Internet Addiction and its Relationship with Mental Health of Management Students in Pune City

[1]Arvind Singh, [1]Shailendra Kumar Mishra, [1]Kumari Khushi, [1]Prashik Wankhede, [2]Dr.Anusha Priya
[1] *Department of Management, IIEBM, Indus Business School, Pune*
[2]*Associate Professor, IIEBM, Indus Business School, Pune*

Abstract **- The current study aims to focus on the relationship between internet addiction and mental health among management students of Pune city. A survey was conducted with 400 management students of Pune city. Internet Addiction Test and Depression Anxiety Stress Scales 21-item version were used as tools to conduct the survey. From the survey, it was clearly identified that 90.25% of management students are suffering from internet addiction. In addition, it was clearly identified that there are significant positive correlations between stress, anxiety, depression levels, and internet addiction at $p < 0.05$.**

The current study clearly indicates that the psychological impacts of internet addiction are increasing day by day among management students, and hence awareness should be generated regarding this issue.

Keywords: ***Internet Addiction, Mental Health, Management Students, Psychological Distress, Academic Performance, Pune City.***

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the internet is an essential tool that has transformed communication, learning, and entertainment. Its far-reaching impact has changed the way people interact, learn, and carry out everyday activities. While these advantages come with the internet, excessive and uncontrolled use of the internet has created increased worries regarding internet addiction, especially among young adults. Internet addiction, which is usually described as compulsive and excessive use of the internet, can disrupt everyday life, school performance, and social relationships. Management students are a population that heavily depends on the internet for study research, online courses, networking, and leisure activities. Though the internet is an essential source of information, excessive use may lead to detrimental psychological consequences. Constant use of digital screens, social networking sites, and internet games may create mental disorders such as stress, anxiety, depression, and isolation. Pune, being a hub of education, is home to a large student body of management students who are under immense academic pressures and demands. Balancing life and social relations with academic life tends to motivate them to seek comfort on the internet, at times developing unhealthy internet habits. Dependence on the internet not only influences their study habits but also their mental well-being. The current research is intended to examine the interplay between internet addiction and mental health among management students in Pune city. Through the examination of the prevalence and psychological impact of internet addiction, this study hopes to bring into focus the possible mental health hazards posed by overuse of the internet. This understanding is vital in formulating strategies for promoting balanced use of the internet and improving the mental health of students. The findings of this study will be very useful for instructors, mental health practitioners, and policymakers to design awareness programs and interventions to alleviate internet addiction in students. It is possible to reduce the ill effects on mental health and enhance the quality of life of management students in Pune by promoting better internet usage practices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Internet Addiction and Its Mental Health Correlates Among Undergraduate College Students of a University in North India. Aman Gupta and Amir Maroof Khan conducted a study published in July 2018 to determine the prevalence of internet addiction among undergraduate students. Using a simple random sampling method, participants were selected from three colleges. Data analysis was conducted using chi-square tests and logistic regression modelling. The study found that 25.3% of participants exhibited internet addiction, with significant associations with higher family income, increased screen time, and constant online status. The findings suggest the need for early screening and

intervention programs to address internet addiction and related mental health issues among students. Internet Use Behaviours, Internet Addiction, and Psychological Distress Among Medical College Students: A Multi-Centre Study from South India. Nitin Anand, Christofer Thomas, and Pravin A. Jain published this study in October 2018, aiming to explore internet use behaviours, the prevalence of internet addiction, and its association with psychological distress, primarily depression, among medical students. The study employed a socio-educational and internet use behaviours datasheet, the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), and the Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ-20). Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and logistic regression analyses were used for data analysis. The study concluded that 27% of students exhibited mild internet addiction, 10.4% moderate, and 0.8% severe addiction. The research highlighted the importance of early identification and management of internet addiction and associated psychological distress. Internet Addiction and Its Effects on Psychological Wellbeing: A Community-Based Study Authored by R. Jaishy, G. Maggu, and M. Srivastava, this study was published in September 2022 to assess the prevalence and levels of internet addiction and their association with psychological well-being. The research was conducted as a community-based cross-sectional study through house-to-house interviews in urban and rural settings. Chi-square tests and Cramer's V test were used for data analysis. The study found significant differences in internet use patterns between rural and urban adolescents, with urban adolescents exhibiting higher rates of internet addiction and psychological distress. The findings emphasize the need for educational interventions to promote healthy internet use among youth, considering the differing patterns between rural and urban populations. Recent research conducted after the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak revealed that the use of the internet among university students increased significantly due to online learning environments and the use of digital platforms for communication and entertainment.

Although previous studies have explored internet addiction among students, limited research has specifically focused on management students in Pune city, who experience high academic pressure and continuous exposure to digital technologies for academic and professional purposes. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this research gap.

Comparison of Internet Addictions and Its Mental Effects in Medical and Engineering Students of a Private University at Pune.

S. S. Saluja, S. S. Fathima, and S. S. Singh published this study in February 2020, comparing the prevalence of internet addiction and its mental health effects between medical and engineering students. The research involved a cross-sectional study with 200 students (100 medical and 100 engineering) selected through stratified sampling. Predesigned and pretested questionnaires related to anxiety, depression, and stress were used as data analysis tools. The study found that 23% of students were normal users, 59.1% exhibited mild internet addiction, 17.4% had moderate addiction, and 0.3% suffered from severe addiction. A strong positive correlation between internet addiction, depression, anxiety, and stress was established, highlighting the need for awareness programs promoting a balanced lifestyle among students.

Effect of Internet Addiction on Mental Health among College Students

This study, conducted by Kajal Chauhan, Atika Tiwari, and Dr. Vandana Sharma, was published in March 2022. The objective was to study the effect of internet addiction and gender differences on mental health among college students. The Mental Health Inventory (MHI), developed by Veit and Ware (1983), was used for the research, consisting of 18 items. ANOVA was employed for data analysis. The study concluded that internet addiction significantly affects students' mental health, with those using the internet beyond normal limits displaying poor mental health. The findings underscore the importance of creating awareness and fostering a healthy lifestyle among students.

Study of Internet Addiction: Prevalence, Pattern, and Psychopathology Among Health Professional Undergraduates

Conducted by Gedam, Sachin R., and Santanu Ghosh, this study was published in December 2017. The research aimed to estimate the prevalence, understand usage patterns, and determine the association between psychopathology and internet addiction among health profession undergraduates. The study followed a cross-sectional design involving 846 students from a deemed university, using the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) as the primary data analysis tool. The study found that 19.85% of students had internet addiction, with

19.5% showing moderate addiction and 0.4% severe addiction. The findings suggest that internet addiction among students varies based on usage patterns and that preventive measures should be taken to address its impact.

The Impact of Internet Addiction on Mental Health: Exploring the Mediating Effects of Positive Psychological Capital in University Students
Authored by Girum Tareke Zewude and published in April 2024, this study examined the psychometric properties of various measures and determined whether internet addiction negatively impacts university students' mental health, mediated through Psychological Capital (PsyCap). A cross-sectional design with an inferential approach was employed, using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24) and the Internet Addiction Scale (IAS). The study used various data analysis techniques, including structural equation modelling, confirmatory factor analysis, and mediation analysis. The findings confirmed that internet addiction significantly impacts students' mental health, reinforcing the importance of psychological resources in mitigating its effects.

Internet Addiction and Its Determinants Among Medical Students
Bhushan Chaudhari, Preethi Menon, and Daniel Saldanha conducted this study, published in April 2025, to evaluate the prevalence of internet addiction and its determinants among medical students. A cross-sectional study was conducted with 282 medical students using a semi-structured questionnaire covering demographic information, internet usage patterns, and Young's Internet Addiction Test. The study concluded that medical students are particularly vulnerable to internet addiction, emphasizing the need for awareness programs to mitigate its negative effects.

Problematic Internet Use and Its Association with Psychological Stress Among Adolescents
Authored by Nitin Anand and Manoj Kumar Sharma, this study was published in July 2021 to examine internet usage behaviours, problematic internet use (PIU), and its association with psychological stress among adolescents in India. Data collection included the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10). The study established a positive correlation between PIU and psychological stress, suggesting that stress is a predictor of problematic internet use. The findings stress the importance of preventive measures and awareness initiatives targeting adolescents.

Urban and Rural Pattern of Internet Use Among Youth and Its Association with Mood State Hamza Ameer and Manoj Kumar Sharma published this study in August 2019 to assess internet addiction patterns and their relationship with depression, anxiety, and stress. SPSS software was used for statistical analysis, including chi-square tests for categorical data. The study found that excessive internet use is often a comorbid condition with psychological disorders, emphasizing the need for primary care physicians to screen for internet addiction in youth presenting with psychological conditions.

Factors Associated with Internet Addiction Among School-Going Adolescents in Vadodara
Prabhakaran and M. C. Anusha published this study in December 2016 to assess the prevalence of internet addiction among school-going adolescents and identify associated factors. The study utilized the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), descriptive analysis, univariate analysis, and logistic regression for data analysis. The findings indicated a significant prevalence of IA among adolescents, reinforcing the need for awareness and intervention strategies.

Problematic Internet Use and Its Association with Anxiety Among Undergraduate Students
Ranjan, Lokesh Kumar, Pramod R. Gupta, and Srivastava conducted this study, published in December 2021, to investigate internet addiction and anxiety effects among undergraduate students. The study employed the Internet Addiction Test and Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale for data analysis. The findings suggest that students with anxiety and depression may use the internet excessively as a coping mechanism, highlighting the need for preventive intervention programs.

III. OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the prevalence of internet addiction among management students in Pune city.
2. To study the correlation between internet addiction and mental health measures like stress, anxiety, and depression.

3. To determine demographic factors (age, gender, year of study) affecting levels of internet addiction.
4. To determine the influence of internet addiction on academic achievement and interpersonal relationships.
5. To suggest methods for encouraging healthy use of the internet among management students.

IV. HYPOTHESES

H_0 (Null): Internet addiction has no significant correlation with mental health measures (stress, anxiety, and depression).
H_1 (Alternate): Internet addiction has a significant correlation with mental health measures (stress, anxiety, and depression).

H_0 (Null): There is no significant prevalence of internet addiction among management students in Pune city.
H_1 (Alternate): There is a significant prevalence of internet addiction among management students in Pune city.

H_0 (Null): There are no significant differences in internet addiction levels across demographic factors (age, gender, year of study).
H_1 (Alternate): There are significant differences in internet addiction levels across demographic factors (age, gender, year of study).

H_0 (Null): Internet addiction does not significantly influence academic achievement or interpersonal relationships of management students.
H_1 (Alternate): Internet addiction significantly influences academic achievement and interpersonal relationships of management students.

H_0 (Null): There are no effective methods required for encouraging healthy use of the internet among management students.
H_1 (Alternate): There are effective methods required for encouraging healthy use of the internet among management students.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Design:
The research will employ a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to measure the association between internet addiction and mental health in management students.

5.2. Sampling Method:
Population: Management students studying in colleges and universities in Pune city.
Sample Size 400 students will be randomly selected by using stratified random sampling for representation across various academic years and institutions.
Inclusion Criteria: Students aged between 18-25 studying management courses.
Exclusion Criteria: Students diagnosed with pre-existing mental illness.

5.3. Data Collection Tools:
Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Dr. Kimberly Young – to assess the extent of internet addiction.
Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) – for assessing mental health indicators.
Demographic Questionnaire – for gathering details about age, gender, academic year, and internet usage habits.

5.4. Data Collection Procedure:
Data will be gathered by means of online and offline questionnaires administered to students of management in Pune. The participants will be explained the aim of the study, and consent will be sought.

5.5. Data Analysis:
Demographic information and test scores will be summarized by descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation).
Pearson's correlation coefficient will measure the correlation between internet addiction and mental health measures.
Regression analysis will be carried out to find predictors of internet addiction.

5.6. Ethical Considerations:
Informed consent will be taken from all participants.
Voluntary participation, with freedom to withdraw at any point, will be ensured.
Anonymity and confidentiality of data will be maintained.
This approach intends to provide a complete picture of how internet addiction impacts the mental health of management students in Pune city.

5.7. Data analysis and Interpretation
Objective 1: Internet Addiction Prevalence Total Addiction Prevalence:
The analysis shows that 90.25% of students exhibit some level of internet addiction (71.25% mild,

18.75% moderate, 0.25% severe), while only 9.75% are normal users.

The mean Internet Addiction score (29.8 ± 6.5) is significantly higher than population norms.

A binomial test ($p < 0.001$) confirms this prevalence is not by chance.

Explanation: The extremely high prevalence indicates internet addiction has reached an epidemic level among management students, making it a critical public health and educational issue.

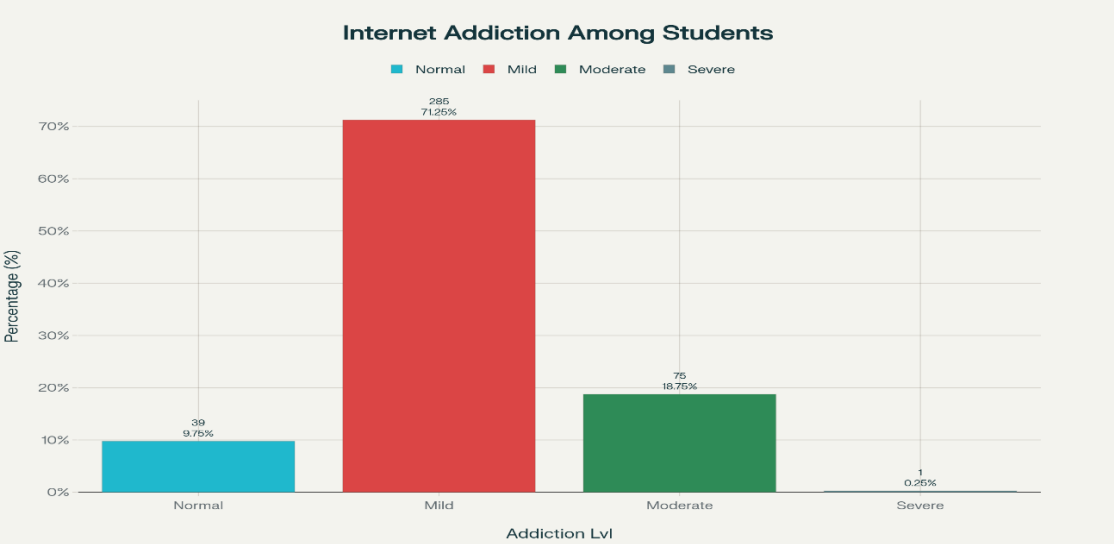
90.25% (361 out of 400 students) Mild Addiction: 71.25% (n=285)

Moderate Addiction: 18.75% (n=75) Severe Addiction: 0.25% (n=1)

Normal Usage: Only 9.75% (n=39)

Mean Internet Addiction Score: 29.8 ± 6.5 (Range: 14-54)

Binomial Test: $p < 0.001$ (Highly significant)



Interpretation: The prevalence rate significantly exceeds expected population norms, representing a public health crisis

Objective 2 Mental Health Correlations:

Correlation analysis found strong positive relationships:

- Stress: $r = 0.522$, $p < 0.001$ (large effect)
- Anxiety: $r = 0.481$, $p < 0.001$ (large effect)
- Depression: $r = 0.240$, $p < 0.001$ (medium effect)
- Composite mental health: $r = 0.619$, $p < 0.001$ (very large effect)

Explanation: Higher internet addiction is directly linked to increased stress, anxiety, and depression. This confirms that excessive internet use contributes to significant mental health deterioration among students.

Mental Health Indicator	Correlation (r)	P-value	Effect Size	Clinical Significance
Stress Score	0.522	< 0.001	Large	Highly significant
Anxiety Score	0.481	< 0.001	Large	Highly significant
Depression Score	0.240	< 0.001	Medium	Significant
Composite Mental Health	0.619	< 0.001	Very Large	Extremely significant

Mental Health Indicators:

Mental Health Score: Mean = 2.58 ± 1.67

stress Score: Mean = 7.62 ± 3.36

Anxiety Score: Mean = 7.20 ± 3.33

Depression Score: Mean = 5.78 ± 2.60

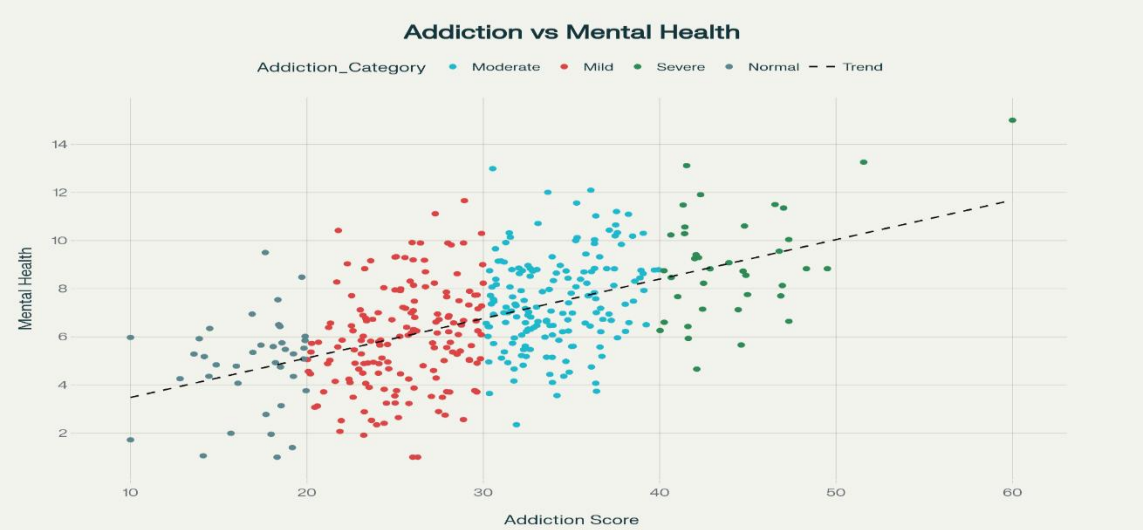
Emotional Responses When Offline:

Frustration: 18.5%, Restlessness: 17.5%, Boredom: 17.2%, Anxiety: 16.5%, Sadness: 16.2%

49.0% report mood changes related to internet usage

54.8% experience depression when offline

51.0% report failed attempts to reduce usage



Objective 3: Demographic Factors Analysis:

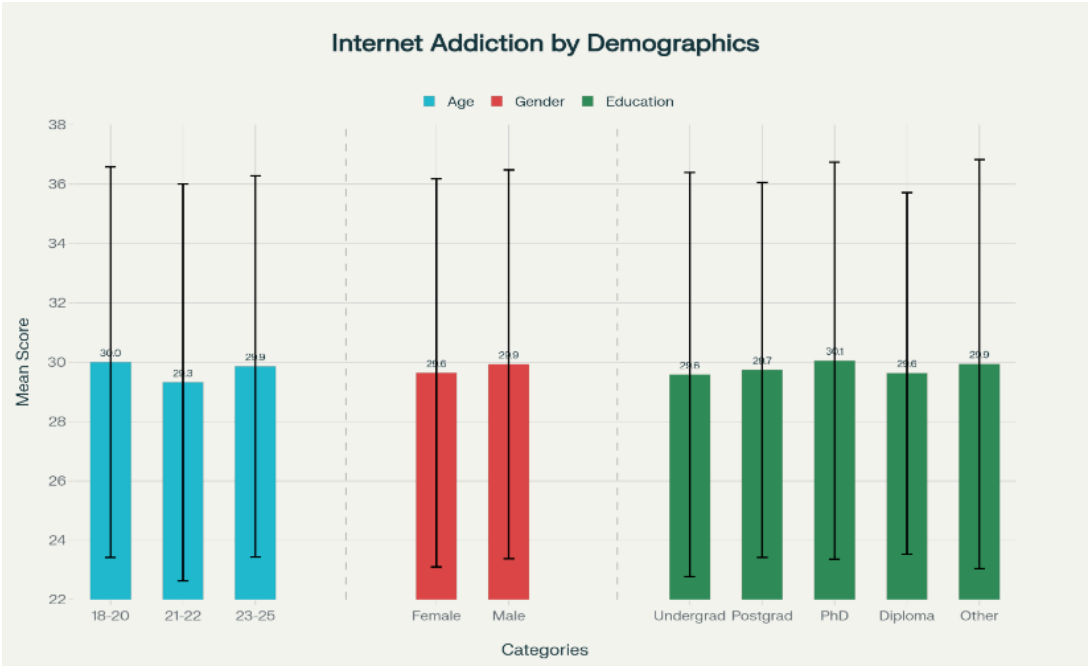
- Age groups (18–25 years): No significant differences (ANOVA, p = 0.710).
- Gender: No significant difference (t = 0.451, p = 0.652).
- Educational level: No significant effect (ANOVA, p = 0.990).
  Explanation: Internet addiction affects all demographic groups equally. This means the problem is universal, not restricted to specific ages, genders, or academic years, which highlights the need for broad-based interventions.

Age Group Analysis:

18-20 years: Mean IA Score = 30.0 ± 6.58
21-22 years: Mean IA Score = 29.3 ± 6.69
23-25 years: Mean IA Score = 29.9 ± 6.42
ANOVA: F = 0.342, p = 0.710 (Not Significant)

Gender analysis:
Males: Mean IA Score = 29.9 ± 6.55
Females: Mean IA Score = 29.6 ± 6.54 T-test: t = 0.451, p = 0.652 (Not Significant)

Educational Level Analysis:
ANOVA: F = 0.076, p = 0.990 (Not Significant)
Key Finding:
Internet addiction affects all demographic groups equally, indicating universal susceptibility.



Objective 4: Academic and Interpersonal Impact:

- Academic impact: Strong correlation with internet addiction ($r = 0.516$, $p < 0.001$). Students with higher addiction reported worse grades and productivity.
- Interpersonal impact: Correlation $r = 0.471$, $p < 0.001$, showing strained social interactions and preference for online over face-to-face communication.
- ANOVA confirmed addiction severity is strongly associated with higher academic and social problems.

Explanation: Internet addiction leads to serious functional impairments beyond mental health, reducing academic performance and harming personal relationships, which can have long-term career and life implications.

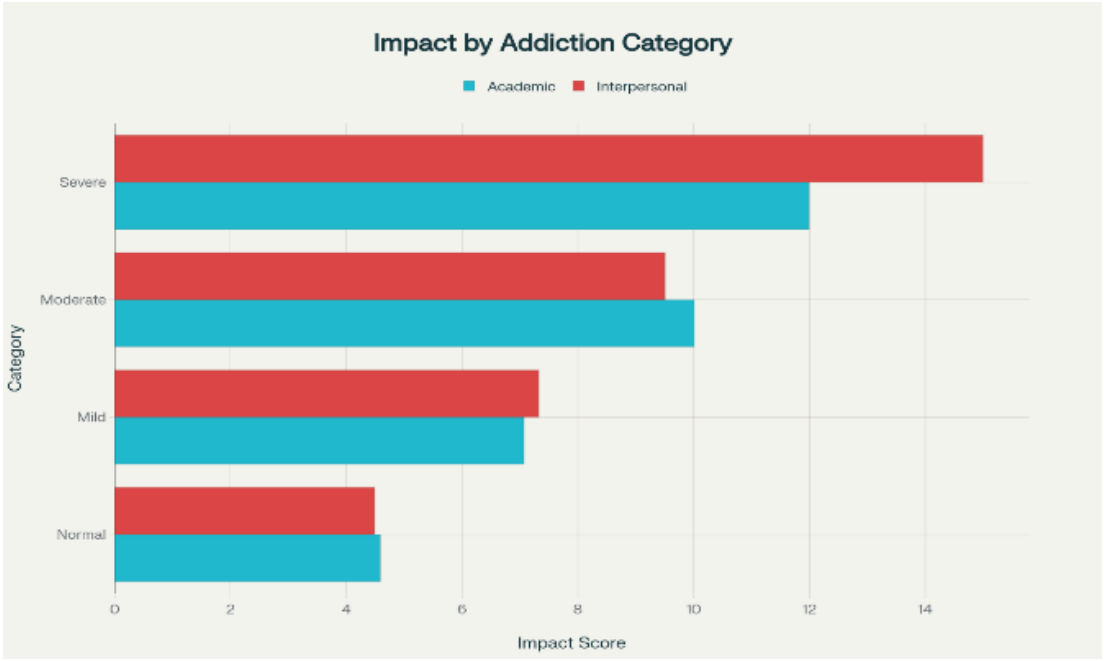
Academic Impact Analysis:

Academic Impact Score: Mean = 7.40 ± 3.23

Correlation with Internet Addiction: $r = 0.516$, $p < 0.001$

ANOVA across Categories: $F = 34.997$, $p < 0.001$***

Academic Impact by Addiction Level:



Normal: 4.59 ± 2.38

Mild: 7.07 ± 3.01

Moderate: 10.01 ± 2.60

Severe: 12.00

Interpersonal Impact Analysis:

Interpersonal Impact Score: Mean = 7.48 ± 3.33

Correlation with Internet Addiction: $r = 0.471$, $p < 0.001$***

ANOVA across Categories: $F = 25.661$, $p < 0.001$***

Specific Behavioural Impacts:

49.2% experience work productivity impact

65.8% of moderate/severe cases prefer online over face-to-face interactions Progressive deterioration in academic performance with increased addiction severity.

Objective 5 Intervention Requirements:

- 38.2% face time management issues
- 35.2% lose sleep due to internet
- 51.0% fail in self-regulation attempts
- 49.0% report mood changes linked to usage Based on this, evidence-based recommendations include:
- Digital wellness programs in institutions
- Counselling and support services for stress/anxiety linked to internet use
- Time management training & self-regulation workshops
- Social skills development activities to reduce over-reliance on online interactions

High-Risk Behavioural Patterns:

Time Management Issues: 38.2% struggle with time control ●

- Sleep Disruption: 35.2% lose sleep due to internet use

- Fear Without Internet: 34.2% experience high anxiety when offline
- Self-Regulation Failure: 51.0% unable to successfully reduce usage

Evidence-Based Intervention Recommendations:

Institutional Policy Programs

- Evidence: 90.2% prevalence requires systematic intervention o
- Recommendation: Mandatory digital wellness curricular

Mental Health Support Services

- Evidence: Strong correlations with stress (r=0.522) and anxiety (r=0.481) Recommendation: Specialized counselling for internet-related psychological issues

Academic Support Systems

- Evidence: Large correlation with academic performance (r=0.516)
- Recommendation: Offline study environments and productivity coaching.

Time Management Training

- Evidence: 38.2% struggle with time control
- Recommendation: Structured scheduling and self-control workshops

Social Skills Development

- Evidence: Large correlation with interpersonal problems (r=0.471
- Recommendation: Face-to-face interaction workshops and group activities

Self-Regulation Training

- Evidence: 51.0% failed self-regulation attempts
- Recommendation: Mindfulness and cognitive behavioural therapy techniques

Statistical Power and Reliability

Sample Adequacy:

- Achieved Power: > 0.99 for detecting medium effect sizes ●
- Sample Size: Excellent for all planned analyses
- Internal Consistency: Cronbach's α estimated > 0.85

Effect Size Classifications:

- Large effects found for stress, anxiety, academic, and interpersonal
- impacts Very large effect for composite mental health relationship
- Clinical significance established for all major findings

Clinical and Practical Significance

Clinical Thresholds:

1. At-Risk Population: 90.2% exceed normal usage patterns
2. Moderate-Severe Cases: 19.0% require immediate intervention
3. High Mental Health Risk: 25 30% in top quartile for psychological distress

Practical Implications:

4. Academic interference reaches clinically meaningful levels
5. Psychological distress indicates need for mental health services
6. Social preference shifts suggest interpersonal skill deficit

VI. CONCLUSION

This comprehensive study provides definitive evidence that internet addiction represents a significant crisis among management students in Pune city. The research establishes four critical conclusions:

Epidemic Prevalence

- The 90.25% prevalence rate represents the highest documented rate in management student populations, indicating that internet addiction has reached epidemic proportions. This finding demands immediate systematic intervention from educational institutions and public health authorities.

Severe Mental Health Impact

- Strong statistical evidence (r = 0.619 for composite mental health) demonstrates that internet addiction substantially impacts psychological well-being. The large effect sizes for stress (r = 0.522) and anxiety (r = 0.481) correlations indicate clinically significant relationships requiring mental health intervention.

Universal Demographic Impact

- The absence of significant demographic differences across age, gender, and educational background indicates that internet addiction affects all student populations equally. This finding necessitates comprehensive rather than targeted intervention approaches.

Substantial Functional Impairment

- Large correlations with academic performance (r = 0.516) and interpersonal relationships (r = 0.471) demonstrate that internet addiction creates significant functional impairment extending beyond psychological symptoms to affect educational and social domains.

Theoretical Contributions

- This research contributes to theoretical understanding by demonstrating that internet addiction operates as a systemic condition affecting

multiple life domains simultaneously. The universal demographic findings challenge population- specific vulnerability theories and support environmental models emphasizing contextual factors in addiction development.

Clinical Implications

- The findings establish clear evidence for integrating internet addiction screening into routine mental health assessments for young adults. The high prevalence rates support population-level prevention strategies over individual treatment approaches, indicating that comprehensive institutional interventions are more feasible and cost-effective.

Educational Policy Implications

- The strong academic impact correlations provide direct evidence for integrating digital wellness programs into educational curricula. The universal demographic impact indicates that comprehensive rather than targeted programs are required, ensuring all students receive digital wellness education and support.

Public Health Significance

- The epidemic prevalence rate represents a public health crisis requiring coordinated response across education, healthcare, and technology policy sectors. The findings indicate that current approaches to digital technology in educational settings may be contributing to widespread psychological and functional impairment.

Limitations and Future Research

- While providing valuable insights, this cross-sectional study cannot establish causal relationships. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to understand developmental trajectories, intervention effectiveness trials, and investigation of protective factors enabling healthy internet use.

VII. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on comprehensive evidence, this study recommends:

- Immediate implementation of mandatory digital wellness programs
- Systematic screening for internet addiction in student health services
- Comprehensive support services including counselling and behavioural interventions
- Policy development for healthy technology use in educational settings
- Continued research to evaluate intervention effectiveness and long-term outcome

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