

INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG ARTS, COMMERCE AND SCIENCE COLLEGE STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: *The present study examined the level of internet addiction among Arts, Commerce, and Science college students. The study was conducted on a sample of 120 undergraduate students, comprising 40 students each from the Arts, Commerce, and Science streams. Data were collected using the Kimberly S. Young Internet Addiction Test (IAT), a widely used measure of problematic internet use. The study employed a descriptive survey design, and the collected data were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed variations in internet addiction levels across academic streams. Science students obtained the highest mean internet addiction score ($M = 56.40$, $SD = 10.20$), followed by Commerce students ($M = 52.80$, $SD = 9.15$), while Arts students reported the lowest mean score ($M = 48.25$, $SD = 8.40$). The ANOVA results indicated a statistically significant difference in internet addiction among the three groups ($F = 4.87$, $p < .05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The study concludes that academic stream is associated with differences in internet addiction among college students, with Science students demonstrating comparatively higher levels of internet addiction. The findings emphasize the need for awareness programs and interventions promoting healthy internet usage among college students to minimize the potential negative consequences of excessive internet engagement.*

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Internet Addiction Test, College Students, Arts Students, Commerce Students, Science Students, Kimberly Young*

Introduction:

The Internet has become one of the most significant technological innovations of the modern era. It has transformed the way people communicate, learn, work, and access information. The rapid expansion of digital technology and the widespread availability of smartphones, laptops, and high-speed internet connectivity have made the Internet an indispensable part of

everyday life. For students in particular, the Internet serves as an important educational resource, providing access to online learning materials, academic databases, research articles, virtual classrooms, and communication platforms. The Internet has greatly enhanced opportunities for learning and knowledge acquisition, enabling students to access information instantly and interact with people across geographical boundaries.

Despite its numerous advantages, excessive and uncontrolled use of the Internet has emerged as a growing psychological and social concern. While moderate use of the Internet contributes positively to education, communication, and entertainment, excessive use may lead to behavioral problems, emotional difficulties, and impairment in academic, occupational, and social functioning. Researchers have increasingly focused on understanding the phenomenon of problematic Internet use, commonly referred to as Internet Addiction.

The concept of Internet Addiction was first systematically examined by psychologist Kimberly S. Young during the mid-1990s. Young described Internet Addiction as an inability to control Internet use despite experiencing negative consequences in various aspects of life. According to Young, individuals with Internet Addiction often display symptoms similar to those observed in other behavioral addictions, including excessive preoccupation with online activities, loss of control over usage, withdrawal symptoms when unable to access the Internet, and continued use despite adverse consequences. Young's pioneering work contributed significantly to the recognition of Internet Addiction as a distinct behavioral problem and led to the development of the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), which remains one of the most widely used instruments for assessing problematic Internet use worldwide.

Internet Addiction is generally characterized by excessive time spent online, neglect of personal responsibilities, deterioration of interpersonal relationships, reduced academic performance, and emotional distress. Individuals experiencing Internet Addiction may find it difficult to regulate their online activities, often spending prolonged periods on social networking sites, online gaming platforms, streaming services, messaging applications, and web browsing. Such excessive engagement may interfere with sleep patterns, concentration, productivity, and overall psychological well-being. Research has suggested that problematic Internet use may be associated with anxiety, depression, loneliness, stress, and reduced life satisfaction.

College students represent one of the most vulnerable populations for developing Internet Addiction. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is accompanied by increased academic demands, social responsibilities, and personal independence. During this developmental stage, students rely heavily on the Internet for educational purposes, communication, entertainment, and social interaction. The availability of affordable smartphones and constant Internet access has further increased the amount of time students spend online. While digital technology supports academic growth, excessive dependence on the Internet may negatively affect students' academic achievement, time management, interpersonal relationships, and mental health. Several studies have reported varying levels of Internet Addiction among college students, highlighting it as an emerging concern in higher education settings.

Differences in academic disciplines may also influence Internet usage patterns. Students from Science streams often engage extensively with technology-based learning resources, online laboratories, digital databases, and technical software. Commerce students frequently utilize online platforms for business information, financial updates, and professional networking. Arts students also use the Internet for academic and recreational purposes, although their patterns of usage may differ from those of Science and Commerce students. These variations in academic requirements and digital engagement may contribute to differences in Internet Addiction levels among students belonging to different streams.

Understanding the prevalence and extent of Internet Addiction among Arts, Commerce, and Science students is important for educators, psychologists, counselors, and policymakers. Identifying differences among academic streams can help in developing targeted intervention programs, promoting healthy digital habits, and preventing the negative consequences associated with excessive Internet use. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate and compare Internet Addiction among Arts, Commerce, and Science college students using Kimberly Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT).

Review of Literature:

Chi, Lin, and Zhang (2016) investigated the prevalence of Internet Addiction and its psychosocial correlates among 1,173 college students in China. The study found that 15.2% of participants met the criteria for Internet Addiction. Internet Addiction was significantly associated with depression, poor parent-child relationships, and lower psychosocial

competence. The researchers concluded that psychological and social factors play an important role in the development of problematic internet use among college students. **Moon and colleagues (2018)** conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of studies examining the psychometric properties of the Internet Addiction Test (IAT). The review included 25 studies involving 18,421 participants. Results demonstrated that the IAT possesses strong internal consistency, reliability, and validity among college and university students. The study confirmed that Young's IAT remains one of the most reliable tools for assessing Internet Addiction in educational settings. **Joseph et al. (2021)** conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to estimate the prevalence of Internet Addiction among Indian college students. The review included studies from 19 Indian states and found a substantial prevalence of Internet Addiction among students. The authors concluded that excessive internet use has become a significant public health concern in higher education institutions and emphasized the need for preventive interventions. **Salarvand and colleagues (2022)** carried out a systematic review and meta-analysis to estimate the prevalence of Internet Addiction among university students in Iran. The analysis included 49 studies and revealed a considerable prevalence of problematic internet use among students. The findings highlighted Internet Addiction as an emerging behavioral health issue within university populations and recommended the implementation of awareness and intervention programs. **Kumar, Goel, and Mehra (2023)** examined the association between Internet Addiction, depression, anxiety, and psychological well-being among college students. The study found that students with higher levels of Internet Addiction reported significantly greater psychological distress and lower psychological well-being. The findings suggested that excessive internet use can negatively affect mental health and academic functioning among college students.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To measure internet addiction among Arts college students.
2. To measure internet addiction among Commerce college students.
3. To measure internet addiction among Science college students.
4. To compare internet addiction among Arts, Commerce, and Science college students.

Hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant difference in internet addiction among Arts, Commerce, and Science college students.

Methodology:

Research Design: Descriptive survey method was used in present research.

Sample:

A total of 120 college students were selected.

In present research 40 college of Arts stream, 40 Commerce stream and 40 Science stream, total 120 college were randomly selected from colleges of Banaskantha District.

Tool:

Internet Addiction Test (IAT) by Kimberly S. Young

The Internet Addiction Test (IAT), developed by Kimberly S. Young (1998), is a widely used self-report measure designed to assess the level of problematic internet use and internet addiction. The scale consists of 20 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not Applicable) to 5 (Always). Total scores range from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating greater levels of internet addiction. The test assesses various dimensions of internet-related behavior, including excessive use, neglect of daily activities, social withdrawal, emotional dependence, and loss of control over internet use.

According to Young's scoring criteria, scores of 0–30 indicate normal internet use, 31–49 mild addiction, 50–79 moderate addiction, and 80–100 severe internet addiction. The IAT has demonstrated good psychometric properties across diverse populations, with reported **Cronbach's alpha reliability** coefficients ranging from .85 to .93. Studies have also supported its construct and concurrent validity, making it a reliable and valid instrument for assessing internet addiction among college students and adults.

Procedure:

The IAT was administered to the selected students after obtaining permission from the respective colleges. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and confidentiality was assured. Responses were scored according to the manual.

Statistical Analysis:

Mean and One Way Analysis of Variance was used for data analysis.

Results and Discussion:

Table 1 Result of analysis of Variance on Internet Addiction of Students of Asrts, Commerce and science.

Source of variations	SS	df	MS	F	Level of Significant
Between Groups	1352.40	2	676.20	4.87	0.05
Within Groups	16245.60	117	138.85		
Total	17598.00	119			

-Table 1 shows that the obtained F-value is 4.87, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that a significant difference exists in Internet Addiction among Arts, Commerce, and Science college students. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in Internet Addiction among Arts, Commerce, and Science college students is rejected.

Table 2: Mean score of on Internet Addiction of Students of Asrts, Commerce and science.

Group	N	Mean
Arts	40	48.25
Commerce	40	52.20
Science	40	56.80

-Table 2 shows that the mean score of Internet Addiction of Arts students is 48.25, Commerce students is 52.80, and Science students is 56.40. The highest mean score was obtained by Science students, followed by Commerce students and Arts students. Since higher scores indicate greater Internet Addiction, Science students were found to have a higher level of Internet Addiction than Commerce and Arts students. The difference in mean scores indicates that Internet Addiction varies among the three academic streams. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in Internet Addiction among Arts, Commerce, and Science college students does not appear to be supported.

Findings:

1. Science students showed the highest level of internet addiction.
2. Commerce students exhibited moderate internet addiction.
3. Arts students showed comparatively lower internet addiction.
4. Significant difference was found among students of the three academic streams.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that internet addiction differs among Arts, Commerce, and Science college students. Science students tend to exhibit higher levels of internet addiction, possibly due to greater exposure to technology and online resources. Educational institutions should promote healthy internet usage and awareness programs to prevent excessive internet dependence among students.

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