



A STUDY ON THE PURPOSE AND PATTRENS OF INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract: There are many studies about internet use and internet and social media addiction and it is one of the thing that influence our daily life. The usage of internet and social media is very common in this generation. The study is aimed to understand the main purpose of usage of social media and understand the positive and negative opinion and negative effects of over utilization of internet and social media. This study employed a in depth data collection approach using random sampling method. The sample size was 25 students who are using internet and social media. Data were collected through interview methods face to face interview. Data were collected from students in between the age of 19 to 24. Thematic analysis revealed that the factors that makes person to addict were fashion, publicity, curiosity, technology, and physical and mental health problems were eyesight, obesity, social phobia, depression, and time management. Various awareness programs, individual realization and informational support can help to reduce the addiction and usage of internet and social media. These findings have important applications in formulating appropriate preventive strategies and actions in the future. Internet had innumerable physical and psychological impact on the participants in terms of increased stress, sleeplessness, anxiety, and low self-esteem and low self -image as result of excessive use of internet and social media. There are advantages in the internet and social but it depends upon the person how they are using it. Also, the informational and self –realization and self-motivation and awareness programs helps the people to reduce and overcome from their excessive use of internet and social media.

Key words: Internet , social media, addiction, fashion, publicity, mental and physical health problems

I. INTRODUCTION

Internet has become an essential part of modern life, rapidly expanding in reach and usage, especially among young people. However, excessive use has led to growing concerns about **Internet Addiction (IA)**—a condition characterized by the inability to control online behavior despite negative consequences. First proposed by Ivan Goldberg, this concept highlights how overuse can impact academic performance, relationships, and mental and physical health. Studies show that adolescents and

college students are particularly vulnerable due to developmental stress, easy access, and the use of the internet as a coping mechanism. Internet addiction is often linked with symptoms like mood swings, anxiety, depression, and social isolation, and is explained through theories such as dopamine reward mechanisms, cognitive-behavioral patterns, and escapism. While the internet offers valuable opportunities for learning, communication, and entertainment, its misuse can disrupt daily life and well-being. Therefore, understanding usage patterns and promoting balanced digital habits are essential, especially among students, to ensure healthier lifestyles and prevent long-term negative effects.

II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

. This chapter reviews existing literature on internet addiction, highlighting its prevalence, causes, and impacts among students. Studies by Sergey D. Neverkovich and colleagues emphasize that internet addiction among adolescents (14–19 years) develops progressively—from mild interest to full dependence—and requires structured prevention programs within educational settings. Research by Kassiani K Pliakou and Murat Akin shows that excessive internet and social media use is widespread among university students, with many spending several hours daily online, often affecting their mental health and quality of life. Similarly, Sushma J found varying levels of addiction among medical students, linking it to depression, low self-esteem, and high usage patterns. Other studies, such as those by Hanna Rouvinen, highlight the strong association between increased internet use and both physical and mental health outcomes in higher education students. Research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic by Shetty Kanappa V further indicates that lockdowns significantly increased internet dependency, leading to psychological distress among students. Additionally, qualitative reviews like that of Popat and Tarrant reveal that adolescents perceive both positive and negative effects of digital engagement on their mental well-being. Overall, the literature demonstrates that while the internet is essential for education and social interaction, excessive use can lead to addiction, negatively impacting academic performance, relationships, and mental health, thereby underscoring the need for awareness, early intervention, and balanced digital habits among students.

3.1 Population and Sample

The study was conducted among the under graduated students from different states. Data were collected through in depth interviews from 25 participants who are using internet and social media. Using random sampling method. Among 25 participants 24 are females and one male.

I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The primary Aim of this research is to “A study on the purpose and patterns of Internet and Social Media Usage Among College Students”. It also seeks to examine the positive and negative opinion of students o internet usage and social media . This chapter delineates the Objectives of the study, its Research design, sampling methods, data collection tools, hypotheses, and operational definitions.

Title of the Study

“A study on the purpose and patterns of Internet and Social Media Usage Among College Students”
Statement of the problem”

The internet has very long reaching effects into the life of individuals. Now a days access to the internet among the college students became easy and affordable. Most of the students relying on the internet for each and every kind of information it can be academics and entertainment. Advanced technologies and software making students and every individual depend on the internet and revisit them which leading to the addiction and dependency. Every individual especially students need to be self aware of how much time they are spending on the internet, what purpose they are using, negative and positive impact of

internet on their lives and routines. Students need to learn time management along with the internet usage and utilize their skills rather than depending on the internet. Excessive internet and social media usage may lead to procrastination, lower their creative thinking and problem solving skills and cognitive skills which depends on the individual how the individual utilizing their internet and social media.

Aim

The Aim of study is to examine the “A study on the purpose and patterns of Internet and Social Media Usage Among College Students”

Objectives

To understand the main purpose of usage of internet and social media among students

To understand the positive and negative opinion of students about the usage of internet and social media

To understand the negative effects due to over utilization of internet and social media on the physical and mental health.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

ADDICTION

Mosby’s Medical, Nursing & Allied Health Dictionary defines addiction as “compulsive, uncontrollable dependence on a substance, habit, or practice to such a degree that cessation causes severe emotional, mental, or physiologic reactions.”

According to Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, “Addiction is a dependence, on a behavior or substance that a person is powerless to stop.”

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines compulsion as “an irresistible impulse to perform an irrational act” and addiction as a “compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance.” The term addiction has been to some extent replaced by the word dependence for substance abuse.

INTERNET ADDICTION

Based on Center for Internet Addiction Recovery, internet addiction is when an individual is having a compulsive behavior involving the internet interferes with normal functioning, and causes stress on the addicts, as well as their family, friends, and loved ones (Padwa & Cunningham, 2010).

According to Wolfe (2000), internet addiction is a creation of the media. While, Bidgoli (2004) stated that, internet addiction is a dysfunctional internet use pattern. This phenomenon occurs when people spend much time online to the detriment of their social and financial well-being.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social media as “a public web-based service that permits users to create a personal profile, identify other users with whom they can relate to or have a connection with, read and react to posts made by other users on the site, and send and receive messages either privately or publicly

Social media addiction is a term used to describe a situation where a user spends too much time on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, instagram) such that it negatively affects other aspects of his or her daily life like school, work or relationship with others (Walker, 2011). Addiction as described by the American Psychological Association refers to a compulsive behaviour that leads to negative effects. In other forms of addictions such as drugs, gambling, video gaming, overeating etc., people feel bound to particular activities such that they become harmful habits, which then obstructs other important activities in their lives and this can be said of people who use social media excessively.

HYPOTHESIS

- The level of usage of internet and social media
- The level of negative effects due to over utilization of internet and social media.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

The study was conducted among the under graduated students from different states. Data were collected through in depth interviews from 25 participants who are using internet and social media. Using random sampling method. Among 25 participants 24 are females and one male.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Participants were asked by questions which were framed by the interviewer based on the responses of the participant.

PROCEDURE

The study followed a phenomenological approach to find out the participant's experience and opinion in their own words. Initially, the participants were approached, explained about the purpose of the study and informed about the confidentiality of the information being shared and their right to withdraw from the interview. Afterwards, their informed consent was obtained. In-depth interviews were conducted with each of the participants and the duration of the each interview ranged between 15 minutes to 48 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and points were noted down with their permission. The recordings were later transcribed to verbatim which were transformed into units, patterns and themes using thematic analysis.

Inclusion criteria:

- Students in the age group of 19-24
- Students studying in undergradation
- Students who are Interested to participate in the study.
- Students who is using internet and social media is eligible for the study.
- Individuals from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds are encouraged to participate.

Exclusion criteria:

- Participants with cognitive or developmental impairments hindering their participation.
- Students who abstain from internet usage entirely.
- Individuals unwilling or unable to provide consent for participation.
- Those Undergoing treatment for severe mental health issues unrelated to internet addiction.

Ethical considerations:

Information that will be given the respondents responses and use of them for research purposes only will be strictly confidential. Privacy and confidentiality of the interview, data analysis and dissemination of the findings.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study consisted of a total of 25 participants, with females comprising the majority at 96% (24 participants) and males accounting for only 4% (1 participant). All participants (100%) were unmarried. In terms of age distribution, 72% (18 participants) fell within the 19–21 age group, while the remaining 28% (7 participants) were between 22–24 years. Regarding residence, 68% (17 participants) were from urban areas and 32% (8 participants) were from rural backgrounds.

With respect to factors influencing the usage of internet and social media, health-related concerns emerged as the most prominent factor, with a frequency of 0.9, indicating that a significant number of participants associated internet usage with impacts on their physical and mental well-being. Disadvantages of internet and social media usage were also highly reported (0.8), followed by procrastination and informational support, both with a frequency of 0.7, suggesting that while students recognize the informational benefits, they also experience delays in productivity. Advantages of internet usage were noted with a frequency of 0.6, and socialisation was reported at 0.4, reflecting moderate acknowledgment of its role in connecting with others. Trust issues were identified with a frequency of 0.3, while time management challenges were relatively lower at 0.2. Waste of money was the least reported factor, with a frequency of 0.08, indicating that financial concerns were not a major issue for most participants in relation to internet and social media usage.

4.1 Results of Descriptive Statics of Study Variables

Table 4.1: Percentage and number of people across different demographic variables.

Variables	n	%
Gender		
Male	1	4
Female	24	96
Marital status		
Married	0	0
Unmarried	25	100
Age		
19-21	18	72%
22-24	7	28%
Residence		
Urban	17	68%
Rural	8	32%

Table 1 shows the percentage and number of people across different demographic variables such as gender, marital status, age and residence. Total number of participants in the study was 25. Out of which 4% were males. 96% were females. 100 % people were unmarried. Age range of 19 -21 had 72% of participants, 22-24 consisted of 28% of participants. 68% of participants were urban and 32% of participants were rural from a population of 20.

Table 4.2 : Frequency of factors which indicates in the usage of internet and social media.

FACTORS	FREQUENCY
Advantages	0.6
Disadvantages	0.8
Health	0.9
procrastination	0.7
Time management	0.2
Trust	0.3
Waste of money	0.08
Socialisation	0.4
Informational support	0.7

The study was conducted to understand the level of internet and social media usage among students, along with their opinions and the negative effects associated with overuse. The findings indicate that several factors contribute to increased engagement and potential addiction. Features such as easy accessibility, availability of diverse applications, entertainment content, and personalized information play a significant role in attracting users and encouraging prolonged usage. Students often engage with the internet for academic purposes, entertainment, stress relief, and leisure, making it an integral part of their daily routine.

The advantages of internet and social media usage are widely acknowledged, particularly in terms of informational support, ease of communication, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Online platforms provide access to educational resources, courses, and career opportunities, while also enabling individuals to build networks and showcase their skills. Additionally, digital technologies simplify everyday activities such as attending online classes, reading news, shopping, ordering food, booking tickets, and making financial transactions. These conveniences make life more efficient and accessible, especially for students managing multiple responsibilities.

At the same time, the increasing reliance on online activities such as gaming and shopping contributes to excessive screen time and reduced physical activity. While online games can be engaging and creative, they may also lead to addictive behaviors and, in some cases, negatively affect mental well-being. Similarly, online shopping offers affordability and convenience but may reduce real-world social interactions and encourage sedentary habits.

Several negative consequences of excessive internet and social media usage were identified. Procrastination emerged as a major issue, where individuals delay important tasks due to distractions and constant online engagement. This behavior is often linked to stress and is sometimes used as a coping mechanism to avoid responsibilities. Financial aspects were also noted, as individuals tend to spend money on data usage and online services without much consideration, although such spending may be justified when used for productive purposes.

Another significant concern is de-socialization, where individuals become less engaged in face-to-face interactions and real-life relationships. Increased online communication can sometimes lead to neglect of immediate social environments, contributing to social anxiety and reduced interpersonal skills. Trust

issues also arise in online interactions, as anonymity and fake identities can lead to deception, making users vulnerable to exploitation.

Excessive internet use also has notable physical and mental health implications. Prolonged screen time can result in issues such as eye strain, headaches, sleep disturbances, and reduced physical activity, which may further lead to conditions like obesity and musculoskeletal discomfort. Mental health concerns include stress, depression, low self-esteem, and social anxiety. Sleep deprivation, in particular, is a common issue due to late-night usage of devices.

To address these challenges, several preventive measures can be adopted. At the individual level, self-regulation and awareness are crucial. Engaging in alternative activities such as reading, physical exercise, social interaction, and mindfulness practices like yoga and meditation can help reduce dependency on digital devices. Educational institutions also play a key role by creating awareness about the responsible use of internet and social media, highlighting both advantages and disadvantages, and encouraging participation in physical and creative activities.

Overall, while the internet and social media offer numerous benefits that enhance learning and connectivity, their excessive use can lead to significant negative consequences. Therefore, a balanced approach, supported by self-discipline and institutional guidance, is essential to ensure healthy and productive usage among students.

The thematic analysis indicates that excessive internet and social media use has numerous physical and psychological impacts on participants, including increased stress, sleeplessness, anxiety, low self-esteem, and a poor self-image. While the internet and social media offer several benefits, their impact largely depends on how individuals use them. Informational support, self-realization, motivation, and awareness programs can play a crucial role in helping individuals reduce and overcome excessive usage.

V. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study aimed to understand the level of internet and social media usage and the negative effects associated with their overuse among students. It was conducted with 25 participants, of whom 24 were female and one was male, using in-depth interview methods for data collection. The thematic analysis revealed that most participants engaged in excessive internet use, which led to both advantages and disadvantages. Overuse was found to disrupt daily activities, contribute to procrastination, financial issues, and de-socialization, and negatively affect both physical and mental health. However, the findings also suggest that awareness programs, informational support, and self-realization strategies can help mitigate these negative effects.

The study recommends that future research should involve a larger and more gender-balanced sample to improve the generalizability of the findings. It also emphasizes the importance of family support programs that provide resources, counseling, and guidance to enhance parenting skills, communication, conflict resolution, and stress management. Additionally, educating students about cybersecurity and the risks of excessive internet use can encourage more responsible online behavior. Finally, improving access to affordable and accessible mental health services for adolescents and their families—through increased funding, reduced waiting times, and expanded telehealth options—can further support individuals in managing and reducing excessive internet and social media use.

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