

Turning Lemons into Lemonade: Social Support as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Technostress and Quality of Life Among University Students

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Purpose: The overuse of internet-based technologies as a means of coping with the stress they generate has resulted in an alarming level of addiction, adversely impacting the quality of life and overall health of younger individuals. This social detachment, in turn, contributes to both physical and mental health deterioration. The potential remedy for this predicament lies in the application of social support as an antidote to internet addiction. In this context, our present study employs the Stress-Strain-Outcome model to explore the indirect effects of internet addiction and the moderating role of social support in relation to the influence of technostress on the quality of life of adults.

Methods: We adopted a time-lagged design to collect data from university graduates and evaluated our study hypotheses using Mplus.

Results: Our empirical findings highlight the significant influence of technostress on internet addiction, with the latter significantly mediating the relationship between technostress and quality of life. Furthermore, our results reveal that social support effectively moderates the indirect effects of technostress on quality of life through its impact on internet addiction.

Conclusion: These findings can help researchers and educators better understand the underlying mechanisms between technostress and quality of life with social support as the silver lining. This form of social support holds the potential not only to alleviate internet addiction but also to positively enhance the quality of life and overall wellbeing of individuals facing these challenges. The implications of these findings and avenues for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: internet addiction, quality of life, social support, technostress, social media, moderation-mediation

Introduction

Pervasive use of information and communication technologies has reached to an extent that is causing health and wellbeing deterioration¹ by affecting the overall quality of life of youth. Excessive use of internet-based technologies to reduce the stress caused by the use of those technologies to a level of addiction is taking a toll on the quality of life and health of the younger generation.² Their cutoff from social life leading to physical and mental health deterioration can probably be cured by using social support as an antidote to internet addiction. The young generation all over the world is almost equally affected by internet addiction and technological stress.^{3,4} The average time adolescents spend online has significantly increased, from about 8 hours weekly in 2005 to 18.9 hours in the last decade.⁵ This substantial engagement, particularly during the crucial stages of adolescence, raises questions about its association with potential declines in mental, quality of life, and social well-being.⁶ Recent data highlights an alarming trend in the pervasive use of information and communication technologies, particularly among the youth, which is raising concerns about health, quality of life, and wellbeing deterioration. For instance, in Taiwan, a staggering 99.5% of individuals aged 15–24 are