

Loneliness and Problematic internet use in Union territory of Kashmir during Covid 19 lock-down

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Abstract:

The year 2020 was memorable and nostalgic due to the pandemic of covid 19. With no vaccine or medicine available, the only ways to protect oneself and control the spread of virus as per WHO were social distancing, lockdown and Quarantine. Most of the countries acted quickly and implemented strict lock-down. India was not an exception. Union territory of Kashmir being one of the part of this country, the measures of lock-down and quarantine was also implemented here. While as most of the studies were done to know the impact of social isolation and quarantine on mental health of the inhabitants, the present research was done to understand loneliness and problematic internet use in union territory of Kashmir during covid 19 lock-down. The current study used cross sectional survey method. A sample of 200 participants each above 18 years of age were selected randomly from concerned union territory of Kashmir. The information was collected from them using short form of revised UCAL loneliness scale and internet addiction test. An association was found using regression analysis between loneliness and (1) Problematic internet use (PIU) (2) Hours spend on internet (3) Age (4) The quality of relationship with people they were spending during lock-down period with (5) Frequency of news about pandemic they heard from social media. It was also found that problematic internet use (PIU) was associated with loneliness and its predictors. A dose response was found between PIU and predictors of loneliness using ANOVA. The current study highlights the influence of local culture on loneliness and problematic internet use (PIU) during covid 19 lock-down in the union territory of Kashmir.

Keywords: Loneliness, Problematic internet use (PIU), Nostalgic, Pandemic, Quarantine, ANOVA, Regression analysis.

1. Introduction:

The quick spread of the Corona virus has forced governments throughout the world to take extreme steps like that of lock-down as well as quarantine to control the SARS CO- 2. Uncertainty and high levels of fear were caused among the inhabitants due to these measures of limited mobility and stressful isolation. Due to this, demands to describe dangers to mental health were raised among psysociologist as well as by service providers. Lot of research was done on the mental health during the pandemic of SARS CO 2 to understand the effects of stress of getting covid, isolation due to quarantine and economic issues. Given the neutralising role of ICT on the effect of quarantine due to desolation on psychological health, and as a quick solution, psychological health experts suggested enhancing the utilisation of the technology to decrease the emotions of depression as well as social desolation due to quarantine. Holmes et al described the possible merits of internet communications during epidemic. The Brooks, Smith etc. also described that internet communications could decrease the emotions of isolation, pain and stress. Recent studies have indicated that greater utilisation of the net was a forecaster of greater degrees of social help and reduced alienation in oldies under the stress of social desolation because of SARS CO 2. Mucci forced the requirement for internet telemedicine as well as internet social help interventions to help inhabitants under the isolation, yet threatened of acute problematic results due to higher use. Word Problematic Internet Use had been first explained by Beard as higher net use which causes bad outcomes on the customer's life. Researches indicated that online addiction and problematic internet use (PIU) were related with loneliness, instability of emotions, depression, decreased levels of self esteem & some more enslaving behaviour. Social desolation could increase problematic internet use (PIU), and studies have indicated that there have been higher uses of pornography and internet gaming during the SARS CO 2. Findings from China have indicated that PIU enhanced during corona confinement. The relations of problematic internet use and alienation have been shown in past researches, as has been its relation with lower social help & poor families. However, online addicts who experience social isolation utilise the net as a gateway.

1.1. Aim of Study:

The objectives of current study were

- 1] To find the danger factors with regard to loneliness in lock-down of SARS CO2.
- 2] To determine risk factors for problematic internet use (PIU) during the same period.

The present research had a wide sample of adults. The present study examined the danger factors with regard to loneliness as well as PIU and their relation. Loneliness Scale of UCLA (ULS-6), with PIU values on the bases of net Addiction Test were used. The research involved an internet estimation of a specimen of 200 members.

1.2. Hypothesis:

The two hypothesis to be tested were

- 1] "The quality of association with person sharing lock down , age and information obtained from media about SARS CO 2 would be associated with loneliness"[2] .
- 2] The time spends on net in hours and problematic internet use would be associated with loneliness.

2. Methods:

This study was performed online on union territory of Kashmir. Absence of fast internet posed a great problem in collection of data. Current research examined the cross-sectional association using a multi-variate approach. The survey consisted of questions in English and Urdu language for participants. The questionnaire was based on the Internet enslaving Test, which included 20 items to understand the samples' net utilisation during covid which was neither for academic purpose not for job and then calculating addiction. The participant responded to the questions based on Likert scales (5 = always 0= not applicable). The sum of scores indicated that there are three kinds of net users, based on their net addiction: controlled net users, troublesome net users (PIU) and net enslaves.

The short form of the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-6) was also used in this research. The ULS-6 consists of 6 items. The members responded to the terms on a 4-point scale designed by Likert (4 = often 1= never). Greater score indicated greater loneliness. Demographic information was collected on the bases of age, gender, country, education qualification, and marital status, family size, job field and security. CORONA associated questions were: If the participant got COVID-19, if any family member got covid, and if the participant or close relative were working on the frontline during the SARS CO 2. Lock-down associated questions were; how dedicated the participants were to the confinement regulations, knowledge of the vitality of the confinement strictness and social separation, no. of persons with which the member was sharing the either curfew or detention, and a score given to the effectiveness of the association with those persons. Members were questioned regarding their special online activity, time in hours expedite on internet, and whether they performed offline jobs during confinement of SARS CO2.

2.1. Participants:

A sample with about 200 members was taken. The specimens were inhabitants of Kashmir aged 18 and above. The yardstick for selection was net user. The participants were selected through social media (Whats App and Twitter) randomly. In total, 457 responses were collected some of which were rejected. Total of 293 sound filled forms were obtained. The members took part in the research out of their free will, and were allotted an online agreement form. 62% happened to be female, 64% happened to be aged 18–35 years while as 50% happened to be single, 45.3% happened to be married, and 4.2% happened to be divorced, 68.1% had bachelor degrees, 18% had master's and doctorate, 7.5% had diplomas, and 15% had high school diplomas or below.

3. Results:

Related to lock-down

- 80% of the samples were fully dedicated to confinement.
- 99% fully visualised need of confinement as well as that of social distancing.
- 63% rated their association with companions of confinement as excellent or good.
- 58% were expending the confinement with 8 or more people.
- 20% were expending their confinement in a room.
- 64% were expending their condiment in a medium sized to large house.
- 95.6% were expending their confinement in family house.
- Related to internet use
- 15% expended 2 hours or less on internet daily.
- 20% expended 5 hours on internet daily.
- 27% expended 6 to 7 hours on internet daily.
- 36% expended 8 hours or more on internet daily.
- 38% worked or studied on internet regularly.
- 55% used social networks like whats App, face book etc as their special net activity.
- **65% had minutely or never done any offline performances during confinement.**

3.1. Correlations:

Loneliness scores were found to be significantly related with Internet Addiction Test scores. Loneliness was also found to be significantly associated with the quality of the association with whom the participant was expending confinement with. Alienation was also validly associated with time [No. of hours] spent on net and negatively related with age.

Loneliness and Problematic internet use was significantly related with being single, having poor job security, having smaller accommodation and getting news about corona from media.

Loneliness and PIU was not found to be significantly related with;

- Gender
- Educational qualification
- Job kind
- Working online
- Being frontline worker
- Being covid positive
- Having covid positive family member
- Commitment to lock-down
- Perception of need for quarantine
- Number of persons experiencing quarantine with.

Table 1: Correlation

1. Material status	Loneliness (\bar{X} , St.d, p)	PIU (\bar{X} , St.d, p)
Unmarried	36.7(3.9) P<0.001	53.1 (17) P<0.001
Married	30.6 (3.4)	
2. Job security		
Good	35.4 (3.6) P<0.005	49 914.20 P,0.005
Poor	36.8 (3.8)	53.4 (14.4)
3. Accommodation		
Small	35.6 (3.9) P<0.05	57.3 (15.8) P<0.01
Average	34 (3.8)	47.2 (13.5)

3.2. Regression examination.

Two regression examinations were done one for loneliness and another for IAT values.

The significant predictors of loneliness were:

- Be younger,
- A poor association with persons experiencing quarantine,
- expending long time online and
- Receiving news about corona from media.

Table 2: Loneliness

Modal	Coefficient	Std. Error	T	Sig.
Age (more)	-0.342	0.152	-2.25	significant
Marital status	-0.288	0.285	-1.01	N/S
Job security	-0.652	0.370	1.76	N/S
Good association	-0.049	0.006	-8.16	Significant
Accommodation	-0.062	0.149	-0.416	N/S
News source	0.809	0.330	2.45	Significant
Other interest	-0.065	0.174	-0.37	N/S
Time on net	-0.263	0.083	3.16	significant

- The significant predictors of IAT scores were:
- Loneliness,
- Having poor association with the inhabitants sharing confinement,
- Expending long time online

- Spending less duration on other offline performances and
- Receiving information about SARS CO 2.

Table 3: IAT Score

Modal	Coefficient	Std. Error	T	Sig.
Age	-0.342	0.150	-2.28	N/S
Marital status	2.312	1	2.312	N/S
Job security	1.790	1.2	1.491	N/S
Good association	-0.062	0.024	-2.58	Significant
Accommodation	0.852	0.522	1.63	N/S
News source	4.080	1.158	3.52	Significant
No other interest	3.392	0.610	5.56	Significant
Time on net	2.810	0.295	9.52	Significant
Loneliness	1.142	0.145	7.87	Significant

3.3. ANOVA

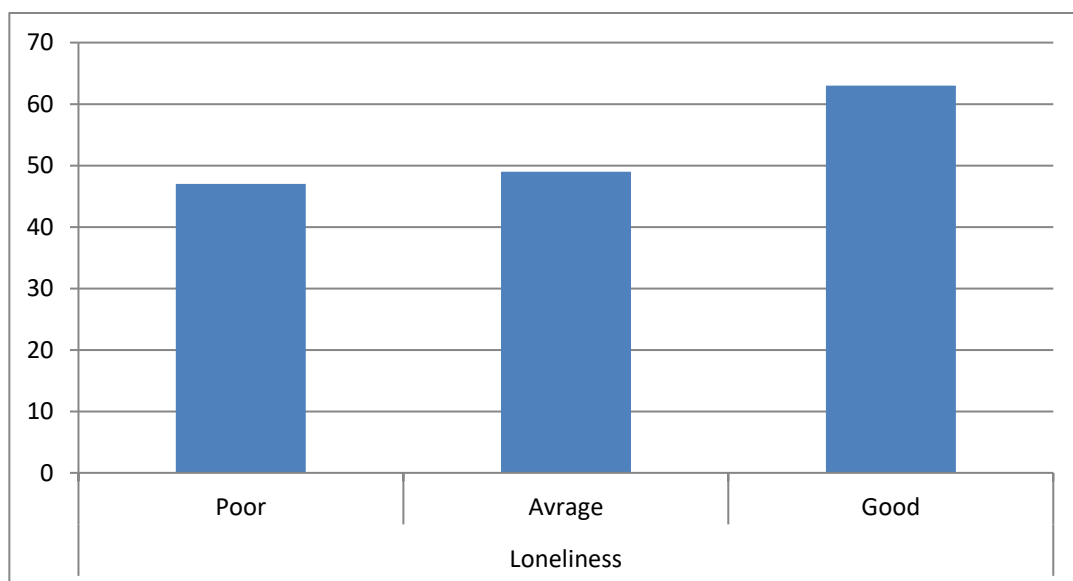
The interaction between loneliness and IAT scores was found using ANOVA. None of the interactions was found to be significant.

To find dose-response, continuous predictor variables were broken and then taken for ANOVA. It was found that there is valid linear dose – response association between alienation and nature of association with inhabitants experiencing confinement and time in hours expedite online. A significant linear dose-response relationship was also experienced for these terms & IAT values. Alienation had a clear dose-response association with IAT values.

Table 4: Dose-Relationship of Loneliness and PIU

	Loneliness(\bar{X} Sd.e, p)	PIU (\bar{X} , Sd.e, p)
Quality of people with association		
Poor	37.5 (0.490 P<0.005)	57.7 (1.77) P<0.001
Average	36 (0.48)	55.4 (1.72)
Good	35 (0.48)	51.5(1.73)
Hours(time) on internet		
Low	33.5 90.48) P<0.005	47.3 (1.74) P<0.001
Average	34.2 (0.56)	53.6 (1.65)
High	34.8 (0.52)	63.7 (1.86)

PIU Scores



4. Conclusions

The present research was on loneliness and internet use during lockdown. The research indicated that 27% of the participants spent six to seven hours a day on the net, during confinement out of which 36% were on net for greater than 8 hours. The hypothesis about forecasters of alienation was confirmed by this research. It was confirmed that being one, young and living in little homes was related with greater alienation. However ANOVA indicated that the main forecasters of alienation were the type of the association with people spending confinement and the time in hours spend on net. Another hypothesis that is, the associations between net use and alienation was also confirmed by this research. The alienation value was greatly related with the time of hours spent on net, which confirms the belief of Caplan [44] that internet use in hours may be very high due to loneliness and feelings of low social support.

The IAT values were not related with hours spend on the net, obtaining information from media, and less offline pursuits [2]. The ANOVA and regression indicated significant relations among alienation and IAT values. IAT values were also found to be significantly correlated with the type of the association with whom the inhabitants was sharing the confinement of covid 19. Net addicts also valued greater in social media use like face book, whats App etc which indicates the social importance of communicating with others. This can be due to lack of social experience, isolation and stubby self [2].

One major constraint of the current research was that it was cross-sectional, which made it strenuous to find causation. One way of finding the cause is to examine dose response which was crisp here by breaking the forecast variables and inspecting the association with alienation and IAT values. The linear dose-response indicated these results and to consider casualty in detail more longitudinal research are now needed. The main threat components for mental health during the corona epidemic are alienation and PIU.

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