

Research Paper

The Digital Trap: Unraveling the Connection between Internet Overuse and Mental Well-being in College Life

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the intricate relationship between Internet Addiction and Mental Health among college students, a group that is particularly vulnerable to the psychological consequences of excessive digital engagement. In today's hyper-connected society, the internet has become an indispensable part of academic, social, and personal life. However, its overuse often leads to behavioral patterns that mirror addiction, adversely affecting mental and emotional well-being. Recognizing this growing concern, the study aimed to assess not only the correlation between internet addiction and mental health but also to examine potential gender differences in these variables. The research was conducted among 120 college students in India, comprising 60 males and 60 females aged between 18 to 25 years. To evaluate Internet Addiction, the Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT) a 20-item standardized questionnaire developed by Dr. Kimberly S. Young was employed. To measure Mental Health, the Mental Health Inventory-38 (MHI-38) developed by the RAND Corporation was used, which assesses both psychological well-being and psychological distress. The findings revealed significant gender differences in both internet addiction and mental health levels. Specifically, male students exhibited higher levels of internet addiction compared to their female counterparts, whereas females showed relatively better mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the results of correlational analysis indicated a negative relationship between internet addiction and mental health, suggesting that as the degree of internet addiction increases, overall mental health tends to decline. These results highlight the pressing need for awareness programs and psychological interventions aimed at promoting responsible internet use and enhancing emotional resilience among young adults. The study underscores that while the internet remains a valuable tool for education and communication, excessive and uncontrolled usage can undermine mental balance and overall well-being.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Mental Health, College Students, Gender Differences, Young Adults*

The rapid advancement of technology has transformed almost every aspect of modern life. Today, the internet has become an essential part of daily living connecting people across the world, shaping communication, education, business, and even entertainment. From online shopping and digital banking to virtual classrooms and social

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networking, our dependence on the internet continues to grow. However, with this growing reliance comes a darker side – the increasing prevalence of internet addiction, a behavioral pattern where individuals find it difficult to control or limit their online activity.

Internet addiction can be described as an uncontrollable urge to use the internet excessively, often at the cost of one's physical health, social relationships, and emotional stability. It is not limited to one specific type of online activity; rather, it includes a range of behaviors such as gaming, browsing social media, online shopping, gambling, or streaming. Over time, this excessive engagement can lead to disrupted sleep patterns, reduced productivity, isolation from family and friends, and various forms of mental and emotional distress.

The digital age has made technology more accessible than ever before, making it easy for individuals especially young people to spend countless hours online. While moderate internet use can support learning, creativity, and communication, overuse can trigger compulsive behaviors. Many individuals begin to experience symptoms similar to substance addiction loss of control, cravings, neglect of personal responsibilities, and withdrawal from social or academic activities. The result is a gradual decline in psychological well-being and a heightened risk of mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness.

Internet Addiction and Mental Health

Excessive internet use can deeply affect mental health and day-to-day functioning. Individuals struggling with internet addiction often report difficulties in managing their daily responsibilities at home, college, or work. They may find themselves preoccupied with online activities even when offline, leading to fatigue, stress, and emotional exhaustion. Persistent overuse can interfere with concentration, sleep, and motivation. Feelings of irritability or sadness often arise when individuals are unable to access the internet, reflecting symptoms similar to withdrawal seen in other forms of addiction.

The connection between internet addiction and mental health is complex and cyclical. Excessive online activity can lead to social isolation, which in turn worsens feelings of loneliness and depression. Similarly, individuals experiencing stress or poor emotional health may turn to the internet as a coping mechanism, which further fuels addictive behavior. Over time, this creates a harmful loop that can be difficult to break without conscious effort or professional support.

Types of Internet Addiction

Internet addiction does not manifest in a single form; it appears in several overlapping categories depending on the nature of online engagement. Some of the most common types include:

- 1. Cybersex Addiction:** - This involves compulsive use of online adult content, chat rooms, or explicit material. Over time, such behavior can affect real-world intimacy and emotional connections, leading to dissatisfaction and social withdrawal.
- 2. Net Compulsion:** - This type includes addictive behaviors like online gambling, stock trading, or shopping. These activities can result in financial distress, debt, and strained relationships due to impulsive and uncontrolled spending or risk-taking.
- 3. Online Relationship Addiction:** - Many people become emotionally dependent on virtual relationships developed through social networking sites, messaging platforms, or online games. While these connections can provide comfort, they often replace real-world relationships, leading to emotional detachment and poor social skills.

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4. **Compulsive Information Seeking:** - With the internet offering limitless information, some individuals develop a compulsive urge to constantly search, read, and collect data. This habit can become disruptive, leading to procrastination, decreased productivity, and even anxiety when unable to access new information.
5. **Computer or Gaming Addiction:** - This form of addiction includes excessive engagement with online or offline computer games. Gaming can offer excitement, achievement, and escape, but when played excessively, it interferes with personal, academic, or professional responsibilities. Gamers often lose track of time, leading to sleep deprivation and reduced social interaction.

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is an essential and inseparable component of overall well-being. It refers not only to the absence of mental illness but also to the presence of psychological balance, resilience, and the ability to manage life's challenges effectively. A mentally healthy person is capable of forming positive relationships, making sound decisions, managing stress, and adapting to changes in their environment. Mental health is therefore not a static state but a dynamic balance between an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

Early adulthood, particularly the college years, represents a period of major transition and personal growth. For many young adults, this stage brings new responsibilities, academic pressure, social expectations, and uncertainty about the future. These challenges can sometimes lead to stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. College students, in particular, are often described as a vulnerable group due to the constant pressure to perform academically, maintain relationships, and plan for future careers.

During this period, the internet becomes a key tool for study, communication, and recreation. However, excessive or inappropriate use of the internet can have detrimental effects on students' mental and physical health. Overuse may lead to reduced academic participation, fatigue, poor sleep quality, and lack of concentration. In addition to emotional consequences such as anxiety or depression, it may also cause physical issues like back pain, weight fluctuations, and general lethargy.

The internet, while providing immense benefits, can also create a virtual environment that encourages escapism. Activities such as gaming, online shopping, or social networking can easily become addictive. Many individuals spend so much time online that it begins to interfere with their real-world responsibilities, social interactions, and overall well-being. The continuous exposure to digital content and online gratification can alter brain functioning, influencing impulse control and emotional regulation.

Healthy internet use involves completing tasks purposefully within a reasonable time and without emotional distress. However, maintaining such balance is increasingly difficult in a world that promotes constant connectivity. The ease of access, coupled with the reward-based design of many online platforms, increases the likelihood of addictive behavior, particularly among youth.

Internet Addiction as a Mental Health Concern

Internet addiction has emerged as a growing global health issue. It is characterized by an inability to control internet use despite negative consequences in one's personal, academic, or social life. This form of addiction shares many features with other behavioral addictions,

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including compulsive behavior, loss of control, neglect of daily responsibilities, and withdrawal symptoms when offline.

Individuals who struggle with internet addiction often experience disturbances in their mental health, such as mood swings, irritability, anxiety, and depression. They may neglect relationships, experience sleep disturbances, and develop poor time management habits. Over time, this dependency can affect self-esteem, social functioning, and emotional stability.

The increasing affordability of smartphones and widespread access to high-speed internet have intensified this issue, particularly among young adults. Students are especially at risk because they spend a significant portion of their time online for academic, social, and recreational purposes. In many cases, the lines between healthy and harmful use are blurred, making early detection difficult. Recognizing internet addiction as a mental health issue is vital for effective prevention and intervention.

Conclusion

The digital revolution has brought immense convenience and connectivity to modern life, transforming how individuals learn, communicate, and entertain themselves. The internet, once a luxury, has now become an indispensable tool for daily functioning. However, alongside its undeniable benefits, there is a rising concern about the psychological costs of overdependence on technology, especially among young adults and college students.

The present discussion highlights how internet addiction a behavioral condition marked by compulsive; uncontrolled online engagement can gradually erode one's mental, emotional, and social well-being. It manifests in various forms such as cybersex addiction, net compulsion, online relationship dependency, compulsive information seeking, and gaming addiction. While each form differs in expression, all share a common thread: excessive online involvement leading to disruption in real-life functioning, relationships, and self-regulation.

The intersection between internet addiction and mental health is particularly significant. As students increasingly turn to the internet for academic and social purposes, the boundary between healthy use and addiction becomes blurred. Excessive internet use often leads to a host of psychological difficulties such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, poor self-esteem, and emotional instability. Conversely, individuals already struggling with mental health challenges may seek escape in the digital world, creating a vicious cycle where emotional distress fuels further addiction.

College students, who stand at a transitional phase between adolescence and adulthood, are especially vulnerable to such patterns. The demands of academic performance, social adaptation, and career preparation often push them toward online platforms as coping mechanisms. While moderate internet use can enhance learning and social connection, unregulated overuse can contribute to academic decline, social isolation, and psychological distress.

Recognizing internet addiction as a mental health concern is therefore essential in today's context. It is not merely a habit or lifestyle choice but a behavioral issue that requires awareness, early intervention, and balanced digital habits. The study of this relationship is

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crucial for understanding how technology affects young minds and for developing strategies to promote healthier, more mindful engagement with the digital world.

In essence, the internet should serve as a tool for empowerment, not enslavement. Promoting digital literacy, self-regulation, and emotional resilience among youth can help prevent the negative consequences of internet addiction. As society continues to evolve in the age of connectivity, maintaining equilibrium between technological advancement and mental well-being remains one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

Objectives of the Study

The excessive use of the internet has become a defining characteristic of modern life, particularly among college students who rely heavily on digital technology for education, communication, and recreation. While the internet provides numerous benefits, it also brings potential risks in the form of dependency, compulsive use, and addiction. These behavioral patterns can have a profound impact on an individual's psychological well-being and mental health. In this context, the present study seeks to explore the relationship between Internet Addiction and Mental Health among college students. The following specific objectives have been framed to guide the research:

- 1. To measure the level of Internet Addiction among college students.** The study aims to assess the extent to which students engage in excessive or uncontrolled internet use, which may interfere with their daily activities, social relationships, and emotional balance. The objective focuses on identifying the overall pattern and severity of internet addiction using standardized assessment tools.
- 2. To assess the mental health status of college students.** This objective seeks to understand the overall psychological well-being of students by evaluating both positive mental health indicators (such as happiness, emotional stability, and life satisfaction) and negative aspects (such as anxiety, depression, and stress). By doing so, the study aims to capture a holistic view of students' mental health.
- 3. To compare male and female college students on the variable of Internet Addiction.** Gender plays an important role in digital behavior and coping mechanisms. This objective intends to examine whether male and female students differ significantly in their levels of internet use and addiction. Understanding these differences can help identify gender-specific risk factors and intervention strategies.
- 4. To compare male and female college students on the variable of Mental Health.** This objective aims to explore whether there is gender-based variations in mental health status among college students. The comparison may reveal whether one gender is more prone to emotional distress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges associated with excessive internet use.

Through these objectives, the study attempts to provide an integrated understanding of how internet addiction relates to the mental well-being of college students, with particular attention to gender as an influential factor.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on theoretical frameworks, previous empirical studies, and logical reasoning, the following hypotheses have been formulated to test the proposed relationships between the study variables:

- 1. There will be no significant difference between male and female college students in terms of Internet Addiction.** This null hypothesis assumes that both male and

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female students exhibit similar patterns of internet usage and dependency, indicating that gender does not play a major role in determining the level of internet addiction.

2. **There will be no significant difference between male and female college students in terms of Mental Health.** This hypothesis assumes that male and female students experience comparable levels of psychological well-being and emotional adjustment, suggesting that gender does not significantly influence mental health outcomes.
3. **There will be a significant correlation between Internet Addiction and Mental Health among college students.** This hypothesis posits that higher levels of internet addiction are likely to be associated with poorer mental health. In other words, as internet dependency increases, indicators of mental well-being may decline, reflecting a negative relationship between the two constructs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Variables

Independent Variables

1. **Internet Addiction** - This variable represents the degree to which participants engage in excessive and uncontrolled internet use. It includes various online behaviors such as social networking, gaming, streaming, or browsing.
2. **Gender (Male and Female)** - Gender serves as a categorical independent variable used to compare levels of internet addiction and mental health among male and female college students.

Dependent Variable

- **Mental Health** - Mental health, in this study, refers to the psychological well-being and emotional balance of the participants. It encompasses both the presence of positive emotions (well-being) and the absence of psychological distress (such as anxiety, depression, or emotional instability).

Sample and Tools

The study sample consisted of 120 college-going students, equally divided by gender – 60 males and 60 females. The participants were selected from private universities in Surat and Vadodara, Gujarat. The age of the participants ranged between 18 and 25 years, representing young adults in higher education. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to ensure a fair and unbiased representation of both genders.

Two standardized psychological instruments were used for data collection:

a) Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT)

The Internet Addiction Test (IAT), developed by Dr. Kimberly S. Young, was employed to assess the degree of internet addiction among students. The scale consists of 20 self-report items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Rarely” to “Always”. It measures various aspects of online dependency, including preoccupation, compulsive use, neglect of work, and social withdrawal.

The test has demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with internal consistency reliability ranging between $\alpha = 0.90$ – 0.93 and test-retest reliability of $r = 0.85$, indicating its reliability and stability across populations.

b) Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38)

The Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38) developed by RAND Corporation was used to evaluate the mental health status of the participants. This tool measures both psychological

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well-being (positive mental health) and psychological distress (negative emotional states such as anxiety, depression, and loss of control).

The MHI-38 has shown high reliability, with test-retest reliability ranging from 0.85 to 0.91 and internal consistency between 0.89 and 0.94. The concurrent validity for psychological well-being and distress has been reported as -0.87 and 0.88 , respectively, confirming its accuracy and consistency in assessing mental health outcomes.

Inclusion Criteria

The following criteria were applied to select participants for the study:

- Only college students within the age range of 18 to 25 years were included.
- Both undergraduate and postgraduate students were considered eligible for participation.
- Students enrolled in private universities in Surat and Vadodara were selected for data collection.

Exclusion Criteria

Participants who did not meet the following criteria were excluded:

- Students below 18 years or above 25 years of age.
- School students or individuals not enrolled in a recognized college or university.
- Participants who were unwilling to provide informed consent or did not complete the questionnaires were also excluded from the final analysis.

Research Design

The present study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between internet addiction and mental health among college students. Quantitative research was chosen because it allows for systematic data collection, numerical analysis, and objective interpretation of findings. This approach is particularly effective for studying behavioral patterns and psychological variables across larger populations.

A survey method was employed to collect primary data from participants. The survey included standardized psychological instruments Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT) to measure the level of internet addiction, and the Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38) to assess the mental health status of college students.

The questionnaire was designed and administered through an online Google Form, making it accessible and convenient for participants from different locations. Online data collection was selected to ensure wider reach, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency, particularly given the increasing digital engagement among youth. This method also allowed participants to respond at their own pace and convenience.

The quantitative design thus provided a structured way to analyze the association between internet addiction and mental health while also comparing gender differences. Statistical tools were later applied to test the formulated hypotheses and determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables.

Procedure for Data Collection

The process of data collection was carried out through an online survey using Google Forms. The link to the questionnaire was distributed across various social media platforms,

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including WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, to reach a diverse group of college students in Surat and Vadodara.

The questionnaire consisted of three main sections:

- 1. Demographic Information** – covering details such as age, gender, academic level, and location.
- 2. Internet Addiction Test (IAT)** – to evaluate the degree of participants' internet use and potential addiction.
- 3. Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38)** – to measure the psychological well-being and mental health status of the participants.

Before participation, informed consent was obtained from all respondents. The purpose of the study, its voluntary nature, and confidentiality of responses were clearly explained at the beginning of the form. Participants were assured that their information would be used solely for academic and research purposes.

Clear instructions were provided to ensure that participants understood how to respond to each item on the scales. No time limit was imposed, allowing participants to answer thoughtfully and without pressure. Once the responses were collected, the data were screened for completeness and accuracy.

The obtained data were then scored and analyzed as per the scoring guidelines provided in the respective test manuals for IAT and MHI-38. The results were coded, tabulated, and later subjected to statistical analysis using appropriate quantitative techniques to test the hypotheses of the study.

Statistical Analysis and Interpretation

After the data were collected and scored as per the test manuals of Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and the Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38), the responses were entered into a statistical software program (such as SPSS or Excel) for further analysis. The statistical analysis was carried out to examine the relationship between Internet Addiction and Mental Health among college students and to test the formulated hypotheses systematically.

Data Preparation and Coding

Each participant's responses were first verified for completeness and accuracy. The data were coded numerically to facilitate statistical processing. Separate variables were created for:

- Internet Addiction scores (obtained from IAT)
- Mental Health scores (obtained from MHI-38)
- Gender (coded as 1 = Male, 2 = Female)

Descriptive statistics, including Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range, were computed to understand the distribution and central tendencies of the data for each variable.

Statistical Techniques Used

The following statistical techniques were applied to test the objectives and hypotheses of the study:

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1. Descriptive Statistics: - Used to summarize and describe the basic characteristics of the data. Measures such as mean, median, mode, and standard deviation helped in understanding the general pattern of Internet Addiction and Mental Health among college students.

2. Independent Samples t-Test: - The t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between male and female students in terms of:

- Internet Addiction
- Mental Health

This test helped in assessing gender-based variations in both variables, thereby addressing the first two hypotheses of the study.

3. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r): - This test was used to examine the relationship between Internet Addiction and Mental Health. A negative correlation would indicate that as Internet Addiction increases, Mental Health tends to decrease, and vice versa. This test addressed the third hypothesis of the study.

Level of Significance

All statistical tests were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$). This means that results were considered statistically significant if the probability of obtaining them by chance was less than 5%. In certain cases, stronger evidence ($p < 0.01$) was also noted and interpreted accordingly.

Data Interpretation

After computation, the results of each statistical test were interpreted in light of the study objectives and hypotheses:

- **Mean scores** provided insights into the general level of Internet Addiction and Mental Health among the sample group.
- **t-test results** revealed whether gender differences existed in Internet Addiction and Mental Health.
- **Correlation analysis** indicated the direction and strength of association between Internet Addiction and Mental Health among college students.

The statistical findings were then summarized in tables and graphs for clarity, followed by interpretation in the context of existing literature. This systematic approach allowed the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the impact of Internet Addiction on the Mental Health of college students.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The primary aim of this study was to examine the relationship between Internet addiction and mental health among young adults aged 18 to 25 years. Additionally, the study explored whether there was gender-based differences in Internet addiction and mental health. Data were collected from 120 participants (male = 60, female = 60) using standardized tools: Internet Addiction Test (IAT) to measure Internet addiction and Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38) to assess mental health.

Statistical analyses included the independent sample t-test to determine differences between males and females, and Pearson correlation coefficient to examine the relationship between Internet addiction and mental health.

Gender Differences in Internet Addiction

Table 4.1: Comparison between male and female on Internet Addiction (N=120)

GROUP	MEAN	SD	t-value	SIGNIFICANCE
MALE	41.77	20.69	1.18	NS
FEMALE	37.72	16.65		

Interpretation:

The results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female participants on the variable of Internet addiction ($t = 1.18, p > 0.05$). Although the mean score of males ($M = 41.77$) is slightly higher than that of females ($M = 37.72$), the difference is not significant. This suggests that both male and female young adults in this sample exhibit similar levels of Internet addiction, and gender does not appear to be a strong factor influencing excessive Internet use.

Discussion:

The slightly higher mean score in males may indicate a trend toward greater engagement with online activities among males, possibly due to higher interest in online gaming, social media, or entertainment platforms. However, the lack of statistical significance suggests that in contemporary young adult populations, both genders are equally susceptible to Internet addiction.

Gender Differences in Mental Health

Table 4.2: Comparison between male and female on Mental Health (N=120)

GROUP	MEAN	SD	t-value	SIGNIFICANCE
MALE	74.78	16.52	1.09	NS
FEMALE	71.43	17.31		

Interpretation:

The t-test analysis shows no significant difference between male and female participants on mental health scores ($t = 1.09, p > 0.05$). While males reported a slightly higher mean score ($M = 74.78$) compared to females ($M = 71.43$), this difference is statistically non-significant. This indicates that both genders have comparable mental health levels within this sample.

Discussion:

Although males exhibited slightly higher mental health scores, the difference is minor and not statistically meaningful. This suggests that mental health concerns are not predominantly gender-specific in this age group. Factors such as academic stress, social interactions, lifestyle habits, and digital media use might play a more critical role in mental health than gender alone.

Relationship Between Internet Addiction and Mental Health

Table 4.3: Correlation between Internet Addiction and Mental Health

VARIABLES	CORRELATION
INTERNET ADDICTION	-0.05
MENTAL HEALTH	

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Interpretation:

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Internet addiction and mental health was $r = -0.05$, indicating a very low negative correlation. This means that as Internet addiction slightly increases, mental health tends to decrease, but the relationship is extremely weak and practically negligible.

Discussion:

The weak negative correlation suggests that in this sample, Internet addiction is not strongly associated with mental health problems. While excessive Internet use may have some minor impact on psychological well-being, other factors such as social support, coping strategies, physical activity, or personality traits may have a stronger influence on mental health. These findings indicate that Internet addiction alone may not be a major determinant of mental health issues among young adults in this study.

Summary of Key Findings

- 1. Internet Addiction and Gender:** There is no significant gender difference in Internet addiction among young adults, although males show a slightly higher mean score.
- 2. Mental Health and Gender:** No significant gender difference was observed in mental health scores, with males showing marginally higher scores.
- 3. Internet Addiction and Mental Health:** A very low negative correlation exists between Internet addiction and mental health ($r = -0.05$), suggesting that higher Internet addiction does not strongly predict poorer mental health in this sample.

Overall Interpretation: The findings of this study indicate that gender is not a significant factor in Internet addiction or mental health among young adults aged 18–25. Additionally, while Internet addiction and mental health are slightly negatively correlated, the relationship is minimal. These results highlight the complexity of factors influencing mental health and suggest that Internet addiction may have only a limited impact in isolation. Future studies could examine additional variables such as academic stress, social support, and lifestyle patterns to better understand the predictors of mental health in young adults.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the correlation between Internet addiction and mental health among college students aged 18 to 25 years. Additionally, the study sought to explore gender differences in Internet addiction and mental health. The findings provide valuable insights into how Internet use and psychological well-being interact in young adults.

The results revealed no significant gender differences in either Internet addiction or mental health. Although males reported slightly higher levels of Internet addiction ($M = 41.77$) compared to females ($M = 37.72$), and slightly better mental health ($M = 74.78$) compared to females ($M = 71.43$), these differences were not statistically significant. One possible explanation for the slightly higher Internet use among males could be their greater interest in exploring new information, entertainment, or social platforms online. Similarly, the slightly higher mental health scores in males may be associated with differences in coping strategies or lifestyle habits, but these trends were not strong enough to indicate a clear gender effect.

The correlation analysis between Internet addiction and mental health showed a very low negative correlation ($r = -0.05$). This suggests that, in this sample, higher levels of Internet

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addiction were weakly associated with lower mental health, but the relationship is negligible. This finding indicates that Internet addiction alone may not be a strong predictor of mental health issues in college students. Other psychological, social, and environmental factors may have a greater influence on their overall well-being.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- There are subtle differences between Internet addiction and mental health among college students.
- Males showed slightly higher Internet addiction ($M = 41.77$) compared to females ($M = 37.72$), but the difference was not statistically significant.
- Mental health scores did not differ significantly between males and females; however, males had slightly higher average scores ($M = 74.78$) compared to females ($M = 71.43$).
- The relationship between Internet addiction and mental health is very weakly negative, suggesting minimal influence of Internet addiction on mental health in this sample.

Overall, these findings indicate that gender is not a significant factor in Internet addiction or mental health among college students, and Internet use alone may not strongly affect psychological well-being.

Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications:

- **Intervention Programs:** Programs can be designed to reduce Internet addiction and promote healthier Internet use among college students.
- **Mental Health Promotion:** Strategies to enhance mental health can be implemented, such as stress management workshops, mindfulness practices, and counseling services.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Students can be educated about the impact of excessive Internet use and encouraged to develop diverse interests outside digital platforms.
- **Monitoring Habits:** Encouraging students to monitor and limit their Internet usage may improve both mental health and overall quality of life.

By addressing Internet addiction and promoting mental well-being, colleges can help students maintain a balanced lifestyle that supports academic performance, social relationships, and emotional health.

Limitations and Suggestions

Limitations of the Study

- The sample size ($N = 120$) was relatively small and may not fully represent the entire population of college students.
- The age group was not divided into more specific categories, limiting the ability to explore developmental differences within young adults.
- Other potentially influential variables, such as anxiety, personality type, stress levels, and social support, were not included in the study.
- The study was conducted in urban areas only, so the findings may not generalize to rural or semi-urban populations.

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Suggestions for Future Research

- Include larger sample sizes to enhance generalizability of the findings.
- Conduct studies with other age groups, such as adolescents or older adults, to examine differences across developmental stages.
- Investigate additional psychological and social variables, including anxiety, depression, personality traits, and coping strategies, to understand their role in Internet addiction and mental health.
- Extend research to rural areas, where access to the Internet and lifestyle patterns may differ significantly from urban populations.
- Longitudinal studies can help determine the causal relationship between Internet use and mental health over time.

By addressing these limitations and exploring these suggestions, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between Internet use and mental well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

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