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Learned Helplessness and Internet Addiction Among Young Adults

Ravi K Agrahara[1*], Ms Sabeera Nowreen[2]

[1*]Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Surana College Centre for Post Graduate Studies Bengaluru
[2]Consultant Psychologist Surana Well Being Centre Queens Road Bengaluru

***Corresponding Author:** Ravi K Agrahara
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Surana College Centre for Post Graduate Studies Bengaluru

Abstract
Learned helplessness, a psychological concept suggesting individuals who have experienced repeated failures or a perceived lack of control over outcomes may develop a belief that they are powerless to change their circumstances, is often explored as a correlate of lack of control over addictive behaviours. This mixed-methods study aimed to investigate the impact of learned helplessness on individuals with Internet Addiction. The quantitative phase included 136 individuals with internet addiction (60 males and 76 females) aged 20 to 35 years. The Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire was used to screen for internet addiction, and the Learned Helplessness Scale was used to assess levels of learned helplessness. Statistical analyses, including independent sample t-tests, Pearson correlations, and regression analysis, were conducted. The quantitative results revealed a significant difference in learned helplessness between males and females with Internet addiction, with females exhibiting higher levels. A significant positive relationship was found between internet addiction and learned helplessness, and regression analysis indicated that learned helplessness significantly predicted internet addiction. However, no significant difference in the severity of internet addiction was found between males and females. Following the quantitative phase, a qualitative exploration was conducted using semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants. Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed key themes, including internet usage as a coping mechanism, social isolation, varying levels of insight into internet addiction and learned helplessness, personal and environmental triggers for internet use, the integration of internet use into daily schedules, and the loss of time sense. The qualitative findings provided rich contextual explanations for the quantitative results, particularly concerning the gender differences in learned helplessness and the mechanisms linking learned helplessness to internet addiction. This study highlights the complex interplay between learned helplessness and internet addiction, emphasizing the importance of considering both quantitative and qualitative perspectives in understanding and addressing this issue.

Keywords: Learned helplessness, Internet addiction, Perceived lack of control, Mixed-methods, Qualitative analysis, Thematic analysis.

Introduction

The digital age, characterized by the ubiquitous integration of smartphones and technology into daily life, has fostered unprecedented connectivity. However, this era has also precipitated concerns regarding the potential for excessive technology usage to escalate into addictive behaviors. Internet addiction, defined by compulsive online activity that disrupts daily functioning and well-being, has emerged as a significant public health issue among young adults (Study of Internet Addiction, 2020). This phenomenon is often comorbid with psychological distress, including depression and insomnia, highlighting a complex interplay of mental health factors (Study of Internet Addiction, 2020). Furthermore, individuals with a history of substance use, such as alcohol consumption and smoking, exhibit a heightened vulnerability to internet addiction, suggesting shared neurobiological pathways or personality traits predisposing individuals to multiple forms of addictive behaviors (Study of Internet Addiction, 2020).

Internet addiction, as conceptualized within emerging diagnostic frameworks, is characterized by a cluster of symptoms including preoccupation with the internet, withdrawal symptoms upon cessation, tolerance (needing increased time online), unsuccessful attempts to control use, persistent use despite negative consequences, and significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (DSM-5; ICD-11). Social factors, such as peer influence, social isolation, and the availability of online social support, can significantly influence the development and maintenance of internet addiction. Additionally, the attitudes of individuals towards technology and their perceived control over their usage play a critical role in the progression of addictive behaviors.

Central to this study is the learned helplessness model, which posits that repeated exposure to uncontrollable stressors leads to a perception of helplessness and a subsequent failure to initiate coping responses, even when opportunities for control arise (Maier & Seligman, 2016). This model,

initially developed through animal studies, has been extended to understand human behavior in various contexts, including addiction. In humans, learned helplessness manifests through symptoms such as passivity, procrastination, decreased motivation, low self-esteem, a pessimistic outlook, and the belief that one's actions have no impact on outcomes (Maier & Seligman, 2016). Neuroscience research has illuminated the neural basis of learned helplessness, revealing that the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) plays a crucial role in detecting control and mitigating the stress response (Maier & Seligman, 2016). Notably, the absence of this perceived control leads to behavioral passivity and anxiety, indicating a direct link between perceived control and adaptive coping (Maier & Seligman, 2016). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that learned helplessness manifests differently across sexes, suggesting underlying biological or behavioral distinctions that influence stress responses (Dalla et al., 2008).

The brain disease model (BDM) of addiction presents a neurobiological framework for understanding addictive behaviors, positing that chronic drug use induces brain changes that perpetuate addiction (Bell et al., 2013). While the BDM aims to reduce stigma and promote treatment-seeking, concerns exist regarding its potential to foster learned helplessness by emphasizing biological determinism (Bell et al., 2013). Clinicians and neuroscientists express ambivalence regarding the BDM's impact, acknowledging its potential to enhance insight while also recognizing the risk of undermining individuals' perceived agency in recovery (Bell et al., 2013). The impact of the information is highly dependent on the client's insight level (Bell et al. 2013). The attitude of the individual towards the BDM also influences the effect it has on them.

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach to investigate the relationship between internet addiction and learned helplessness in young adults. The quantitative component will involve administering standardized questionnaires, such as the Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire (IADQ) and the Learned Helplessness Scale, to assess internet addiction severity and learned helplessness levels, respectively. Participants will be recruited using a purposive sampling strategy, targeting individuals who exhibit signs of internet addiction. Additionally, a snowball sampling technique will be employed to expand the participant pool by leveraging referrals from initial participants. Specific research questions include: (1) What is the prevalence of internet addiction in the young adult population under study? (2) To what extent do young adults with internet addiction experience symptoms of learned helplessness? (3) Are there any gender or age-related differences in learned helplessness among young adults with internet addiction? (4) What are the potential factors contributing to the development of learned helplessness in this population? Additionally, the study will explore the subjective experiences of individuals with internet addiction, focusing on their insight about the condition, through qualitative methods.

By identifying individuals with technology addiction and understanding the role of learned helplessness in its maintenance, this research aims to contribute to the development of targeted interventions and healthier practices. The findings of this study will have significant implications for both academia and clinical practice, shedding light on the complex interplay of psychological and neurobiological factors that contribute to internet addiction in young adults. This research will further explore how the perception of control, as mediated by the vmPFC, contributes to the development and maintenance of internet addiction, and how this is impacted by the insight level of the individual.

Methodology

Aim: To assess the degree of learned helplessness in individuals with technology addiction and explore their experiences and insight.

Objectives

- To screen individuals for internet addiction using the Internet addiction diagnostic questionnaire
- To measure the individuals' trait of Learned helplessness using the Learned helplessness Scale Form B
- To understand the nature of Learned helplessness, insight into the addiction, and subjective experiences in individuals with internet addiction

Hypotheses

- *Ho1:* There is no significant relationship between learned helplessness and internet addiction
- *Ho2:* There is no significant difference in learned helplessness between male and female

Variables

Independent variable: Internet Addiction, Gender
Dependent variable: Learned Helplessness

Research design

Mixed method, sequential explanatory design

Sampling details

Method: purposive sampling & snowball sampling

Inclusion criteria:

- Males and Females aged between 20 to 35 years.
- Literate population

Exclusion criteria:

- Individuals below 20 years of age
- Geriatric population

Sample Size: 136 participants (76 females, 60 males) who qualified for internet addiction.

Measures
- Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire (IADQ): To screen individuals for internet addiction and assess the severity of their internet use.
- Learned Helplessness Scale Form B (LHS): To measure the individuals' trait of learned helplessness.

Data Collection Procedure
1. Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques.
2. Participants completed the IADQ to screen for internet addiction.
3. Participants who qualified for internet addiction completed the LHS.
4. Data was collected in a controlled environment.

Data Analysis
- Descriptive Statistics: To summarize the demographic data and scores on the IADQ and LHS.
- Independent Samples t-test: To examine gender differences in learned helplessness.
- Pearson Correlation: To assess the relationship between learned helplessness and internet addiction.
- Regression Analysis: To determine the predictive power of learned helplessness on internet addiction.

Philosophical Underpinnings and Rationale for the qualitative phase
- Epistemological Stance: Interpretivism and phenomenology.
- Rationale: To explore subjective experiences, understand meaning-making, provide context and depth, explain quantitative findings, investigate insight and attitudes, and address the complexity of addiction.

Purpose and Objectives
- To gain a rich, in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of young adults with internet addiction.
- To explore and explain the quantitative findings regarding the relationship between learned helplessness and internet addiction.
- To investigate the subjective experiences of participants concerning their insight into their internet addiction.
- To understand the nuances of how learned helplessness is perceived and experienced by individuals with internet addiction.
- To explore the social factors that contribute to the issue.

Qualitative Approach and Methodology
- Phenomenological Approach: To explore the lived experiences of participants.
- Semi-Structured Interviews: To collect data and allow for flexibility in exploring emerging themes.
- Interview Guide: Developed based on quantitative findings and research objectives, with open-ended questions.
- Sampling: Purposive sampling from quantitative participants, representing varying levels of internet addiction and learned helplessness.
- Data Collection: Audio-recorded, transcribed interviews.
- Data Analysis:
  - Thematic analysis: Coding, theme development, and interpretation.
  - Trustworthiness: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Procedure

This study is conducted in two stages. The first stage aims to screen individuals for internet addiction. A total of 300 young adults, aged between 20 to 35 through the random sampling method. The resultant sample consisted of 76 females and 60 males upon qualifying for the Internet addiction criteria. These participants were given the learned helplessness scale to assess their levels of learned helplessness.

The quantitative data collection was done by manually distributing printed questionnaires to the participants and providing them with the information sheet and consent form for the research study. The confidentiality of the data collected was ensured and consent was sought before proceeding to respond to the survey.

The quantitative data collection was done over a span of 4 weeks. Upon completion of the data collection process, the data collected was run through statistical analysis using Statistical Package for social science (IBM SPSS). A correlational analysis and an independent sample t test was conducted to test the hypotheses of the study.

Furthermore, seven participants were subjected to a semi-structured interview that aims to explore the subjective experiences of individuals with internet addiction and their level of insight into the problem. The qualitative aspect would involve in-depth interviews with a subset of participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences with internet addiction and perceived learned helplessness. The thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes from the interview data.

Discussion:

The findings of the research study are indicative of a significant difference in the degree of learned helplessness in the female sample group when compared to that in the male sample group with internet addiction. It is found that females tend to demonstrate a higher degree of learned helplessness while qualifying for the criteria of internet addiction than males. This result aligns with the previous

research findings of gender difference in this population conducted by Carroll Dweck and colleagues. (Dweck, Davidson, Nelson, & Enna, 1978a; Dalla et al., 2008)

The gender difference in young adults with internet addiction and learned helplessness can be influenced by various factors. Several reasons may contribute to females showing higher levels of learned helplessness in the context of internet addiction.

Firstly, societal norms and gender roles may shape the ways in which males and females perceive and cope with stress and challenges. Females may be more likely to internalize feelings of helplessness due to societal expectations of emotional expressiveness and nurturing behaviors. (Dweck, Davidson, Nelson, & Enna, 1978a)

Secondly, females and males may adopt different coping strategies when faced with stressful situations. Females might be more inclined to engage in passive coping mechanisms, leading to a higher likelihood of experiencing learned helplessness when confronted with internet addiction-related challenges.

Thirdly, Females may be more likely to experience cyberbullying or online harassment, which can lead to increased feelings of powerlessness and learned helplessness.

Lastly, Internet use can expose individuals to images and content that reinforce societal beauty standards and trigger social comparison. Females may be more susceptible to negative body image and self-esteem issues arising from internet usage, potentially exacerbating learned helplessness.

These results are indicative of a strong positive correlation between learned helplessness and internet addiction.

There are several reasons for a strong positive correlation between learned helplessness and internet addiction:

Individuals experiencing learned helplessness may seek refuge in excessive internet use as a coping mechanism to escape from distressing or challenging situations. The internet provides a virtual space where they can detach from real-life problems temporarily. (Study of Internet Addiction, 2020)

Internet addiction may reinforce learned helplessness, as excessive online engagement can lead to neglecting responsibilities and important tasks. This neglect, in turn, reinforces feelings of helplessness, creating a vicious cycle.

Internet addiction can be particularly appealing to individuals experiencing learned helplessness due to the immediate rewards and gratification it offers. This instant satisfaction contrasts with the challenges of real-life problem-solving. (Study of Internet Addiction, 2020)

Internet addiction can distort an individual's perception of time, leading to a neglect of time management and exacerbating feelings of helplessness when confronted with deadlines or responsibilities.

Both learned helplessness and internet addiction may involve cognitive distortions, where individuals perceive themselves as powerless or unable to change their circumstances, reinforcing their addiction. (Maier & Seligman, 2016)

Furthermore, a regression analysis was conducted to better understand the relationship between the two variables. The results indicated that learned helplessness could be predicted 29% of the time. It indicates that learned helplessness is a significant predictor of internet addiction. (Kim et al., 2020)

Table 4.1 Independent sample t-test for internet addiction and learned helplessness in males and females

		Gender	N	Mean	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Learned Helplessness	Equal variances assumed	Female	76	51.67	.014	6.231	134	.000
	Equal variances not assumed	Male	60	46.63		6.401	133.992	.000

Table 4.1 shows learned helplessness score for females who qualify for internet addiction was 51.67. In addition to this, the mean score for males who qualify for internet addiction was 46.63. An independent sample t-test was conducted, resulting in a t-value of 6.231 and 6.401 for females and males respectively, with a 2-tailed p-value of 0.00.

This table indicates a statistically significant difference in the degree of learned helplessness in females with internet addiction and the degree of learned helplessness in males with internet addiction.

Table 4.2 Pearsons correlation between internet addiction and learned helplessness.

		Internet Addiction	Learned Helplessness
Internet Addiction	Pearson Correlation	1	.546**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	136	136
Learned Helplessness	Pearson Correlation	.546**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	136	136

Table 4.2 shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the variables internet addiction and learned helplessness with a correlation coefficient of 0.546 in a sample of 136 participants. This value is statistically significant at 0.01 level with a p-value of 0.00.

Table 4.3 Regression analysis for learned helplessness and Internet addiction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.546[a]	.298	.293	1.009

a. Predictors: (Constant), Learned Helplessness

This table shows the summary of the regression analysis conducted using learned helplessness as a predictor. The R square value of the test is 0.29, indicating that internet addiction could be predicted with learned helplessness scores in 29% of cases in the given sample.

Qualitative analysis

In tandem with the quantitative analysis, the qualitative segment employed a thematic analysis to gain a deeper understanding of participants' lived experiences with learned helplessness and internet addiction. By systematically categorizing interview responses, we identified recurring themes and patterns, capturing the essence of their narratives and perspectives on the subject matter.

Table 4.4 Frequency of codes in the exploratory interview

Cases	Internet usage as Coping mechanism	Internet usage for Social isolation	Insight of addiction	Insight of learned helplessness	Personal and environmental triggers leading to Internet usage	Internet usage as a part of daily schedule	Loss of time sense
1	3	4	0	2	4	3	3
2	3	2	1	1	3	3	3
3	2	2	0	1	3	1	2
4	3	1	0	1	1	1	2
5	1	2	0	1	2	2	2
6	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
7	1	0	0	0	1	1	1

The interviews depicted the following themes and patterns:

1. Internet usage as a coping mechanism:

Participants frequently mentioned using the Internet as a way to distract themselves from negative emotions, intrusive thoughts, and daily struggles. Engaging in various online activities, such as browsing social media, watching videos, or playing games, offered them a brief respite from feelings of helplessness and stress. However, this distraction often resulted in a cycle of avoidance, where participants would further neglect their real-life responsibilities and challenges. The internet also served as a platform for emotional regulation, allowing participants to seek out content that elicited positive emotions or connected them with like-minded individuals. Engaging with supportive online communities or finding solace in creative outlets online provided a sense of emotional relief. However, over time, this reliance on the internet for emotional regulation could exacerbate feelings of helplessness, as it prevented participants from developing more adaptive coping strategies in their offline lives. The internet offered a sense of anonymity and detachment from real-life identity, enabling participants to create a virtual persona that felt separate from their struggles and insecurities. This virtual identity provided a shield against judgment and criticism, allowing participants to freely express themselves without the fear of negative consequences. However, this disconnection from real-life identity could contribute to a deeper sense of learned helplessness, as participants might become detached from their offline realities. For some participants, the internet provided a space for social connection and support that they felt lacking in their real-world interactions. Online friendships and communities offered a sense of belonging and understanding, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness. Nevertheless, reliance on online social interactions could impede the development of meaningful real-life connections, exacerbating feelings of helplessness when faced with real-world challenges. Participants often turned to the internet as a coping mechanism for dealing with mental distress, including anxiety, depression, and stress. Engaging in internet activities allowed them to temporarily escape from intrusive thoughts and emotional pain. However, this form of coping could reinforce the cycle of learned helplessness, as

individuals did not address the root causes of their mental distress through healthier coping strategies or seeking professional support. (Study of Internet Addiction, 2020; Maier & Seligman, 2016)

2. Internet usage for social isolation:
Participants expressed a desire to escape from real-life social interactions due to feelings of social anxiety, self-doubt, or past negative experiences. The internet provided a safe haven where they could control their level of social engagement and limit the exposure to potential judgment or rejection. However, this avoidance of real-life social interactions could reinforce feelings of learned helplessness, as it prevented participants from developing the social skills and support systems necessary for personal growth. The internet allowed participants to create an anonymous online presence, shielding their true identities and insecurities. This sense of anonymity gave them the freedom to interact with others without fear of repercussions or the pressure of maintaining a certain image. While this anonymity provided comfort, it also hindered the development of authentic connections and meaningful relationships, potentially perpetuating social isolation and learned helplessness. For some participants, the internet became a primary source of social interaction, gradually replacing or reducing real-life connections. Engaging in excessive internet use for social purposes led to a neglect of face-to-face interactions, potentially exacerbating feelings of loneliness and isolation. This shift from real-life to online interactions might perpetuate learned helplessness, as participants become increasingly dependent on the internet to meet their social needs. (Goetz & Dweck, 1980)

3. Insight of Internet addiction:
Participants displayed limited awareness and recognition of their internet addiction. Many of them downplayed the severity of their excessive internet use or denied it as a problem altogether. Some attributed their online activities to boredom or leisure rather than acknowledging the compulsive nature of their behaviors. The lack of insight into their internet addiction might stem from the normalization of internet use in contemporary society, making it challenging for participants to recognize its addictive qualities. The low insight on internet addiction has several consequences. Firstly, it may hinder individuals from seeking appropriate help and support to address their problematic internet use. Without acknowledging the addictive nature of their behaviors, participants may fail to recognize the impact it has on their daily lives and well-being. This lack of awareness could lead to the perpetuation of internet addiction and contribute to feelings of learned helplessness when facing its negative consequences. (Wu et al., 2015; Bell et al., 2013)

4. Insight of learned helplessness:
In contrast to internet addiction, participants exhibited a relatively higher level of insight regarding their learned helplessness. They could identify feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness in certain situations and recognized their passivity in responding to challenges. The participants attributed learned helplessness to past negative experiences or a perception that their efforts were futile in achieving desired outcomes. The higher insight into learned helplessness may be influenced by a clearer cause-and-effect understanding of their emotional and behavioral patterns. Participants could connect their feelings of helplessness to specific triggering events or recurring situations, facilitating their self-awareness. This insight, however, did not necessarily translate into effective coping strategies to overcome learned helplessness, indicating a need for targeted interventions to foster adaptive behaviors. (Maier & Seligman, 2016)

5. Personal and environmental triggers leading to internet usage: Participants identified emotional distress and negative emotions as key personal triggers leading to excessive internet usage. The internet provided a means to escape from real-life challenges and overwhelming feelings, granting temporary relief and emotional regulation. Online activities, such as watching videos or engaging in social media, offered a distraction from personal difficulties, leading to an addictive cycle of avoidance. Feelings of loneliness and social isolation acted as personal triggers that propelled individuals towards the internet. The online realm provided a sense of connection, virtual companionship, and social interactions, compensating for the lack of meaningful real-life relationships. Engaging in online communities and virtual friendships offered comfort and belonging, serving as a coping mechanism for addressing feelings of isolation. Furthermore, the environmental triggers include peer influence and social norms, which played a significant role in promoting internet usage. Participants reported feeling pressured to be constantly connected and engaged online to conform to social expectations. Online peer groups and communities also reinforced internet use, as participants sought validation and acceptance from their virtual social circles. Additionally, the easy accessibility of the internet through smartphones and other digital devices acted as a significant environmental trigger for excessive internet use. The constant presence of technology in daily life made it difficult for participants to resist the urge to engage in online activities, further fueling their dependency on the internet.

6. Internet usage as part of the daily schedule:
The qualitative data revealed that females tended to integrate internet usage more explicitly into their daily schedules compared to males. This difference was often attributed to the specific nature of obligations related to work, education, and social connections. Males, on the other hand, engaged in internet activities more opportunistically, using it primarily for information, entertainment, and personal interests. Female participants frequently mentioned internet usage as an essential component of their work or study obligations. For professional purposes, they had to be constantly connected to emails, virtual meetings, or digital tools. Similarly, students expressed their reliance on the internet for academic research, online classes, and assignments. This work or study-related dependency led to excessive internet use as part of their daily schedule. Females emphasized the role of the internet in maintaining social connections, especially through social media platforms. Engaging in online conversations, sharing updates, and staying connected with friends and family became routine activities integrated into their daily schedules. This need for social connectivity drove females to spend significant time on the internet, even during leisure hours. Participants from both genders cited the internet as a primary source of information and entertainment. Engaging with news, blogs, videos, and other content became habitual, leading to excessive internet use as part of their daily routines. This information-seeking behavior often blended with leisure activities, reinforcing the integration of the internet into their schedules. Males and females both incorporated internet usage into their schedules as a means to pursue personal hobbies and interests. For example, accessing online tutorials, gaming communities, or creative platforms became routine activities during leisure time. The pursuit of personal interests contributed to excessive internet use, albeit with variations in the types of activities based on gender preferences.

7. Internet usage leading to loss of time sense:
Participants reported that certain online activities, such as social media scrolling, watching videos, gaming, or browsing through content, were highly immersive and engaging. The continuous stream of captivating content and the design of online platforms contributed to a state of flow, where individuals became engrossed in the activity, leading to a loss of time awareness. Unlike real-life activities, internet usage lacks external cues, such as natural daylight changes or scheduled breaks, that help individuals gauge the passage of time. In the virtual world, time is more fluid, and individuals may find it challenging to self-regulate and set limits on their internet usage. Participants often engaged in multitasking during internet use, such as toggling between multiple open tabs or apps simultaneously. This fragmented attention further contributed to the loss of time sense, as individuals became preoccupied with different online activities without noticing the duration of each. Excessive internet use led participants to disengage from their real-world routines and daily responsibilities. Without structured time management, individuals found themselves spending prolonged periods online, often neglecting important tasks or personal commitments. The loss of time sense during late-night internet use had adverse effects on participants' sleep patterns. Engaging in internet activities until late hours disrupted their sleep routines, resulting in reduced sleep quality and increased feelings of fatigue and restlessness during the day. (Study of Internet Addiction, 2020)

Summary & Conclusion
This study explored the intricate relationship between learned helplessness and internet addiction in young adults, employing a mixed-methods design to capture both the breadth and depth of this phenomenon.
Quantitatively, we observed a significant predictive link between learned helplessness and internet addiction, with notable gender differences revealing higher levels of perceived helplessness among female participants. This suggests that societal and psychological factors may uniquely impact how individuals, particularly women, experience and cope with digital dependencies. The qualitative phase, through in-depth interviews, provided a humanized lens, revealing how internet usage often functions as a coping mechanism, paradoxically reinforcing feelings of helplessness. Participants' narratives highlighted the struggle to maintain self-awareness, with varying levels of insight into their addictive behaviours, underscoring the complex psychological terrain of internet addiction.
Ultimately, the findings underscore the necessity of addressing learned helplessness within interventions for internet addiction. Effective strategies must move beyond mere behavioral modification, focusing instead on cultivating a sense of agency and resilience. The participant stories emphasized the need for compassionate, tailored approaches that acknowledge the unique vulnerabilities of individuals navigating the digital age. Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to understand the long-term impacts of learned helplessness and develop interventions that empower individuals to regain control, fostering healthier pathways in both their online and offline lives. By integrating quantitative rigor with qualitative depth, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of internet addiction, offering valuable insights to navigate the complexities of the digital age.

Implications of the Study:

- This research offers the potential for more personalized support. Professionals can utilize the findings to tailor interventions to the unique needs of individuals struggling with internet addiction and learned helplessness.
- By identifying those at heightened risk, the study facilitates opportunities for early intervention. Support can be offered before these challenges become deeply entrenched.
- The study underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing distinct experiences. It highlights the necessity for interventions that acknowledge gender-specific challenges.
- The findings provide valuable insights for educational programs and public health campaigns. These can be utilized to promote healthier digital habits within communities.
- This work emphasizes the critical role of self-awareness in recovery. It suggests that fostering insight can be a key component of effective treatment.

Limitations of the Study:

- Because the study focused on literate young adults, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of other age groups or individuals with varying levels of literacy.
- The reliance on self-reported data means that participants' responses might have been influenced by social expectations or a lack of full self-awareness.
- The cross-sectional nature of the study prevents the definitive establishment of cause-and-effect relationships between learned helplessness and internet addiction.

Scope for Further Study:

- Future research should track individuals over time to better understand the evolving nature of these conditions.
- Investigating how cultural backgrounds shape the experience of learned helplessness and internet addiction would offer valuable insights.
- Exploring how these issues manifest across different stages of life would provide a more comprehensive understanding.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of interventions designed specifically for different genders is essential for developing targeted support.
- Incorporating objective measures, such as neuroimaging, could provide a more robust understanding of the biological underpinnings.
- Further exploration of how specific online activities influence feelings of helplessness would be beneficial for developing effective strategies.
- Developing methods to enhance self-awareness and insight among those affected is a crucial area for future research.
- Creating culturally sensitive interventions would ensure that support systems are accessible and effective for diverse populations.
- A deeper investigation into the specific role of social media in these conditions would offer valuable insights into the digital landscape.

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