjustment and quality of life of married women. This study highlights the significant impact of internet addiction on the psychological health of married women, and emphasizes the need for better quality of life and psychological support for these women.

Keywords: Statistical Analysis, Challenges,Quality Of Life, Satisfaction,Modern Life.

Introduction:

Internet addiction is becoming a global concern, affecting mental health due to its wide scope and instant access to vast content, although little is known about it and research is still underway. Maintaining a balance between Internet use and other life responsibilities is important to maintain a healthy experience in roles in which couples often face great challenges.

Internet addiction can be found at any age and in any social situation. (Pallanti, 2006). Young (1998), describes Internet addiction as follows: "Internet addiction is defined as any online-related activities, compulsive behavior that interferes with normal life and causes severe strain on the family environment, friends, loved ones and one's work environment. Internet addiction is also called Internet dependence and Internet compulsion. It is a compulsive behavior that completely dominates the addict's life."

Internet addiction disorder is defined as excessive or poorly controlled pre-occupation, craving or behaviour related to the Internet that causes impairment or suffering. Many married women spend so much time on the Internet that it is important to understand its impact on their marital life and their behaviour, well-being and family adjustment and value. The aim of the present study is to examine Internet addiction and its impact on the marital adjustment and quality of life of married women.

The Internet, a crucial social network, offers numerous services when used wisely. However, misuse can lead to Internet addiction, where individuals become addicted to the internet, losing independence and control over their lives. Internet addiction and certain behavioral addictions have some personality traits in common. Brenner (1997) discovered a statistically significant correlation between obsessive Internet use and a propensity for isolation, anxiety, depression, and fantasy. Greenfield (1999) discovered a strong link between cybersex and in-person sex, along with disinhibition, rapid closeness, low appetite, lack of sleep, loneliness, loss of boundaries, and mood and consciousness alterations that the author deemed psychogenic. According to Shapira et al. (2000), problematic Internet users exhibit the following behavioral traits: substantial social impairment and psychological discomfort Internet use was linked to both previous and present behavioral issues in day-to-day activities, according to a different study by Mathie and Cooper (2003).

Marriage is an important legal and emotional commitment that protects lineage and culture. Managing stress related to Internet addiction is important for maintaining emotional health and family unity. Excessive Internet use is causing Internet addiction, disrupting social bonds, and increasing feelings of loneliness and anguish. These days, it can be difficult for a couple to adjust to marriage and improve their quality of life.

The amount of time an individual spends on the Internet varies, and some people can become addicted, raising serious concerns. Internet users can form both positive and negative interactions, often with limited control. In the absence of restriction, individuals may do things they would not normally do, such as violating the privacy of others (Sarakoglu et al., 1989).

Mental health is important throughout life, affecting emotional, psychological and social well-being. Heavy Internet users often suffer from emotional, psychological and social dysfunction, which affects stress management, relationships and decision making. Internet addiction significantly affects the mental health of women as well as men, hindering their ability to function, cope with stress and contribute to the community. Worldwide, Internet addiction is a growing problem that causes neurological complications, psychological disturbances, family and social problems. Research suggests an inverse relationship between Internet addiction and women's mental health.

The aim of the present study is to find out the Internet addiction and its impact on marital adjustment and quality of life of married women.

Objectives of the investigation

1. The differences in various demographic variables such as age, education, sex etc. of the internet addicts and the non-addicts married women.

2. The difference of marital adjustment between the internet addicts and the non-addicts married women.

3. The difference in the different dimensions of quality of life of the internet addicts and the non-addicts married women.

Hypotheses

1. Married women's addicted to internet would be found to differ on demographic variables such as age, sex, education, etc. in comparison to those not addicted to internet.

2. Married women's addicted to internet would be found to differ on marital adjustment in comparison to those not addicted to internet.

3. Married women's addicted to internet would be found to differ on different dimensions of quality of life as compared to the adolescents who are not addicted to internet.

Study design:

This study was a quantitative study with a cross-sectional design. Questionnaires were used for data collection purposes. The independent variable in this study was the internet addiction. The dependent variables are marital adjustment, and quality of life of married women's.

Sample :

The sample for the present study comprised 100 married women with internet addiction and 100 normal healthy married women aged 18 to 45 years. The study involved filling out consent forms, collecting socio-demographic and clinical data, and administering psychological tests such as the Marital Adjustment Scale (Kumar P. and Kanchan R., 1987) and WHOQOL-BRIEF to assess marital adjustment

and quality of life. Responses were solicited from individuals who were not suffering from any severe or chronic psychological or physical disorder.

Tools:

The following tools would be employed to conduct the present study.

Socio-demographic and Personal Data sheet: It is a semi-structured, Proforma especially drafted for this study by researcher. It contains information about socio-demographic variables like age, sex, religion, education and domicile.

Internet Addiction Test (Young K., 1996): This questionnaire which is based on DSM-TR criteria for a diagnosis of intermittent explosive and pathological disorders is one of the most reliable tests to measure the Internet addiction which Kimberly Young created . It consists of 20 multiple choice items based on Likert scales.

Marital Adjustment Scale (Kumar P. & Kanchan R., 1987): Marital Adjustment Scale is developed by Pramod Kumar and Rohtagi Kanchan in year of 1987 is used for assessing the extent of marital adjustment between husband and wife. The marital adjustment questionnaire consists of 25 highly discriminating "Yes", "No" type items. The reliability of this scale is 0.71 and a validity of 0.84.Mean, Median and S.D. for the sample were found to be 19.54, 19.70 and 6.43 respectively. The higher would be the marital adjustment of the husband and wife.

WHOQOL-BRIEF: WHOQOL-BRIEF quantifies the four domains of Quality of life i.e. Physical, Health, Psychological Health, social Relationship and Environment. The WHOQOL-BRIEF contains a total 26 questions. To provide a broad and comprehensive assessment, one item from each of the 24 facets contained in the WHOQOL-BRIEF-100 has been included. In addition, two items from the overall Quality of Life and General health facet have been included.

Procedure:

A total 200 samples will be selected in the age range of 18 to 45 years using purposive sampling from the Arrah District of Bihar, India. The sample for the present study consisted of 100 internet addicted female, and 100 non-internet addicted normal healthy female. Data collection for this study was done by taking proper permission from the married women. Formal interview was taken to check internet addiction; if any woman was found to be addicted to internet, she would be tested for internet addiction. Those who scored more than 50 in the internet addiction test were included in the internet addiction group and those who scored less than 50 were included in the non-addiction group and were included in the study. Consent form was taken. Information about socio-demographic variables and clinical details was collected using socio-demographic and clinical data sheets. After that, psychological tests were conducted to assess marital adjustment and quality of life. The two groups were then compared on marital adjustment and quality of life scores using the above-mentioned tools and were statistically analyzed.

Statistical analysis: The statistical analysis was done with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences-20 (SPSS-20). To analyze group differences between Group 1 (Women addicted to internet) and Group 2 (Women addicted to internet) on certain socio-demographic variables chi-square test and t-test were applied, to analyze group differences on psychological variables between Group 1 and Group 2 the t-test was applied on psychological variables.

Results and discussion:

The present study was being conducted to find out whether women's Internet addiction has an impact on women's psychological health. The present study is a quantitative study with a cross-sectional design. The cross-sectional design of most population-based studies avoids the possibility of bias in the findings on the temporal nature of the relationship between Internet addiction and its impact on mental health among individuals. Also, this research design is valuable for isolating the causal effect of specific variables. The structure of the design, especially the use of a good control group, helps to maximize the internal validity of the research. (Nunnally; 1975).

Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

The Table 1 presents descriptive information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the entire sample i. e. Group 1 (Women addicted to internet) and Group 2 (Women not addicted to internet). Table-1 shows that there was no statistically significant difference found in gender, domicile, religion, type of family and Socio Economical Status.

Table-1

Presents descriptive information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the entire sample

Variables		Group 1	Group 2	Chi square P Value (df)
Domicile	Rural	56	47	
	Semi Urban	13	19	.363 (2)
	Urban	31	36	
Religion Belief	Hinduism	69	65	
	Islam	27	31	.672 (3)
	Christianity	3	3	
	Others	1	1	
Type of Family	Nuclear	55	46	.479 (1)
	Joint	45	54	
Socio-Economical Status	Low	66	67	.678 (1)
	Middle	25	27	
	High	9	6	

In order to see both the groups were similar in term of socio-demographic details or not. Both the groups, Group 1 (Women addicted to internet) and Group 2 (Women not addicted to internet) were tested through chi square test and t test. Table 1 results indicating that both the groups were statistically not significant difference on most of socio-demographic variables i.e., domicile, religion, type of family and socio economical belief.

Women internet addiction and its relation to marital adjustment:

Table 2 reveals that there were significant differences were found in Marital Adjustment Scale (t = 5.31, p< .001) between Group 1 (Women addicted to internet) and Group 2 (Women not addicted to internet). Mean score of Group 1 was found 19.70 and mean score of Group 2 was found 21.46.

Table-2

Comparison of Marital Adjustment Scale score between Group 1 (Women addicted to internet) and Group 2 (Women not addicted to internet).

Areas of assessment	Group 1 (Mean ±SD)	Group 2 (Mean ±SD)	t value	P
Marital Adjustment Scale	19.70±2.91	21.46 ± 1.56	5.31	.000

An overview of the results table revealed that marital adjustment of women with Internet addiction was poorer than the group without Internet addiction.

Similar findings were reported in a recent study by Latif, M et al. (2024) that Internet addiction has a negative impact on marital adjustment. In 2023, a cross-sectional study in Kerman, Iran, examined the relationship between addiction to social networks and marital satisfaction among married women. The results indicated a significant negative relationship, meaning that increased addiction to social networks corresponded with decreased marital satisfaction. (Maghsoodi, S., & Vafadoost, Z., 2023)

Another study investigated the effects of internet addiction on marital adjustment and mental health among adults. The results revealed that individuals with higher internet addiction scores tended to experience lower marital satisfaction and poorer

mental health outcomes. This suggests that excessive internet use can negatively impact both the quality of marital relationships and overall psychological well-being. (Sultana, M. S., Rahman, A., Dey, B. K., & Kulsuma, U. 2024).

These studies collectively suggest that internet addiction among women can have detrimental effects on marital adjustment.

Women internet addiction and its relation to quality of life:

Table 3 reveals that there were significant differences found in Scale Total Score (t = 14.998, p< .001), Physical (t = 15.006, p< .001), Psychological (t = 14.465, p< .001), Social relationship (t = 11.497, p<.001) and Environmental domain (t = 11.451, p<.001) of WHOQOL-BRIEF between Group 1 (Women addicted to internet) and Group 2 (Women not addicted to internet).

Table-3

Comparison of WHOQOL-BRIEF Scale between Group 1 (Women addicted to internet) and Group 2 (Women not addicted to internet).

Areas of assessment		Women addicted to internet Group 1 (Mean ±SD)	Women not addicted to internet Group 2 (Mean ±SD)	t value	P
WHOQOL BRIEF (Total Score)	Total Score	167.13 ±58.53	279.98 ± 4728	14.998	.000
	Physical	39.26 ±15.65	70.65± 13.87	15.006	.000
	Psychological	39.43 ±16.61	69.50 ± 12.49	14.465	.000
	Social relationship	41.87 ±20.00	71.66 ± 16.47	11.497	.000
	Environmental	45.55 ±15.21	68.72 ± 13.34	11.451	.000

These result data show that excessive Internet use reduces quality of life in physical, psychological, social relationship and environmental areas.

Our current findings are supported by the psychodynamic approach suggests that internet addiction is a response to avoiding displeasure, seeking alternative pleasures, and forgetfulness, with excessive denial techniques and anonymity highlighting the intensifying effects of this behavior. (Sela et al., 2020).

Literature also reveals that misuse of the Internet causes social concern, unpleasant feelings, loss of impulse control, and impulsive behavior (Chen et al., 2013; Shapira et al., 2000).

Another study explored the mediating effects of risk perception and Internet addiction on the relationship between Internet use and quality of life. It found that Internet addiction negatively affected quality of life. (Qian, B., Huang, M., Xu, M., & Hong, Y. 2022).

A systematic review and meta-analysis titled "Internet Addiction Effect on Quality of Life" examined the impact of internet addiction on quality of life across various populations. The analysis revealed that internet addiction is associated with a decline in quality of life, affecting physical health, psychological well-being, and social relationships. Noroozi, F., et.al, 2021).

In summary, while direct research on the impact of internet addiction on women's quality of life is scarce, existing studies suggest that internet addiction can negatively affect various aspects of life, including physical health, mental well-being, and social relationships.

Conclusion:

The current situation is one in which the internet has become an essential component of modern life. Understanding when it turns into an addiction is difficult. Internet addiction is causing marital adjustment issues for married women and negatively impacting their quality of life. It was found that women with Internet addiction had significantly different marital adjustment and quality of life.

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