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Research Paper

Effects of Internet Addiction among Male and Female College Students

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of internet use among college students has raised concerns about the psychological and behavioral implications of excessive online engagement. This study investigates the effects of internet addiction among male and female college students in Anand, using the standardized Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Kimberly Young (1998). A sample of 200 students (100 males and 100 females) was selected using stratified random sampling from various colleges in the region. The study found a higher prevalence of Internet addiction among female students compared to males, likely due to differences in usage patterns and psychological factors. Additionally, students from urban areas exhibited significantly higher levels of Internet addiction than their rural counterparts. However, no significant interaction effect was observed between gender and residential area on Internet addiction levels among college students.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Gender, College students and Area*

Internet addiction is characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges, or behaviors related to computer use and Internet access that lead to impairment or distress. Internet addiction is the belief that people can become so dependent on the use of their mobile phones or other electronic devices that they lose control over their own behavior and suffer negative consequences. A new study published in the latest issue of Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking has found that a shocking 6 percent of the world's population now suffers from Internet addiction.

Internet is an umbrella term for a fusion of networks. According to Okunna and Omenugha (2013), internet is a combination of thousands of computer networks sending and receiving data from all over the world. It is a vast source of information that is constantly changing and expanding. Since its inception in the 1960s, it has grown immensely and is now used by over 400 million people all over the world, from those in commercial and educational institutions to individual consumers.

There is much debate in the scientific community about whether excessive internet use can be classified as a true addiction. In an addiction to substances such as drugs or alcohol,

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consumption ceases being pleasurable but continues and is difficult to escape even as the likelihood of harm to the body and life mounts. In the case of internet use, there is no clear point at which being online becomes non-pleasurable for most individuals. In part for this reason, behavioral "addictions," including using the internet, remain controversial: Experts debate where the line should be drawn between passionate absorption in any activity say, devoting a lot of time to playing the cello or reading books and being stuck in a rut of compulsivity that stops being useful and detrimentally affects other areas of life.

Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) is defined as problematic Internet use. It is generally defined as problematic, compulsive use of the Internet, which results in significant impairment of a person's functioning in various aspects of life over a long period of time. Young people are at particular risk of developing Internet Addiction Disorder. Case studies highlight students whose academic performance declines as they spend more and more time online. Some also experience health consequences from sleep loss. Because they stay up later and later to chat online, for social network status updates or to progress further in a game.

According to Sarkis (2014), the diagnostic criteria for Internet Gaming Disorder should include five of the following criteria to be met within one year:

1. 1.Preoccupation or obsession with Internet games.
2. Withdrawal symptoms when not playing Internet games.
3. A build-up of tolerance i.e. more time needs to be spent playing the games.
4. The person has tried to stop or curb playing Internet games, but has failed to do so.
5. The person has had a loss of interest in other life activities, such as hobbies.
6. A person has had continued overuse of Internet games even with the knowledge of how much they impact a person‘s life.
7. The person lies to others about his or her Internet game usage.
8. The person uses Internet games to relieve anxiety or guilt–it is a way to escape.
9. The person has lost or put at risk an opportunity or relationship because of Internet games.

But, alongside, Young (1996) who gets the credit of bringing the problem of Internet Addiction into the limelight for researches, proposed the following diagnostic criteria:

- Preoccupation: One thinks constantly about previous online activity or keeps looking forward to the next online session. Some people crave for time on the Internet the way a smoker craves for a cigarette.
- Increased use: One needs to spend increasing amounts of time online to achieve satisfaction.
- Inability to stop: One can't cut back on one‘s Internet use, even after several attempts. Some people can't stop visiting chat rooms while at the office, even though they know their bosses are monitoring the sites they visit.
- Withdrawal symptoms: One feels restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when one attempts to stop or cut down Internet use.
- Lost sense of time: Every One lets time slip by occasionally, while on the Internet.
- Risky behaviors: One jeopardizes a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity, because of Internet use.
- Lies: This includes lying to family members, a therapist, or others to conceal the extent of one‘s involvement with the Internet. Someone who's seeing a therapist for depression might not tell the therapist about one‘s Internet use.

- Escape to the Internet: One is using the Internet as a way to avoid thinking about problems, or to allay depression or feelings of helplessness.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jain, Shubra (2022) The researcher conducted a study on internet addiction among teenagers using smartphones which was followed by another cross-sectional study among English medium students of classes 9 to 12 in Uttar Pradesh, which included 1020 participants, of whom 57 were still Didn't have internet exposure till now. However, Internet addiction was observed. The prevalence of Internet addiction was significantly associated with increasing age, with 44.9% in the 17–19 age group, compared to 32.1% in the 14-16 age group. The results also revealed that internet addiction was higher among male participants (40.6%) than female participants (30.6%).

A study by Teo and Lims (1997) in Singapore proposed that there are differences between boys and girls in terms of technology. They indicated that Internet users in Singapore were predominantly male, with only 11 percent of Internet users being female. Their study also found that women and men engaged in different activities. Females spend more time on the Internet for messaging activities and promotional campaigns, while males spend more time on downloading and shopping activities. Similarly, Sherman, End, Kraan, Cole, Campbell, Birchmeyer, and Klausher (2000) argued that college males were found to be more proficient and comfortable using computer technology and the Internet than their female classmates.

A study conducted in India by Bhagat (2012) found a significant difference between males and females on Internet addiction. In contrast, Chiu, Hong and Chiu (2013) found that female college students in Taiwan were more likely to be addicted to the Internet, especially through their smartphones.

Using Young's original criteria, users were divided into groups: 74.5% as moderate users, 24.8% as possible addicts, and 0.7% as addicts. It was reported that moderate users and potential addicts mostly use the Internet for social networking, educational purposes, chatting, e-mailing, gaming, downloading media files, and pornography, while the purpose of using the Internet for addicts was significantly different. They were more engaged in social networking, chatting and downloading media files. Most of the addicts mostly use the internet in the evening and night compared to other users who use it in the morning and afternoon.

Objectives

- To examine Internet addiction among male and female students.
- To investigate Internet addiction among urban and rural students.

Hypotheses

- Ho_1.There will be no significant difference between male and female student references to Internet Addiction.
- Ho_2.There will be no significant difference between Urban and Rural area student references to the Internet Addiction.
- H_{O3}.There will be no interactional effect between gender and area with reference to Internet Addiction.

Research Design

The main aim of this study is to get information about the students. Internet Addiction creature another important variables like gender and types of Area

Table No.1 2 x 3 factorial research designs

(N=200)

Male 100		Female 100	
Urban 50	Rural50	Urban 50	Rural50

Variables of the study

Sr. No.	**Name of Variable**	**Nature of Variables**	**Levels of Variables**	**Level Name of Variables**
1.	Gender	Independent Variable	2	Male Female
2.	Area	Independent Variable	3	Urban and Rural
3.	Internet Addiction.	Dependent Variable	1	Scores of Various Level of Internet Addiction.

Control variables

1. Only Anand district student were selected for the present study.
2. The sample was drawn from Gujarat State hence it can be not applicable to the whole of India.
3. While selecting the sample religion is not taken into consideration, so religious-wise differences cannot be inferred from the data.

Sample

Research work 200 male and female respondents from a college in Anand district were taken and simple random sampling method was used for sample selection. All the respondents have been recruited from the colleges of Anand district. Out of which 100 male respondents were students from urban and rural areas and 100 female respondents were students from urban and rural areas.

Tools

The following research tools were used in the present study:

1. **Personal Data Sheet:** The investigator used a personal data sheet to collect information regarding types of gender, Area, and type of faculty.
2. **Internet Addiction Scale:** Internet Addiction Test: Young (1998) introduced a widely recognized instrument for evaluating internet addiction. This assessment tool comprises 20 items, each scored on a scale of 0 to 5. The cumulative score spans from 0 to 100, which is then categorized as follows: a score of 0-19 corresponds to no addiction, 20-49signifies mild addiction, 50-79 indicates moderate addiction and a score of 80-100 represents severe addiction.

Statistical analysis

In this study, 'F' test was used for statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No. 1 Means and SDs of overall Internet Addiction concerning gender and Area (N=200)

Independent variable		Mean	SD	N
Male	**Urban**	60.14	7.27	50
	Rural	52.34	14.44	50
Female	**Urban**	62.12	9.30	50
	Rural	56.96	8.08	50

Table No.2 ANOVA Summary of overall Internet Addiction with reference to gender and Area. (N=200)

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean sum of squares	F	Sign. Level
Gender (A)	544.50	1	544.50	5.27	**0.05**
Area (B)	2099.52	1	2099.52	20.32	**0.01**
Gender * Area(AXB)	87.120	1	87.12	.843	**NS**
SSW (Error)	20250.440	196	103.32		-
SST	693232.000	199			
NS= Not Significant 0.05 = 3.89 0.01 = 6.76					

Table No. 3 Difference between the mean score of overall Internet addiction with reference to gender and Area (N=200)

Independent variable	N	Mean (M)	Difference between mean
Male	50	56.24	3.3
Female	50	59.54	
Urban	50	61.13	6.48
Rural	50	54.65	

Gender and Internet Addiction

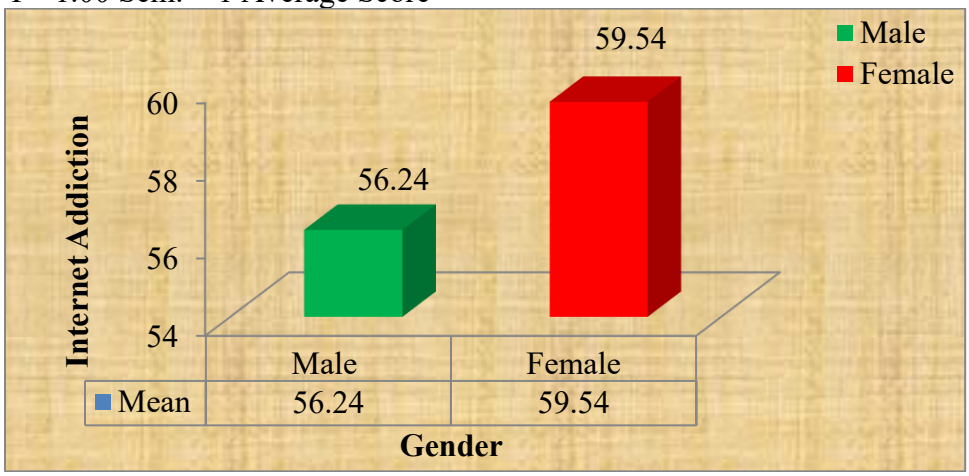
To study the subject of there is a significant difference or not between the Internet Addiction and gender. Null hypothesis No.1 was constructed.

The hypothesis developed by the researcher when 'F' test was used to test the effect of Internet Addiction on gender can be clearly seen in table number 2 above. Table no. 3 shows that the mean scores of Internet Addiction of males and females were 56.24 and 59.54 respectively and the difference between the two is 3.3 which is not small. Table no. 2 The mean sum of squared values was 544.50, the F (ANOVA) value was 5.27 and the numerical value was not insignificant and the result is significant at 0.05 levels therefore, hypothesis no1 is rejected with the conclusion that there is a significant effect between women and men on Internet Addiction. Here it was found that women have more habit of using internet than men.

Column No. 1 Chart Showing Mean Scores of Internet Addiction with reference to gender

X = Gender (Male Female)

Y= 1.00 Sem. = 1 Average Score



Area and Internet Addiction

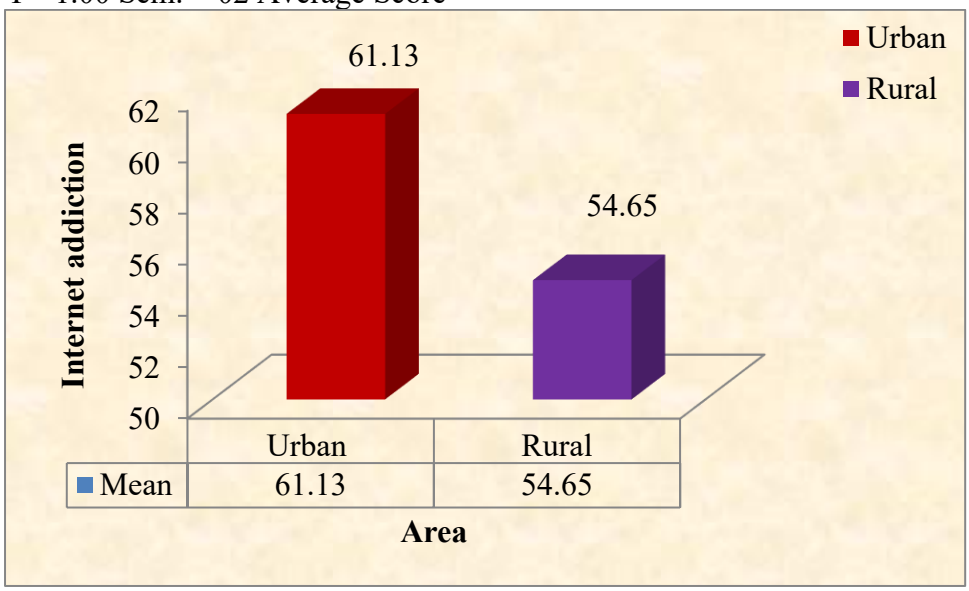
To study on the subject of there is significant difference or not between Internet Addiction and Area. Null hypothesis no.2 was constructed.

The above hypothesis was formulated and 'F' test was applied to test the effect of Internet Addiction on learning flow, which can be seen from the above table. Table no. 3 shows that the mean score of propensity towards Internet Addiction among urban and rural college students men was 61.13 and 54.65 respectively and the difference between the two is 6.48 which is very high.Table no. The mean sum of the values of the 2 areas was 2099.52, and their 'F' (ANOVA) value was 20.32 and significant at the 0.01 level. Consequently, hypothesis number 2 is rejected. Here it was found that urban students have more habit of using internet than rural students.

Column No. 02 Column showing mean scores of Internet Addiction with reference to Area

X = Area (Urban and Rural)

Y= 1.00 Sem. = 02 Average Score



Interactional Effect

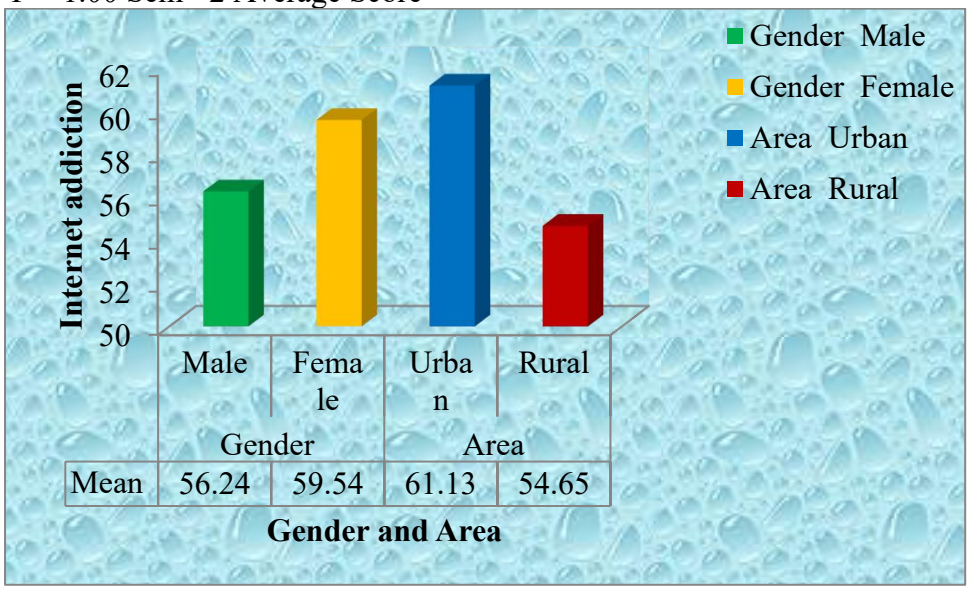
When the 'F' test was used to test the effect of Internet Addiction on gender and Area, the hypothesis developed by the researcher can be seen from the above table number three. Table no.2 The Mean sum of square values was 87.120. F (ANOVA) value was .84 which is not significant at any level. Here above hypothesis is accepted. Based on the results here it can be said that there is no statistically significant interaction effect between gender and area.

Column No. 03 Figure showing mean score of Internet Addiction with reference to interaction on of the gender and Area

X = Gender (Male and Female)

Area (Urban and Rural)

Y = 1.00 Sem =2 Average Score



Findings:

- There was a greater prevalence of Internet addiction among females than among men in the present study; these differences are often attributed to differences in usage patterns, motivations, and psychological factors between the genders.
- A significant difference has been found between urban and rural areas in terms of internet addiction, with urban area students having a higher degree of internet addiction than rural students.
- There is no significant interaction effect was found between gender and area on internet addiction among college students.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed notable differences in internet addiction based on gender and location. Female students demonstrated a higher prevalence of internet addiction compared to their male counterparts, which may be linked to differing usage patterns, motivations, and psychological factors. Additionally, students from urban areas exhibited significantly higher levels of internet addiction than those from rural areas. However, no significant interaction effect between gender and area was observed, indicating that these factors independently influence internet addiction among college students.

Suggestions for Future Research

College going students were included in the present study. It is considered equally interesting to further study individuals of different age groups such as elderly people and in fact young children, because of the changed world post-Covid-19, internet and smartphones have become not only the new normal, but the norm. In fact a compulsion for all. Therefore, smartphone and internet addiction can be studied across eras as well. In this study, the upper middle and socioeconomic status of the society has not been taken into consideration. Based on this condition can also be studied. Internet addiction is one of the biggest concerns of parents and teachers with children. Therefore, apart from parents, one can also study on the basis of government and private schools.

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Conflict of Interest
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