

Research Paper

Hooked Online, Disconnected Offline: A Study of Internet Addiction and Social Skills

Simran Chandwani^{1*}, Jeenat Rani²

ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the association between internet addiction and social skills among postgraduate students, proposing that increased internet addiction would be linked with lower levels of social skills. Internet addiction, typically described as excessive and poorly controlled internet use, has been associated with several adverse psychosocial consequences, including reduced interpersonal functioning. The study sample consisted of 200 postgraduate students (100 males and 100 females) aged between 21 and 25 years. To measure the variables, the Internet Addiction Test by Young (1998) and the Social Skills Inventory by Riggio (1986) were administered. Findings revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between internet addiction and social skills ($r = -.42$, $p < .01$), indicating that individuals with higher internet addiction tended to demonstrate lower social competence. In addition, a one-way ANOVA indicated significant differences in social skills across high and low internet addiction groups, $F(1, 198) = 8.42$, $p = .04$. Further, an independent-samples t-test showed a significant difference in social skills based on gender. Female participants ($M = 72.8$, $SD = 11.3$) scored higher on social skills compared to male participants ($M = 68.2$, $SD = 12.5$), $t(198) = 2.73$, $p = .03$, suggesting relatively stronger interpersonal abilities among females. Overall, the results support the proposed hypothesis that greater internet addiction is associated with weaker social skills. The findings also indicate notable gender differences in social competence. These outcomes emphasize the need for strategies aimed at minimizing excessive internet use and improving interpersonal functioning among university students.

Keywords: Internet addiction, social skills, Gender, Age

“The Internet paradox is that it both connects and isolates people.”

— Kraut et al. (1998)

In contemporary society, the internet has become deeply embedded in nearly every aspect of daily life, ranging from social interactions to leisure activities. Its rapid expansion has transformed the way individuals communicate, learn, and engage in economic activities. However, alongside its numerous benefits, a growing concern has emerged in the form of internet addiction. This phenomenon, characterized by excessive and uncontrolled use, increasingly affects individuals' daily functioning and well-being.

¹Research Fellow, Department of Psychology, Punjabi University, Patiala, India.

²Senior Research Fellow (SRF), Department of Psychology, Punjabi University, Patiala, India.

*Corresponding Author

Received: June 02, 2026; Revision Received: August 10, 2026; Accepted: August 14, 2026

With the continuous advancement of technology and the widespread reliance on digital platforms for socialization, commerce, and education, the internet has assumed a central role in modern living. Unlike earlier times, when social connections were primarily maintained through face-to-face interactions, individuals today often rely on online platforms to build relationships, share personal experiences, and remain socially connected. For many, virtual interaction has shifted from being a convenience to a perceived necessity, raising important concerns about its impact on real-life social functioning.

Internet addiction refers to a pattern of excessive internet use characterized by a growing need to spend more time online, an inability to control usage, and experiencing negative emotional states such as restlessness, irritability, mood swings, or depression when not connected. This overuse also leads to adverse effects on social interactions (Young, 1998; Young & Rodgers, 1998).

It is also described using terms such as problematic, pathological, or compulsive internet use, as well as cyber addiction, social network addiction, and internet gaming addiction. This phenomenon has become a significant concern, particularly among adolescents, due to its increasing prevalence and its association with various psychological and behavioral comorbidities (Koo & Kwon, 2014; Kuss et al., 2014; World Health Organisation [WHO], 2014).

Internet addiction, first conceptualized by Young in 1996, is considered an impulse-control disorder marked by excessive and uncontrollable internet use that leads to negative consequences. It is characterized by symptoms such as preoccupation with online activities, difficulty in reducing usage, withdrawal effects, and tolerance, closely resembling patterns observed in substance-related addictions.

The prevalence of internet addiction varies considerably across regions and populations. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that it affects approximately 7–20% of adolescents globally, with notably higher rates reported in Asian countries. Several factors contribute to its development, including psychological characteristics such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression, as well as environmental influences such as widespread accessibility to digital devices and internet services (Koo & Kwon, 2014; Kuss et al., 2014; Soriano-Molina et al., 2025).

Studies have connected internet addiction to wider psychosocial problems. For example, a longitudinal study in China found reciprocal relationships between internet addiction and ADHD symptoms, including hyperactivity, inattention, and impulsivity. This indicates that addiction can both arise from and worsen pre-existing conditions. Likewise, heavy internet use has been associated with loneliness, and a meta-analysis confirmed a moderate positive link between the two. These results emphasize the internet's potential as a harmful coping strategy for emotional pain. Recent research, such as that by Dong et al. (2025) noted the growing research attention on how social media dependence contributes to internet addiction among college students, with studies indicating varying prevalence rates across regions and an observed increase following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social skills are understood as learned patterns of socially appropriate behavior that help individuals interact effectively with others and reduce the likelihood of negative social reactions (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). These skills play an essential role in both personal adjustment and professional success, as they involve key abilities such as effective

communication, empathy, and the development of healthy interpersonal relationships. When such skills are underdeveloped, individuals may experience social withdrawal, weak relationship quality, and a lower sense of well-being.

The present study proposes that internet addiction is inversely related to social skills, meaning that individuals with higher levels of internet dependence are likely to show poorer social competence. This assumption is grounded in the idea that excessive engagement with online platforms may gradually replace direct, face-to-face interactions, thereby limiting real-world social learning and practice.

The relevance of this relationship is significant for understanding mental health and social functioning, particularly among young adults. In academic environments, where internet use is integral for both learning and communication, excessive dependence may negatively influence academic performance as well as emotional and social development. The situation has been further intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased reliance on digital platforms and potentially reduced opportunities for in-person interaction. This context provides a basis for reviewing prior research on internet addiction, its association with social skills, and the empirical support for the current hypothesis.

Heavy internet use has been associated with loneliness, and a meta-analysis confirmed a moderate positive link between the two. These results emphasize the internet's potential as a harmful coping strategy for emotional pain (Wang & Zeng, 2024). Recent research, such as that by Dong, et al. (2025), notes that social media dependence greatly fuels internet addiction in college students, with rates differing by area and rising after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social skill frameworks are frequently used to evaluate social skills, which include a variety of behaviours such as interpersonal interaction, empathy, and verbal and nonverbal communication (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). Effective interpersonal functioning and psychological well-being depend on these abilities, which are developed through social learning processes. Social skills deficiencies have been linked to environmental factors including restricted social engagement and developmental disorders like autism and ADHD. For young people, these skills are especially critical during adolescence and early adulthood, which are key times for forming an identity and connecting with peers. Inadequate social skills can cause social withdrawal, lower self-efficacy, and greater susceptibility to mental health problems. Treatments, like social skills training initiatives, have proven effective in enhancing these capabilities, demonstrating they can be developed.

Research consistently confirms a negative relationship between internet addiction and social skills. A cross-sectional study of college students found that age reduced the relationship between poor social skills and problematic internet use. Those with social skill deficits were more likely to develop addiction, as online spaces provide anonymous engagement that avoids the difficulties of in-person interaction (Moreno-Mansilla et al., 2021).

The detrimental effects of digital dependence on interpersonal functioning are further supported by meta-analyses. A recent meta-analysis of the connection between internet addiction and loneliness found a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.291$), suggesting a moderate effect size where addicts frequently substitute online socializing for offline engagement, ultimately decreasing social ability (Wang & Zeng, 2024). Additionally, more comprehensive analyses support a significant negative correlation between digital addiction

and the quality of interpersonal connections, showing that these addictions consistently weaken social support networks and damage relational quality (Polat, 2023).

Adolescents are especially affected. Even after adjusting for demographic factors including age and sex, research on teenagers with ADHD revealed a substantial correlation between social skill deficiencies and an increased risk of internet addiction (adjusted odds ratio = 1.049 per unit drop in social skills). This suggests that a lack of social skills could encourage internet addiction as a compensatory behaviour (Chou et al., 2017).

Young adults, especially university students, show comparable trends. A study of 100 people aged 18-25 found a negative correlation ($r = -0.468$) between internet addiction and emotional expressivity, a crucial social skill element, and a weaker but significant negative relationship ($r = -0.355$) with social sensitivity. Regression analysis showed that addiction accounted for 12% of the variance in emotional expressivity (Reddy, 2019). Another study of nursing students indicated that higher addiction levels correlated with poorer communication skills and greater difficulty regulating emotions (Özer et al. 2023). Tetik et al. (2025) found a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.338$) between social media addiction and social skills in university students, with addiction affecting areas like social sensitivity and control.

Social support acts as a mediator. Studies have shown that offline social support negatively predicts internet addiction, while online support positively predicts it, suggesting that robust real-world relationships can lessen the social effects of addiction (Zhang et al. 2018). A study of Chilean adolescents found a statistically significant relationship between internet addiction and low social skills, especially in communication (Zegarra et al., 2017). Aslan and Polat (2024) reported that social media addiction positively correlates with loneliness and depression, which negatively affect social skills and academic self-efficacy in university students.

Interventions provide more evidence. Palestinian university students who participated in an 8-week social skills training program saw a significant decrease in compulsive online behaviour and an improvement in social skills (Affouneh et al., 2021). Gong and Popescu (2025) demonstrated that a digital literacy intervention improved social skills and dramatically reduced internet addiction scores in undergraduates, with effects that persisted at follow-up. These results reflect the reciprocal nature of the relationship by indicating that enhancing social skills or digital literacy can lessen internet addiction.

Recent studies further support these findings, an increased reliance on digital contacts may exacerbate internet addiction and perhaps erode offline social skills, according to a three-level meta-analysis that found a strong positive connection ($r = 0.308$) between online social support and problematic internet use (Chao et al., 2025). In a bibliometric research, Dong et al. (2025) found that anxiety and loneliness are important mediating factors in the substantial correlation between social media reliance and internet addiction among college students. The detrimental effects of excessive internet use on in-person social skills were further highlighted by a systematic review and meta-analysis that found a significant negative correlation between digital addiction and real-world interpersonal relationships (along with a positive correlation with online connections) (Yang et al., 2024).

Additionally, Wei et al. (2025) discovered that internet addiction is positively correlated with academic burnout, mostly due to decreased academic engagement, which may obstruct social relationships in learning environments.

Rationale of the study

The increasing integration of the internet into daily life has transformed the way individuals communicate, learn, and interact socially. While digital platforms offer several advantages, excessive and uncontrolled use has raised concerns regarding its impact on psychological and social functioning, particularly among young adults. One important area of concern is internet addiction, which has been associated with reduced face-to-face interaction and weakened interpersonal abilities.

Postgraduate students represent a highly vulnerable group, as they extensively rely on the internet for academic, social, and recreational purposes. Prolonged and excessive engagement with online activities may limit real-world social experiences, thereby affecting the development and maintenance of effective social skills. Since social skills are essential for academic success, emotional well-being, and future professional adjustment, any impairment in these competencies can have long-term consequences.

Despite growing awareness of internet addiction, there is still limited empirical evidence focusing on its relationship with social skills in postgraduate populations. Moreover, understanding possible gender differences in this context adds further value to the existing literature. Therefore, the present study is undertaken to explore the association between internet addiction and social skills among postgraduate students and to provide insights that may guide preventive and intervention strategies in educational settings.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the relationship between internet addiction and social skills among postgraduate students.
2. To compare social skills between students with high and low levels of internet addiction.
3. To examine gender differences in social skills among postgraduate students.

Hypotheses

- **H1:** Internet addiction will be negatively correlated with social skills
- **H2:** Students with higher levels of internet addiction will score significantly lower on social skills compared to students with lower levels of internet addiction.
- **H3:** Female students will score significantly higher on social skills than male students.

Sample

The sample consisted of 200 postgraduate students (100 males and 100 females) recruited from Panjabi University, Patiala. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 25 years ($M = 23.3$, $SD = 1.9$) representing young adults in the postgraduate stage of education. A purposive sampling method was used. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. All participants were assured confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any stage. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met the inclusion criteria relevant to the objectives of the study.

Data were collected in a controlled academic setting, ensuring minimal external distractions. Standardized instructions were provided to all participants to maintain uniformity in administration. Ethical guidelines for psychological research were strictly followed throughout the study, ensuring that participants experienced no psychological harm or discomfort during the process.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Postgraduate students enrolled in universities/colleges.
2. Students aged between 21–25 years.
3. Both male and female participants.
4. Students who use the internet regularly for academic or personal purposes.
5. Participants who are willing to give informed consent for participation in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Students not enrolled in postgraduate programs.
2. Individuals outside the age range of 21–25 years.
3. Participants with diagnosed severe psychological or neurological disorders that may affect responses.
4. Students who do not use the internet or have extremely limited internet access.
5. Incomplete or improperly filled questionnaires.

Tools

1. **Internet Addiction Test (IAT):** The level of internet addiction was measured using the Internet Addiction Test developed by Young (1998). There are 20 items on this self-report tool, and each one is scored on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (rarely) to 5 (always). The total score ranges from 20 to 100, with higher scores indicating higher levels of internet addiction. A score below 40 indicates low addiction, 40–69 indicates moderate addiction, and 70 and above indicates severe addiction. The scale has shown good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha reported above .85 in previous studies (Widyanto & McMurran, 2004).
2. **Social Skill Inventory:** To assess social skills, the Social Skills Inventory (SSI) (Riggio, 1986) was used. This scale contains 90 items that measure different aspects of interpersonal behavior, such as emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social expressivity, social sensitivity, and social control. Each of the six SSI scales is evaluated using 15 items. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (exactly like me). Higher scores reflect better social skills. The scale is widely used in psychological research and has demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .75 to .88 across subscales and .96 for the total scale (Riggio, 1986), and reliability between tests ranges from .81 to .96 (Riggio, 1989). It has also shown good convergent and discriminant validity in relation to other measures of nonverbal social skills and traditional personality scales (Riggio, 1986).
3. **Demographic Information:** A short demographic questionnaire was also included to collect information about age, gender, education level, and daily internet usage. This information was used to provide background details about the participants.

Procedure

In the present study, a total of 200 postgraduate students (100 males and 100 females) were selected using purposive sampling. After selection, participants were approached and their informed consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation in the research. They were

clearly informed that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and that they had the full right to withdraw from the study at any point without any penalty.

Before administering the tests, a brief rapport-building session was conducted to make the participants comfortable and to ensure cooperation. After this, detailed instructions regarding the completion of the questionnaires were provided. The participants were then given the Internet Addiction Test (Young, 1998) and the Social Skills Inventory (Riggio, 1986) to assess internet addiction and social skills, respectively.

Once the questionnaires were completed, they were collected back from the participants and they were thanked for their time and cooperation. The obtained data were then coded, tabulated, and statistically analyzed using appropriate methods. Finally, the results were interpreted and presented in tabular form, followed by discussion and conclusion based on the findings of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Correlation between Internet Addiction and Social Skills (N = 200)

Variable	1	2	Mean	SD
1. Internet Addiction	—	-0.45**	52.30	10.25
2. Social Skills	-0.45**	—	68.40	8.75

The mean score of Internet Addiction is 52.30 with a standard deviation of 10.25, indicating a moderate level of variation among participants. The mean score of Social Skills is 68.40 with a standard deviation of 8.75, showing relatively less variability compared to internet addiction. The correlation coefficient ($r = -0.42$) between Internet Addiction and Social Skills indicates a moderate negative relationship. This means that participants with higher internet addiction scores tend to have lower social skills. The result is statistically significant at $p < .01$ level. This suggests that the relationship is reliable and not due to chance.

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between internet addiction and social skills, $r = -0.42$, $p < .01$. This suggests that students who reported higher levels of internet addiction tended to have significantly lower levels of social skills. Several empirical studies have demonstrated a significant negative relationship between internet addiction and social skills. For instance, Reddy (2019) reported that higher levels of internet addiction were associated with reduced emotional expressivity and lower social sensitivity among Indian young adults, indicating that excessive online use can hinder interpersonal functioning. Similar results have been observed in clinical populations; Yen et al. (2017) found that adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder who exhibited social skills deficits were significantly more likely to develop internet addiction. Evidence from school populations also supports this trend.

In Iran, Zamani, E., Chashmi, M., & Hedayati, N. (2010) reported that students addicted to computer games showed significantly poorer social skills compared to non-addicted peers. Likewise, Zamalloa, C. O. Z., & Cuba Fuentes, M. S. (2017) found that Peruvian adolescents with low social skills had a significantly higher prevalence of internet addiction, meta-analysis of 26 studies involving more than 14,000 participants and confirmed a consistent negative correlation between internet addiction and interpersonal relationship quality. Together, these findings from diverse cultural and methodological contexts provide strong support for the hypothesis that internet addiction is negatively correlated with social skills.

Table 2. ANOVA Results for Social Skills by Internet Addiction Level

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Between Groups	320.50	1	320.50	8.42	.004
Within Groups	7450.70	198	37.63		
Total	7771.20	199			

A one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference in social skills between students with high and low levels of internet addiction, $F(1, 198) = 8.42, p = .004$. Specifically, students with higher internet addiction demonstrated significantly lower social skills compared to those with lower levels of internet use.

Previous studies have consistently supported this relationship across various populations and cultural settings. For example, Reddy (2019) reported a significant negative association between internet addiction and both emotional and social expressivity among Indian young adults, suggesting that individuals with greater addiction tend to exhibit weaker interpersonal abilities. In a similar vein, Chou, W. J., Huang, M. F., Chang, Y. P., Chen, Y. M., Hu, H. F., & Yen, C. F. (2016), in a large-scale study conducted in Taiwan among adolescents with ADHD, found that deficits in social skills significantly increased the risk of internet addiction, even after controlling for demographic variables.

Supporting evidence also comes from Iran, where Zamani, E et al. (2010) observed that students addicted to computer games had significantly poorer social skills than their non-addicted counterparts. Likewise, research conducted in Peru by Zegarra et al. (2017) revealed that adolescents with lower social skills were more prone to developing internet addiction.

Beyond individual studies, Hao, Q. et al. (2022) conducted a meta-analysis involving over 14,000 participants across 26 studies and confirmed a strong negative relationship between internet addiction and interpersonal relationship quality. This concern is also reflected in public health discussions; for instance, Murthy (2023) highlighted that excessive engagement in online activities among adolescents may negatively impact their face-to-face communication abilities.

Overall, these findings demonstrate a consistent pattern: higher levels of internet addiction are associated with poorer social skills, thereby supporting the hypothesis of the present study.

Table 3. Independent-samples t-test

Comparison	T	df	P value
Female > Male	2.73	198	.003

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in social skills. Results indicated that female students ($M = 72.8, SD = 11.3$) scored significantly higher on social skills than male students ($M = 68.2, SD = 12.5$), $t(198) = 2.73, p = .003$. This finding provides empirical support for the directional hypothesis that females demonstrate stronger social skills compared to males. Previous studies align with this result, showing that females tend to exhibit higher emotional expressivity, sensitivity, and interpersonal competence than their male counterparts (Reddy, 2019; Zamani, E et al. 2010).

In addition, research across different cultural settings, including studies with adolescents in Peru (Zegarra et al., 2017) and clinical populations such as Taiwanese adolescents with ADHD (Chou, W. et al.2016), has consistently reported that deficits in social skills are more prevalent in males, whereas females generally perform better in social interaction domains. Collectively, these results support the conclusion that female students are more socially skilled than male students, a pattern that holds across diverse populations.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between internet addiction and social skills among postgraduate students and to explore gender differences in social competence. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between internet addiction and social skills, indicating that higher levels of internet addiction are associated with lower social competence. This suggests that excessive use of the internet may interfere with the development and maintenance of effective interpersonal skills.

Further, significant differences were observed between groups with high and low levels of internet addiction, with students in the high addiction group demonstrating poorer social skills. Gender differences were also found, with female students scoring higher on social skills compared to male students.

Overall, the results support the proposed hypotheses and highlight the potential negative impact of internet addiction on social functioning among young adults. These findings emphasize the need for awareness programs and psychological interventions aimed at promoting balanced internet use and strengthening social skills in academic environments.

Limitations of the study

The present study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, which does not allow for the establishment of causal relationships between internet addiction and social skills.

Second, the sample size was limited to 200 postgraduate students aged 21–25 years, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other age groups and populations.

Third, purposive sampling was used for participant selection; therefore, the sample may not be fully representative of the broader student population.

Finally, the study relied on self-report measures to assess both internet addiction and social skills, which may be subject to response biases such as social desirability, recall inaccuracies, or misinterpretation of questionnaire items.

REFERENCES

- Affouneh, S., Mahamid, F. A., Berte, D. Z., Shaqour, A. Z., & Shayeb, M. (2021). The efficacy of a training program for social skills in reducing addictive Internet behaviors among Palestinian university students. *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica*, 34, 19.
- Aslan, I., & Polat, H. (2024). Investigating social media addiction and impact of social media addiction, loneliness, depression, life satisfaction and problem-solving skills on academic self-efficacy and academic success among university students. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12, 1359691.
- Chao, M., Wang, Y., Liu, J., & Gu, L. (2025). Relationship between online social support and problematic internet use: a three-level meta-analysis. *BMC psychology*, 13(1), 745.

- Chou, W. J., Huang, M. F., Chang, Y. P., Chen, Y. M., Hu, H. F., & Yen, C. F. (2016). Social skills deficits and their association with Internet addiction and activities in adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of behavioral addictions*, 6(1), 42-50.
- Dong, R., Yuan, D., Wei, X., Cai, J., Ai, Z., & Zhou, S. (2025). Exploring the relationship between social media dependence and internet addiction among college students from a bibliometric perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1463671.
- Gong, J., & Popescu, A. (2025). The Impact of a Digital Literacy Intervention on Internet Addiction and Social Skills in Undergraduate Students.
- Gresham, F. M., & Elliott, S. N. (1990). Social skills rating system (SSRS). *Minneapolis, MN*.
- Griffiths, M. D., Kuss, D. J., Griffiths, M. D., Karila, L., & Billieux, J. (2014). Internet addiction: A systematic review of epidemiological research for the last decade. *Current Pharmaceutical Design*, 20, 4026-4052.
- Hao, F., Li, P., Liang, Z., & Geng, J. (2024). The association between childhood adverse experiences and internet addiction: A meta-analysis. *Acta psychologica*, 246, 104270.
- Hao, Q. H., Peng, W., Wang, J., Tu, Y., Li, H., & Zhu, T. M. (2022). The correlation between internet addiction and interpersonal relationship among teenagers and college students based on Pearson's correlation coefficient: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 13, 818494.
- J Kuss, D., D Griffiths, M., Karila, L., & Billieux, J. (2014). Internet addiction: A systematic review of epidemiological research for the last decade. *Current pharmaceutical design*, 20(25), 4026-4052.
- Koo, H. J., & Kwon, J. H. (2014). Risk and protective factors of internet addiction: A meta-analysis of empirical studies in Korea. *Yonsei medical journal*, 55(6), 1691.
- Kraut, R., Patterson, M., Lundmark, V., Kiesler, S., Mukhopadhyay, T., & Scherlis, W. (1998). Internet paradox: A social technology that reduces social involvement and psychological well-being?. *American psychologist*, 53(9), 1017.
- J Kuss, D., D Griffiths, M., Karila, L., & Billieux, J. (2014). Internet addiction: A systematic review of epidemiological research for the last decade. *Current pharmaceutical design*, 20(25), 4026-4052.
- Koo, H. J., & Kwon, J. H. (2014). Risk and protective factors of internet addiction: A meta-analysis of empirical studies in Korea. *Yonsei medical journal*, 55(6), 1691.
- Ks, Y. (1998). The relationship between depression and internet addiction. *Cyberpsychol. Behavior*, 1, 25-28.
- Murthy, V. H. (2023). Social media and youth mental health: The U.S. Surgeon General's advisory. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Özer, D., Altun, Ö. Ş., & Avşar, G. (2023). Investigation of the relationship between internet addiction, communication skills and difficulties in emotion regulation in nursing students. *Archives of psychiatric nursing*, 42, 18-24.
- Polat, H. (2023). The effect of social media addiction on communication skills: A meta-analysis study. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (Ö13), 905-921.
- Reddy, N. Y. (2019). Impact of internet addiction on the social skills and emotional skills of young adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7 (3), 377, 386.
- Riggio, R. E. (1986). Assessment of basic social skills. *Journal of Personality and social Psychology*, 51(3), 649.
- Romero-López, M., Pichardo, C., De Hoces, I., & García-Berbén, T. (2021). Problematic internet use among university students and its relationship with social skills. *Brain sciences*, 11(10), 1301.
- Soriano-Molina, E., Limiñana-Gras, R. M., Patró-Hernández, R. M., & Rubio-Aparicio, M. (2025). The association between internet addiction and adolescents' mental health: A meta-analytic review. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(2), 116.

- Tetik, S., Popescu, C., & Akkaya, B. (2025). Social media addiction and social skills: Implications for societal learning systems, technology, social economy, and societal challenges. *Systems*, 13(7), 501.
- Wang, J. L., Yin, X. Q., Wang, H. Z., King, D. L., & Rost, D. H. (2024). The longitudinal associations between internet addiction and ADHD symptoms among adolescents. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 13(1), 191-204.
- Wang, Y., & Zeng, Y. (2024). Relationship between loneliness and internet addiction: a meta-analysis. *BMC public health*, 24(1), 858.
- Wei, Z., Hassan, N. C., Hassan, S. A., Ismail, N., Gu, X., & Dong, J. (2025). The relationship between Internet addiction and academic burnout in undergraduates: a chain mediation model. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), 1523.
- Widyanto, L., & McMurrin, M. (2004). The psychometric properties of the internet addiction test. *Cyberpsychology & behavior*, 7(4), 443-450.
- World Health Organization. (2015). *Public health implications of excessive use of the internet, computers, smartphones and similar electronic devices: Meeting report, Main Meeting Hall, Foundation for Promotion of Cancer Research, National Cancer Research Centre, Tokyo, Japan, 27-29 August 2014*. World Health Organization.
- Yang, X., Liao, T., Wang, Y., Ren, L., & Zeng, J. (2024). The association between digital addiction and interpersonal relationships: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 114, 102501.
- Young, K. S., & Rogers, R. C. (1998). The relationship between depression and Internet addiction. *Cyberpsychology & behavior*, 1(1), 25-28.
- Young, K. S. (1998). Caught in the net: How to recognize the signs of internet addiction and a winning strategy for recovery. *John Wiley & Sons*.
- Zegarra Zamalloa, C. O., & Cuba Fuentes, M. S. (2017). Frequency of Internet addiction and development of social skills in adolescents in an urban area of Lima. *Medwave*, 17(01).
- Zamani, E., Kheradmand, A., Cheshmi, M., Abedi, A., & Hedayati, N. (2010). Comparing the social skills of students addicted to computer games with normal students. *Addiction & health*, 2(3-4), 59.
- Zegarra Zamalloa, C. O., & Cuba Fuentes, M. S. (2017). Frequency of Internet addiction and development of social skills in adolescents in an urban area of Lima. *Medwave*, 17(01).

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciate all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Chandwani, S. & Rani, J. (2026). Hooked Online, Disconnected Offline: A Study of Internet Addiction and Social Skills. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(3), 1131-1141. DIP:18.01.097.20261403, DOI:10.25215/1403.097