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Internet Addiction: How much students of Bihar are addicted?

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Abstract

The quick spread of internet has drastically changed how students communicate, learn, and connect with one another. But excessive use has raised questions about internet addiction, a behavioral disorder linked to poor psychological and academic results. The present investigation looks examines the extent of internet addiction among students and investigates differences based on course level, gender, and kind of institution. Inferential and descriptive statistics were employed a sample of 250 pupils. A moderate degree of addiction was indicated by the mean internet addiction score of 33.20 (SD = 16.97). The use of parametric tests was justified by the results of normality testing using skewness and kurtosis, which verified that the data resembles a normal distribution. To investigate group differences, one-way ANOVA and independent samples t-tests were suggested. The results point to a modest prevalence of internet addiction among students, with possible variance across demographic factors. The report emphasizes the necessity of institutional measures and awareness campaigns to encourage appropriate internet use.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, College Students, Bihar, India.

Introduction

The swift growth of the internet has changed communication, learning, entertainment, and information availability, making digital connectivity essential to contemporary living. Nonetheless, this extensive usage has also sparked increasing worries about excessive and unregulated internet consumption, often termed internet addiction. Goldberg (1995) first coined the term to characterize compulsive, pathological internet usage similar to impulse-control disorders, in which people place online engagements above crucial aspects of life like relationships, education, and employment. Like substance-related addictions, internet addiction

exhibits symptoms including tolerance, withdrawal, and a lack of control (Young, 1998; Griffiths, 1998).

Despite not being officially acknowledged in prominent diagnostic manuals like the DSM-IV (APA, 1995), researchers like Young (1998) created standardized instruments like the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), which has gained widespread usage for identifying problematic internet usage in various populations. Internet addiction presents itself in multiple ways, such as compulsive gaming, addiction to cybersex, online shopping, addiction to cyber-relationships, and obsessive information seeking (Young, 1998; Block, 2008). Studies show that internet addiction arises from a mix of personal, social, and technological influences. Individual weaknesses like impulsiveness, low self-confidence, and inadequate communication abilities heighten vulnerability (Song, 1999; Yun, 1998; Park, 2001). Social elements, especially insufficient family backing and personal disputes, also amplify addictive behaviours (An, 2000). Moreover, online characteristics like easy access, anonymity, and continuous availability increase the likelihood of overuse (Lee et al., 2001). This interplay of personal, social, and technological factors accounts for the increasing incidence of internet addiction in highly connected settings.

Research indicates that heavy internet usage harms mental health, resulting in stress, anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal (Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2003; Kraut et al., 1998). It also affects academic and job performance by diminishing productivity and raising absenteeism (Huang && Leung, 2009). Recent studies indicate that adolescents are especially at risk because of their extensive use of digital platforms and their constrained self-control skills (Kuss et al., 2013).

Although scholarly focus is growing, internet addiction continues to be conceptually unclear because of the absence of universally accepted diagnostic standards and the changing nature of internet applications (Chak & Leung, 2014). Additionally, many current studies are cross-sectional and pay little attention to cultural variations and new digital technologies like AI-driven platforms and virtual environments. These gaps underscore the necessity for additional empirical research to enhance understanding of prevalence trends, root causes, and successful intervention methods.

In this context, the current research seeks to investigate internet addiction by analysing its frequency, influencing factors, and psychological effects, along with recognizing potential preventive and management strategies in modern digital environments.

Conceptual Framework

Internet addiction (IA) is generally understood as a behavioural dependency marked by an excessive or poorly managed focus, impulses, or actions related to internet usage that result in distress or impairment. It is frequently likened to substance-related addictions because of its compulsive characteristics and the resemblance in the neuropsychological processes that drive dependency (Young, 1996; Shaffer, 2004). Kendall (1998) further characterizes internet addiction as a type of psychological dependence, stressing the emotional and mental reliance formed through extended interaction with online platforms.

Research indicates that excessive internet usage is linked to various psychological issues, such as diminished social abilities, altered sleep patterns, weakened interpersonal skills, and increased preoccupation with online activities (Ghassemzadeh, Shahraray, & Moradi, 2008; Liu & Potenza, 2007). These behaviour patterns can gradually develop into more acute mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and social anxiety disorder (Shaffer, 2004; Kim & Haridakis, 2009; Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2003). Additionally, Kraut et al. (1998) emphasized that heavy internet usage can adversely impact personal connections and social involvement, resulting in greater isolation.

Academic studies also show that internet addiction is closely linked to low academic and job performance, encompassing absenteeism and diminished success (Huang & Leung, 2009). Young (1998), creator of the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), offered one of the initial standardized tools for evaluating problematic internet usage, which has been extensively validated among various populations.

Nonetheless, despite thorough investigation, IA continues to be conceptually unclear because of the varied roles of the internet, such as social networking, gaming, email, and instant messaging, which complicates the creation of a universal definition (Chak & Leung, 2014). This absence of conceptual clarity has resulted in persistent discussions concerning the diagnostic criteria and classification of IA.

Recent research indicates that teenagers and Adolescents are especially vulnerable to internet addiction due to heightened accessibility and dependence on digital platforms. Kuss et al. (2013) highlight that younger individuals are more susceptible to forming addictive behaviours. In a similar vein, Chak and Leung (2014) discovered increased dependency in students using online communication platforms like social networking sites and chat rooms, with full-time students showing more vulnerability compared to part-time students.

In India, increasing internet access has heightened worries about IA among young people. Research has shown moderate to severe cases of internet addiction among students in vocational programs (Sharma et al., 2014) and a notable prevalence among teenagers (Sakthivel Arthanari et al., 2017). Further studies also reveal trends and influential elements among Indian users, suggesting an increasing demand for intervention approaches (Grover et al., 2010; Krishnamurthy & Chetlapalli, 2015).

In general, the literature indicates that internet addiction is a complex behavioural disorder shaped by psychological, social, and environmental influences. Although there is increasing empirical evidence, the variations in definition and measurement underscore the necessity for additional conceptual clarity and context-specific studies, especially in developing nations such as India where internet usage is still growing swiftly.

Research Question

1. To assess the level of Internet addiction among students
2. To examine the normality of the dataset
3. To analyze differences in Internet addiction based on gender

4. To examine differences based on type of institution
5. To analyze differences across levels of course

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant difference in Internet addiction between male and female students

H2: There is a significant difference in Internet addiction based on type of institution

H3: There is a significant difference in Internet addiction across levels of course

Method and Procedure

The research involved a sample of 250 undergraduate and postgraduate students from different universities in Bihar, reflecting a population of habitual internet users. The group consisted of 109 men and 141 women. Demographic factors including gender, course, and institution type were gathered. A survey research approach was utilized to evaluate levels of internet addiction. The main tool employed was the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) created by Young (1998), a well-validated 20-item self-assessment Likert scale with scores that vary from 0 to 100. The scale assesses important aspects like prominence, overuse, work neglect, expectation, and self-control issues. The tool's reliability, assessed through Cronbach's alpha, varied between 0.54 and 0.82, signifying acceptable internal consistency. Earlier research in the Indian setting has also shown adequate reliability and validity of the IAT (Krishnamurthy & Chetlapalli, 2013). Literature supporting this topic emphasizes the application of other validated tools in comparable studies, like the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al., 2012) and the Online Video Gaming Instrument (Van Rooij et al., 2010), both demonstrating strong psychometric properties. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. Statistical techniques included descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis), tests for normality, independent samples t-test, and one-way ANOVA

Result and Discussion

The descriptive statistics for the variable **TOTAL (Internet addiction score)** are:

Table 1 Descriptive statistics

Sample Size	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
250	0	84	33.20	16.970	0.431	-0.104

The dataset comprises 250 valid cases (N = 250) without any missing values. Scores vary between 0 and 84, with an average of 33.20, suggesting a moderate degree of internet addiction. The notably high standard deviation (16.97) indicates significant variability among participants. Skewness (0.431) indicates a minor positive skew, while kurtosis (–0.104) reflects a slightly flatter (platykurtic) distribution; nevertheless, both figures are within acceptable ranges for approximate normality. Considering the sample size, the Central Limit Theorem additionally reinforces the normality assumption, validating the application of parametric tests.

Table 2 ***Normality Assessment***

Statistics	Value	Standard error	Z value
Skewness	0.431	0.154	2.80
Kurtosis	-0.104	0.309	-0.34

The evaluation of normality suggested that skewness (Z = 2.80) exhibited a minor positive skew yet stayed acceptable within the ±3.29 guideline, whereas kurtosis (Z = –0.34) was within the typical range. The mean score recorded for internet addiction was 33.20 on a possible scale of 0–84, suggesting a moderate level of addiction in students.

Score	Level
0-16	Low
16-50	Moderate
More than 50	High

The average score (33.20) reflects a moderate degree of internet addiction, implying frequent yet regulated usage among students. Nonetheless, the comparatively high standard deviation (16.97) indicates variability, suggesting that certain individuals may be at increased risk. Inferential Statistics: Gender served as the independent variable while the addiction score acted as the dependent variable.

Table 4. ***Level of Internet Addiction among Gender***

Score	Male	Female
Less than 16	14	25
16-50	67	101
More than 50	28	15

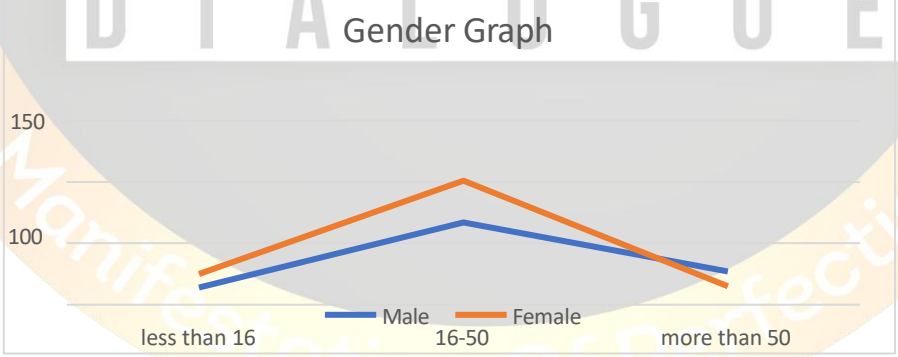

Table 5 ***Mean and standard deviation for Gender***

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male	109	2.13	0.61
Female	141	1.93	0.53

Table 6: Independent Samples t-test for Gender

Variables	t-value	df	p-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Score (Male vs Female)	2.71	248	0.007	0.199

For independent samples, a t-test was run to analyse the scores of males versus females. Findings indicated that Males performed noticeably better. on average (M = 2.13, SD = 0.61) compared to females (M = 1.93, SD = 0.53), t(248) = 2.71, p = 0.007. Since p < .05, the null hypothesis was dismissed, showing A statistically significant variation between genders, with males displaying greater levels in the evaluated categories.

2.Level of Courses

Table 7. Level of Internet Addiction among courses

	UG	PG
Less than 16	24	16
16-50	107	61
more than 50	29	13

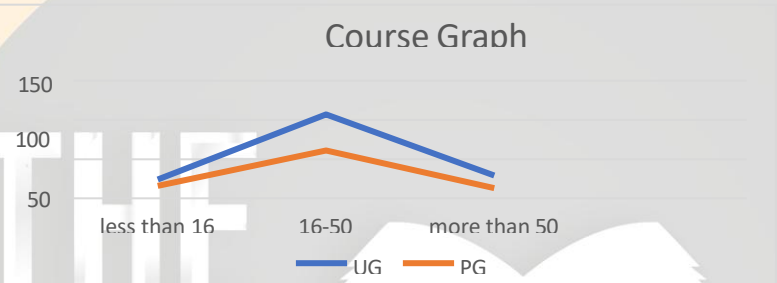

Table 8. Mean and standard deviation for Course

Group	N	Mean	SD
UG	160	2.03	0.59
PG	90	1.97	0.55

Table 9 Independent Samples t-test for Course

Variables	t-value	df	p-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Score (UG vs PG)	0.79	248	0.431	0.06

A t-test for independent sample was used to analyse disparities in age group distribution among undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) participants, with age classified on an ordinal scale. While UG participants had a marginally higher mean score (M = 2.03, SD = 0.59) compared to PG participants (M = 1.97, SD = 0.55), the difference lacked statistical significance, t(248) = 0.79, p = 0.431.The null hypothesis was not rejected since the p-value was higher than 0.05, indicating that there was no discernible difference between the groups.

3.Type of institution

Table 10. Level of Internet Addiction among Types of institutions

Score	Government	Private	Semi-Government
Less than 16	29	5	4
16-50	141	15	14
More than 50	38	3	1

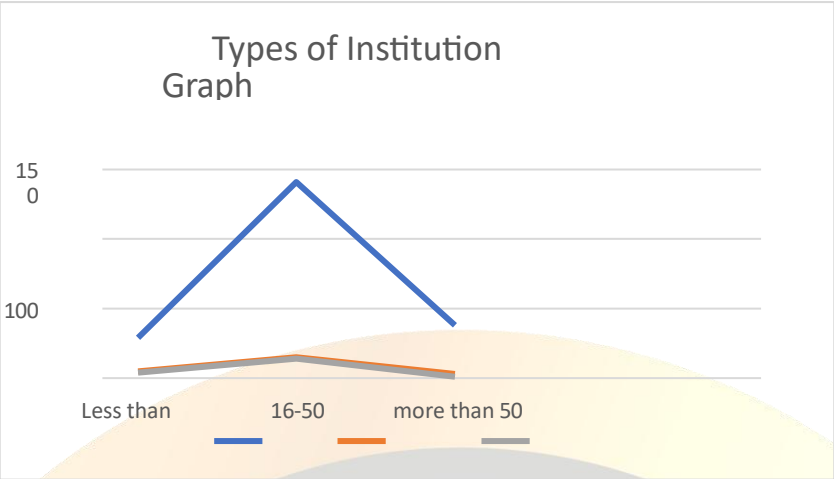

Table11: Mean and standard deviation for Course

Group	N	Mean	SD
Government	208	2.04	0.57
Private	23	1.91	0.58
Semi Government	19	1.84	0.49
Total	250	2.02	-----

Table 12 *One-way ANOVA for* Type of institution

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Group	0.973	2	0.487	1.54	0.216
Within Group	77.87	247	0.315		
Total	78.84	249			

A one-way ANOVA was carried out to explore variations in score distribution among employment categories (Government, Private, and Semi-Government). Government employees had a marginally higher mean score (M = 2.04, SD = 0.57) than Private (M = 1.91, SD = 0.58) and Semi-Government employees (M = 1.84, SD = 0.49), However the differences F (2, 247) = 1.54, p = 0.216. were not statistically significant. Given that the p-value exceeded 0.05, the null hypothesis remained accepted, suggesting no noteworthy difference between groups. If notable differences had been detected, post-hoc tests (e.g., Tukey) would be necessary to pinpoint particular group differences. These variations may indicate disparities in institutional context, academic stress, or digital engagement, with internet addiction possibly differing by academic levels.

The results show that students exhibit a moderate but widespread level of internet addiction, lacking signs of severe dependence. The data's nearly normal distribution warranted the application of parametric analyses. Despite addiction levels not being severe, the occurrence of mild to moderate dependency emphasizes the necessity for preventive measures in educational environments. The results probably underestimate true addiction rates, as they mainly represent

internet use on campus and do not entirely consider smartphone usage and involvement in social media.

Age and internet addiction are significantly correlated, among older pupils exhibiting increased dependency levels, likely due to more exposure to various online activities. Gender disparities were apparent, as males displayed greater levels of addiction compared to females, aligning with earlier research (Huang & Leung, 2009; Kuss, Griffiths, & Binder, 2013). Nonetheless, the causes of these discrepancies are still uncertain and need additional exploration. No major differences were observed among the academic years.

These results correspond with current research indicating that internet addiction is a growing and serious worldwide issue similar to other addictive behaviours like gambling and drug use (Kuss et al., 2013). The growing dependence on internet usage by college students highlights the need to tackle this concern. Future studies should implement longitudinal and mixed-method strategies, involve larger and more diverse groups, and explore psychological factors like stress, anxiety, and depression. Moreover, examining several kinds of internet addiction (like social media and gaming) along with their effects on cognition, social interactions, and behaviour would offer a deeper insight. Proactive measures and intervention tactics are crucial in educational settings to reduce possible risks (Beard, 2005).

Educational institutions are vital in fostering students' digital wellness by promoting responsible technology usage and highlighting the dangers of prolonged screen time. Establishing organized programs and offering counselling assistance can help tackle digital reliance. Moreover, promoting healthy lifestyle practices—like reducing screen time and participating in offline pursuits such as physical activity and social engagement—can help students sustain a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

This research has multiple constraints. Convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the results, since the sample might not reflect the larger population. The absence of raw data and dependence on descriptive analysis constrain thorough inferential investigation of connections among variables. Moreover, self-report instruments can lead to bias stemming from social desirability and inaccuracies in memory recall. Ultimately, the Finding causal correlations is hampered by the cross-sectional approach, which gathers data at a single point in time.

Conclusion

The research finds that internet addiction in students is moderate and prevalent, showing no signs of significant dependency. Although the results indicate controllable usage levels, the occurrence of mild to moderate addiction highlights the necessity for proactive preventive measures in educational environments. The findings might undervalue total addiction since they do not completely consider smartphone usage and social media interactions.

Marked variations were noted in relation to age and gender, as older students and males displayed elevated rates of internet addiction, aligning with earlier studies (Huang & Leung, 2009; Kuss, Griffiths, & Binder, 2013). Nevertheless, no differences were detected between academic

years. These results strengthen the increasing acknowledgment of internet addiction as a worldwide behavioural issue similar to other addiction behaviours (Kuss et al., 2013).

Future research should incorporate longitudinal frameworks, larger and more varied samples, and investigate psychological factors like stress, anxiety, and depression. Moreover, more focus should be placed on several kinds of internet usage, like social media and mobile engagement. Awareness within institutions and preventive measures are crucial for tackling the possible dangers linked to.

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