Study on Relationship between Loneliness and Psychological Well- being among Online gamers

Vincy Joseph[1], Megha. D[2], Dr. Supahala Kotian[3]

[1]Research Scholar, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Srinivas Univeristy, Mangalore, Karnataka, India

[2]B.Sc Psychology, St.Mary's College Puthanangadi, Malappuram, Kerala

[3]Professor, Srinivas University, Mangalore, Karnataka, India

Abstract - **Online gaming describes any video game played on internet that offers online interaction with other players. Around twenty-five percentage of world population has engaged in online gaming. Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some way. Psychological well-being refers to inter- and intraindividual levels of positive functioning that can include one's relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes that include one's sense of mastery and personal growth. The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between psychological well-being and loneliness among online gamers. The sample of the study included 120 participants of age ranging from 18 to 25 who are online gamers with 60 males and 60 females. The tools used to measure psychological well-being and loneliness are Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale and UCLA Loneliness Scale respectively. The data was analysed using appropriate statistical tools using SPSS software version 20. To accomplish the objectives of the study, a quantitative research design was adopted. From the results it was found that there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and loneliness among online gamers. There is a significant negative correlation between psychological well-being and loneliness. But there was no significant difference in psychological- wellbeing and loneliness among male and female online-gamers.**

Index Terms - **Loneliness, Online gamers, Psychological well- being, young adults.**

I.INTRODUCTION

Online gaming has become very popular in the past decade especially after the pandemic and worldwide lockdown with almost twenty-five percentage of the population around the world being online gamers. Online gaming is a very pleasurable activity for those who are interested and some are even making a living out of this. However, it may also have chances of turning into an addiction. The increased amount of time spent in playing online games may cause a withdrawal from the social network or the lack of social relations may be the cause of increase in time spent playing online games. This increased amount of online gaming may also have some effect on the psychological well- being of an individual.

Loneliness is a poignant experience that occurs when a person's perceived number of relationships with other persons lacks in quantity or quality. According to Peplau and Perlman, "Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is deficient in some way". Loneliness is different from solitude. A person can be lonely even when they are in between a group of people, and a person standing alone may not necessarily be lonely. Every individual may have experienced loneliness in some part of their life which may have individual differences in intensity. The reason for loneliness may be different according to individuals. It may be poor relationship with their parents, lack of interpersonal communication skills, or poor peer relationship. Being lonely is a very distressing experience and in extreme cases can lead to psychological disorders such as depression.

Psychological well-being is the pleasant experience of feeling spirited and function efficiently. Psychological well-being is not only about feeling happy, it is also about feeling satisfied with one's life, accepting both positive and negative experiences. It is also about confronting the obstacles and overcoming them. According to Carol. D. Ryff psychological well-being constitute of six factors. They are autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life,

environmental mastery and positive relationship with others. Autonomy is a sense of independence. Purpose in life is all about having a goal in life. Environmental mastery is the ability to handle our surrounding. Sel acceptance is defined as having a clear understanding of their emotions, thought and behaviour and accepting oneself with all the strengths and limitations. Personal growth is about always assessing one's skills and improving them to reach the peak of their potential. Positive relationship with others is having a healthy and warm relationship with people around us. Psychological well-being is an essential component of fully functioning individual.

III.OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the study are:
1.To find out the difference in the psychological well-being among male and female online gamers.
2.To find out the difference in the loneliness among male and female online gamers.
3.To find out the relationship between psychological well-being and loneliness among male and female online gamers.

IV.REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Regan. L Mandryk, Julian Frommel, Ashley Amstrong and Daniel Jhonson (2020) investigated how passion for playing World of Warcraft predicts in-game social capital, loneliness and well-being. The study was conducted in 300 World of Warcraft players. The findings indicated that harmonious passion for gaming facilitated social capital decreased loneliness and increased well-being whereas obsessive passion decrease loneliness and well-being.

Revati. K Bhagchandani (2017) conducted a study on "the effect of loneliness on psychological well-being of college students". The sample of the study was 100 college students of age 18 to 22 years in which 51 were males and 49 females. The tools used for the study were UCLA-R loneliness scale by Russell (1982) and Ryff's Psychological well-being scale (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). The result of study indicated a significant negative corelation between psychological well-being and loneliness.

Ji-Yeon Lee. Dong Woo Ko and Hyemin Lee (2019) conducted a study on "Loneliness, regulatory focus, and online game addiction" on a sample of college students recruited from South Korea. The findings indicated that regulatory focus mediated the effect of loneliness on online game addiction and the moderated mediation analyses using process confirmed that inter-personal competence significantly buffered the indirect effect of loneliness on online game addiction. This study bridges the gap in the online game addiction literature by explaining how loneliness is associated with online game addiction.

A study was conducted by Andrzej Cudo, Natalia Kopis, and Emilia Zabielska-Mendyk (2019) on personal distress as a mediator between self-esteem, self-efficacy, loneliness and problematic video gaming in female and male emerging adult gamers. The sample consisted of 370 video game players with the age between 18 to 30 among which 201 were female and 169 were male. The questionnaires used to collect the data were Problem Videogame Playing Questionnaire, The Interpersonal Reactivity Index, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, De Jong Geirvald Loneliness Scale, and General Self-Efficacy Scale. The result of the study indicated that the time spent playing video games, as well as personal distress as a function of self-esteem, loneliness and self-efficacy, are predictors of problematic video gaming.

Soo Ting T'ng, Khee Hoong Ho,Da En Sim , Cher Hoe Yu and PohYin Wong (2019) conducted a study on the mediating effect of internet gaming disorder's symptoms on loneliness and aggression among undergraduate students and working adults in Malaysia. The participants of the study were 410 under graduate or working adults between 20 to 39 years with at least one year of gaming experience. The study found that loneliness predicted aggression as well as symptoms of IGD.

Helga Myrseth. Olav Kjellevold Olsen, Einar Kristian Borud and Leif Age Strand (2017) published a study "Predictors of Gaming Behaviour among Military Peacekeepers – Exploring the Role of Boredom and Loneliness in Relation to Gaming Problems" to explore the gaming problems in post-deployment veterans and to investigate whether boredom and loneliness can predict levels of gaming problems. The sample of the study were 246 Afghanistan veterans with mean age of 37.5. The findings of the study indicated that veterans who are highly motivated by enhancement motives and score low on lack of internal stimulation may be prone to developing gaming problems.

Marcel Martoncik and John Loksa (2016) conducted a study to check whether the players World of Warcraft experienced more loneliness and social anxiety in real world than in online world. The UCLA Loneliness Scale and Social Phobia Inventory were administered to 161 players and found that the players experience a significantly low degree of loneliness and social anxiety in online world than in real world.

Bahadir Bozoglan, Veysel Demirer and Ismail Sahin (2013) conducted a study to reveal the relationship among loneliness, self-esteem, life satisfaction and internet addiction. The sample chosen for the study was three hundred and eighty-four university students from 18 to 24 years old from the faculty of education in Turkey. From the study it was concluded that loneliness is associated with Internet addiction and its subscales.

Halima Sadia Qureshi, Mussarat Jabeen Khan and Uzma Mansoor (2013) to examine the impact of video games on changing the levels of aggression and loneliness in adolescents.150 adolescents (76 males and 74 females) between the age 12 to 20 participated in the study. The findings indicated a significant difference between male and female gamers in aggression scale, loneliness scale and video game addiction scale. The study concluded that aggression and loneliness in adolescents is induced by pathological video gaming.

C.Goh, C. Jones, & A. Copello (2019) on the impact of online gaming on psychological wellbeing and the role of play motivations and problematic use. A cross-sectional online questionnaire was used to examine relationship between weekly average hours played and psychological well-being in 165 participants. The result indicated a significant corelation with increased playtime associated with decreased psychological well-being.

Memduh Kocadag (2019) conducted a research investigating psychological well-being levels of teenagers interested in e-sport career. Web-based questionnaire and psychological well-being scale which belongs to Telef was used to collect data from a sample of 320 teenagers from 15 to 27 years old in Turkey. The results show that the times of playing video game daily effect psychological well-being levels of teenagers. Also, desire of having a career in E-sport is a significant predictor of low psychological well-being level.

Cecilia Cheng, Mike. W.L. Cheung, Hsin-yi Wang (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of 20 countries on multinational comparison of internet gaming disorder on psychosocial problems versus well-being. The study investigated the association between IGD and the four criteria- psychological problem, interpersonal problem, psychological well-being, and interpersonal well-being and compared the magnitude of this association across countries. A mixed effect meta-analysis was performed on 84 independent samples comprising 58834 samples from 20 different countries. The result indicated a moderate positive correlation between IGD symptoms and psychological problems.

Amy Kirby, Chris Jones and Alex Copello (2014) conducted a study on the impact of Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) on psychological wellbeing and the role of play motivations and problematic use. A cross sectional, online questionnaire design testing the relationship between average hours playing per week and psychological wellbeing was used to assess the association between MMORPGs play and psychological well-being in565 samples. The result of the study indicated a negative correlation between playing time and psychological well-being

V.METHOD

A] POPULATION.
The population selected for this particular study is online gamers who are the age of 18 to 25 years.

B] RESEARCH DESIGN
The study was correlational in nature. The sample size of the study was 120 with 60 males and 60 females. It was collected from the online gamers by administering the tools UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) and Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale through Google forms. Pearson product moment correlation and independent t test were used to statistically analyse the data using SPSS software.

C] SAMPLE DESIGN
The particulars of sample design,
1.TYPE OF UNIVERSE: Finite
2.SAMPLING UNIT: Online gamers
3.SIZE OF SAMPLE:120

D]TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

The tools used for data collection are Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale and UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3). Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale was developed by Carol.D. Ryff. It was a 42- item questionnaire scored on a 6-point scale. The questionnaire had six sub scales which are autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, self-acceptance and positive relationship with others.

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) was developed by Daniel Russel in 1996. It is scored on a 4- point Likert scale.
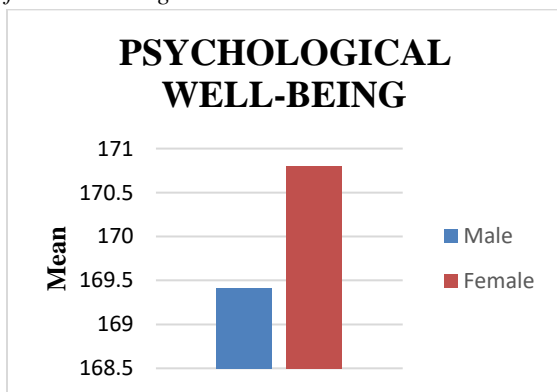
VI.RESULT AND DISCUSSION

H1: There will be significant differences in psychological- wellbeing among male and female online-gamers.

Online-gamers	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Male	169.4167	22.225	118	-.297	.767
Female	170.8000	28.446	118	-.297	.767

Table 1: *Mean, standard deviation and t- value results comparing psychological well-being male and female online-gamers*

From table 1. shows the comparison of the psychological well-being among male and female online gamers using independent t test. There is no significant difference in the scores for male (M=169.4167, SD=22.22557) and female online gamers (M=170.8000, SD=28.44668). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there is a significant difference in psychological- wellbeing among male and female online-gamers is rejected

Figure .1: *Psychological wellbeing among male and female online gamers*

The figure represents the difference in psychological well-being in male and female online gamers. It is very clear that there is only a very small difference between the mean of psychological wellbeing in male and female online gamers. It is not significant. The mean score of psychological well-being is only slightly high in female online gamers when compared to male online gamers.

H2: There will be significant differences in loneliness among male and female online-gamers.

Online gamers	Mean	SD	t	df	P
Male	27.0000	15.77168	.265	118	.792
Female	26.0667	22.28617	.265	118	.792

Table 2: *Mean, standard deviation and t- value results comparing loneliness among male and female online-gamers on loneliness.*

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the loneliness among male and female online gamers. There is no significant difference in the scores for male (M=27.0000, SD=15.77168) and female online gamers (M=26.0667, SD=22.28617). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there is a significant difference in loneliness among male and female online-gamers is rejected.

Figure .2: *Loneliness among male and female online gamers.*
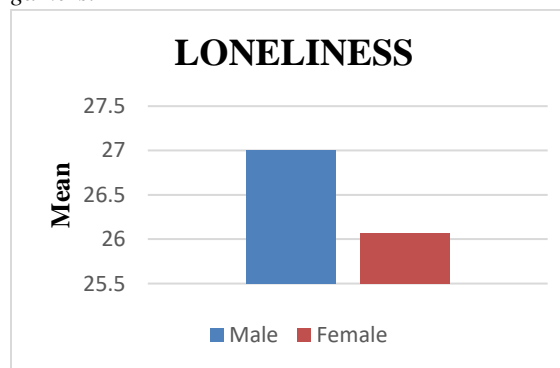
The figure represents the difference in loneliness in male and female online gamers. It is very clear that there is only a very small difference in mean of loneliness between the in male and female online gamers. It is not significant.

H3: There will be a significant relationship between psychological well-being and loneliness among online gamers.

Variables	Psychological Well-being
Loneliness	-.601[**]

Table 3: *Correlation between psychological wellbeing and loneliness*

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

In the present study there is significant relationship between the variables of psychological well-being and loneliness. The correlation coefficient between psychological well-being and loneliness is -.601. There is a significant correlation at 0.01 level of significance. The correlation is negative. This indicate that higher the psychological well-being lesser the loneliness. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and loneliness among online gamers.

VII.FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. There are no significant differences in psychological- wellbeing among male and female online-gamers.
2. There are no significant differences in loneliness among male and female online-gamers.
3. There is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and loneliness among online gamers.

VIII.IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

By using the result of this study, further studies can be done. It will help the researcher to identify the role of gender in psychological well-being and loneliness among online gamers in the present society. It will help the researcher to understand the relationship between psychological well-being and loneliness among online gamers. The increase in loneliness indicates a decrease in psychological well-being. So necessary interventions can be provided to individuals who suffer from excessive loneliness. Because loneliness when exceeds the limit can cause many psychological disorders like depression and a very poor psychological well-being. So early intervention can prevent this.

IX.RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONLINE GAMERS

There is an association between loneliness and psychological well-being in online gamers. So online gamers who suffer from loneliness may have poor psychological well-being. The main reason of loneliness may be the increased amount of time spent playing online games. So, in order to improve their psychological well-being, the online gamers may decrease the amount of time spent on online games. They can also try to improve their relationship with family and peers to reduce loneliness.

X.CONCLUSION

The number of people playing online games is increasing rapidly especially after the lockdown. The impact of online game on individuals is huge. The result of certain studies indicate that a moderate use is associated with benefits whereas obsessive gaming can have severe impact on the psychological well-being of individuals. Also, loneliness is found to be a predictor of pathological gaming in several studies. The increased amount of time spent in playing online games can cause a withdrawal from the family and loved ones and may result in loneliness or because of lack of healthy social relationship the person may spent more time in playing games. From this study it is very clear that the loneliness has a negative impact on the psychological well-being of online gamers. So, it is very clear that increased loneliness in online gamers is associated with decreased psychological well-being. So, in order to improve psychological well-being in online gamers who experience loneliness, improving the quality of their interpersonal relationship can be useful.

REFERENCE

[1] Bhagchandani, R. K. (2017). Effect of loneliness on the psychological well-being of college students. International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, 7(1), 60-64.

[2] Burris, Jessica & Brechting, Emily & Salsman, John & Carlson, Charles. (2009). Factors Associated with the Psychological Well-Being and Distress of University Students. Journal of American college health: J of ACH. 57. 536-43.

[3] Bozoglan, B., Demirer, V., & Sahin, I. (2013). Loneliness, self-esteem, and life satisfaction as predictors of Internet addiction: A cross-sectional study among Turkish university students. Scandinavian journal of psychology, 54(4), 313-319.

[4] Cheng, C., Cheung, M. W. L., & Wang, H. Y. (2018). Multinational comparison of internet gaming disorder and psychosocial problems

versus well-being: Meta-analysis of 20 countries. Computers in Human Behavior, 88, 153-167.

[5] Cudo, A., Kopis, N., & Zabielska-Mendyk, E. (2019). Personal distress as a mediator between self-esteem, self-efficacy, loneliness and problematic video gaming in female and male emerging adult gamers. Plos One, 14(12), 213-226.

[6] Goh, C., Jones, C., & Copello, A. (2019). A further test of the impact of online gaming on psychological wellbeing and the role of play motivations and problematic use. Psychiatric Quarterly, 90(4), 747-760.

[7] Hawkley, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2010). Loneliness matters: A theoretical and empirical review of consequences and mechanisms. Annals of behavioral medicine, 40(2), 218-227.

[8] Kirby, A., Jones, C., & Copello, A. (2014). The impact of massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) on psychological wellbeing and the role of play motivations and problematic use. International journal of mental health and addiction, 12(1), 36-51.

[9] Kocadag, M. (2019). Investigating psychological well-being levels of teenagers interested in esport career. Research on Education and Psychology, 3(1), 1-10.

[10] Lee, J., Ko, D. W., & Lee, H. (2019). Loneliness, regulatory focus, inter-personal competence, and online game addiction. Internet Research,29(2),381-394.

[11] Mandryk, R. L., Frommel, J., Armstrong, A., & Johnson, D. (2020). How Passion for Playing World of Warcraft Predicts In-Game Social Capital, Loneliness, and Wellbeing. Frontiers in Psychology, 11, 2165.

[12] Martoncik, Marcel & Loksa, Jan. (2016). Do World of Warcraft (MMORPG) players experience less loneliness and social anxiety in online world (virtual environment) than in real world (offline)? Computers in Human Behavior. 56, 127-134.

[13] Myrseth, H., Olsen, O. K., Borud, E. K., & Strand, L. Å. (2017). Predictors of gaming behavior among military peacekeepers-exploring the role of boredom and loneliness in relation to gaming problems. Journal of Military Studies,9(1),1–10.

[14] Perlman, D., & Peplau, L. A. (1982). Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research, andtherapy. NewYork: Wiley-Inter science.

[15] Qureshi, H. S., Khan, M. J., & Masroor, U. (2013). Increased aggression and loneliness as potential effects of pathological video-gaming among adolescents. Pakistan Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology, 11(1).66-71.

[16] Shyu, Y. I. L. (2019). Maintaining and Improving Psychological Well-Being. The Journal of Nursing Research, 27(3), 19.

[17] T'ng, S. T., Ho, K. H., Sim, D. E., Yu, C. H., & Wong, P. Y. (2020). The mediating effect of Internet gaming disorder's symptoms on loneliness and aggression among undergraduate students and working adults in Malaysia. PsyCh journal, 9(1), 96-107.