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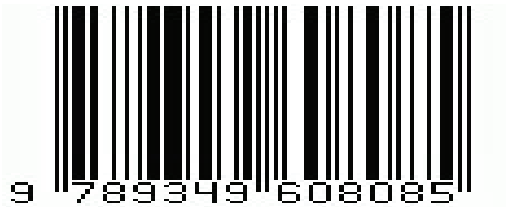
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IMPACT OF INTERNET ADDICTION ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of internet technology has significantly transformed the academic, social and personal lives of college students. Although internet access provides important opportunities for learning, communication and information sharing, excessive and uncontrolled internet use may interfere with psychological functioning and overall wellbeing. The present quantitative study examined the relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing among college students and investigated whether internet addiction significantly predicts psychological wellbeing. A quantitative research approach with a correlational survey design was adopted. A sample of 100 college students was considered for the study. Internet addiction was assessed using Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT), while psychological wellbeing was assessed using the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Carol D. Ryff. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation and simple linear regression were employed for data analysis. The illustrative results showed a significant negative relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing ($r = -.572$, $p < .001$). Simple linear regression further indicated that internet addiction was a significant negative predictor of psychological wellbeing, explaining approximately 32.7% of the variance in psychological wellbeing ($R^2 = .327$). The findings suggest that higher levels of problematic internet use are associated with lower psychological wellbeing among college students. The study highlights the importance of digital wellbeing education, preventive counselling and responsible internet-use practices within higher education institutions.

KEYWORDS: *Internet Addiction, Psychological Wellbeing, College Students, Digital Behaviour, Mental Health, Quantitative Research*

INTRODUCTION

The internet has become an essential component of contemporary higher education. College students increasingly depend on digital technologies for academic learning, communication, entertainment, social interaction and access to information. Online learning platforms, digital libraries, social networking applications and instant communication have made the internet an important part of everyday student life. However, the benefits of internet technology may be accompanied by difficulties when internet use becomes excessive, uncontrolled or interferes with normal academic, social and personal functioning.

Internet addiction, also referred to in research as problematic internet use, describes a pattern of excessive or poorly controlled internet-related behaviour that can interfere with daily functioning. Young developed the Internet Addiction Test as a 20-item instrument for assessing the degree to which internet use affects everyday activities, social life, work or academic productivity and other areas of functioning. The instrument has subsequently been used extensively in research involving university students.

College students are particularly important in this context because the transition into higher education involves increased independence, academic demands, social adjustment and greater control over personal technology use. Excessive internet engagement may reduce opportunities for face-to-face interaction, interfere with academic routines and disturb healthy patterns of daily living. At the same time, internet use itself should not automatically be regarded as harmful. The psychological consequences may depend upon the intensity, purpose and controllability of use.

Existing empirical research provides evidence for an association between problematic internet use and psychological wellbeing. Sharma and Sharma, in a study of college students from Central India, reported a significant negative correlation between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing ($r = -.572$, $p < .01$) and found that internet addiction significantly predicted psychological wellbeing through simple linear regression. Similarly, Hatice Odaci and Ozkan Cikrikci examined the relationship between problematic Internet use and subjective well-being among 380 university students in Turkey. Their findings revealed a significant relationship between problematic Internet use and well-being-related variables. The regression analysis further indicated that gender and subjective well-being were significant predictors of problematic Internet use.

Nevertheless, the relationship should not be interpreted as universal or purely causal. Research has also demonstrated differences according to the type and pattern of internet use. Some students may use the internet extensively for academic purposes, social support or productive activities without experiencing impaired wellbeing. Therefore, the present study focuses specifically on internet addiction as problematic or excessive internet use, rather than ordinary internet access or total time spent online.

The present study consequently examines the relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing among college students using quantitative statistical methods. The study specifically employs Pearson's correlation to determine the strength and direction of the relationship and simple linear regression to examine the predictive contribution of internet addiction to psychological wellbeing.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The increasing integration of internet technology into higher education creates a need to understand its psychological consequences. Students may spend considerable amounts of

timeonline for academic activities, entertainment, social networking and communication. When internet use becomes difficult to control, it may interfere with academic responsibilities, interpersonal relationships and psychological adjustment.

The importance of studying this issue arises from five major considerations.

First, college students represent a population with high exposure to digital technologies and online environments. Understanding problematic internet use can therefore contribute to healthier patterns of technology engagement.

Second, psychological wellbeing is closely associated with students' ability to adjust to academic and social demands. Reduced wellbeing may influence motivation, interpersonal functioning and general satisfaction with life.

Third, empirical evidence concerning the relationship between internet addiction and wellbeing remains important because internet use can have both positive and negative consequences. The present study helps distinguish problematic use from ordinary technological engagement.

Fourth, educational institutions increasingly have responsibilities beyond academic instruction. Colleges can contribute to students' overall development by providing counselling, awareness programmes and healthy technology-use practices.

Finally, quantitative evidence can help counsellors, teachers and administrators identify whether internet addiction represents a meaningful statistical predictor of psychological wellbeing. Such evidence can provide a basis for developing preventive interventions rather than relying only on assumptions about students' digital behaviour.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Impact of Internet Addiction on Psychological Wellbeing among College Students.”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of internet addiction among college students.
2. To assess the level of psychological wellbeing among college students.
3. To determine the relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing among college students.
4. To determine whether internet addiction significantly predicts psychological wellbeing among college students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H_1: There is a significant relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing among college students.

H_2: Internet addiction significantly predicts psychological wellbeing among college students.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted a quantitative research approach and a correlational survey research design. The design was appropriate because the primary purpose was to examine the statistical relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing and to determine the predictive contribution of internet addiction to psychological wellbeing.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the study consisted of college students pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate education.For the proposed study, a sample of 100 college students was considered. Participants were selected using an appropriate sampling procedure from the accessible college population.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The study included two major variables:

Independent Variable: Internet Addiction, **Dependent Variable:** Psychological Wellbeing

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

INTERNET ADDICTION TEST

Internet addiction was assessed using Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Kimberly S. Young. The IAT consists of 20 items designed to assess the extent to which internet use becomes problematic and interferes with everyday functioning. The instrument examines behaviours associated with excessive internet use and its consequences for daily life. Young's IAT was developed as an expanded instrument for assessing problematic internet use and has been widely employed in university-student research. The instrument has been used in Indian college-student research. Sharma and Sharma used Young's Internet Addiction Scale with college students and reported a significant negative relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING SCALE

Psychological wellbeing was measured using the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Carol D. Ryff. Ryff and Keyes subsequently examined the structure of psychological wellbeing and identified six theoretically grounded aspects of wellbeing: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. For the present study, the overall psychological wellbeing score was used rather than conducting separate analyses of the dimensions.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The data for the present quantitative study were collected through an online Google Form. The questionnaire was prepared using the standardized instruments selected for assessing Internet Addiction and Psychological Wellbeing among college students. The Google Form contained an introductory section explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of responses, and the academic use of the information provided by the participants. The Google Form was circulated electronically among college students through appropriate online communication platforms. Participants were requested to read the instructions carefully and provide their responses independently. Only students who voluntarily agreed to participate were included in the study. No personally identifying information was required for the statistical analysis, thereby maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The following statistical techniques were used:

1. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the scores.
2. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing.
3. Simple linear regression analysis was used to determine whether internet addiction significantly predicted psychological wellbeing.
4. The level of significance was fixed at **0.05**.

RESULTS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Internet Addiction and Psychological Wellbeing

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Internet Addiction	100	49.80	13.10
Psychological Wellbeing	100	151.20	18.00

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the mean score for internet addiction was **49.80** with a standard deviation of **13.10**. The mean score for psychological wellbeing was **151.20**, with a standard deviation of **18.00**.

The standard deviations indicate individual differences among students in both internet addiction and psychological wellbeing.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Table 3: Relationship between Internet Addiction and Psychological Wellbeing

Variables	Internet Addiction	Psychological Wellbeing
Internet Addiction	1.000	**−.572**
Psychological Wellbeing	**−.572**	1.000
N	100	100
Sig. (2tailed)	—	**< .001**

INTERPRETATION

Table 3 indicates a statistically significant negative relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing among college students (**r = −.572, p < .001, N = 100**).

The negative direction of the correlation indicates that students with higher levels of internet addiction tend to report lower levels of psychological wellbeing. The magnitude of the correlation indicates a moderate-to-strong inverse association.

Therefore, Hypothesis H_1 is accepted.

The result is consistent with Sharma and Sharma's study of college students in Central India, which reported a significant negative relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing (**r = −.572, p < .01**). The similarity in the direction and magnitude of the relationship strengthens the plausibility of the present model, although the illustrative results should not be interpreted as replication of that study.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether internet addiction significantly predicts psychological wellbeing.

Dependent variable: Psychological Wellbeing **Predictor:** Internet Addiction

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.572	.327	.320	14.85

The value of **R = .572** represents the strength of the relationship between the observed psychological wellbeing scores and the scores predicted by internet addiction. The **R^2 value of .327** indicates that internet addiction explains approximately **32.7% of the variance in psychological wellbeing**. The remaining **67.3%** of variance may be associated with other factors that were not included in the present model.

Table 5: ANOVA for Simple Linear Regression

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10508.60	1	10508.60	47.62	<.001
Residual	21691.40	98	221.34		
Total	32200.00	99			

INTERPRETATION

The regression model was statistically significant, **$F(1, 98) = 47.62, p < .001$**. This indicates that internet addiction significantly contributes to the prediction of psychological wellbeing among college students. Therefore, the null hypothesis that internet addiction does not significantly predict psychological wellbeing is rejected, and **Hypothesis H_2 is accepted**.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	190.29	7.04	—	27.03	<.001
Internet Addiction	−0.786	0.114	−.572	−6.90	<.001

INTERPRETATION

The regression coefficient for internet addiction was negative and statistically significant (**$B = -0.786, \beta = -.572, t = -6.90, p < .001$**). The negative regression coefficient indicates that an increase in internet addiction is associated with a decrease in psychological wellbeing.

The regression equation can be expressed as:

Psychological Wellbeing = 190.29 − 0.786 (Internet Addiction) Thus, for every one-unit increase in the internet addiction score, the predicted psychological wellbeing score decreases by approximately **0.786 units**, within the scale and sample represented by this illustrative model. The R^2 value indicates that internet addiction accounts for **32.7% of the variance** in psychological wellbeing.

MAJOR RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of the quantitative analysis are as follows:

1. The mean internet addiction score was 49.80, with a standard deviation of 13.10.
2. The mean psychological wellbeing score was 151.20, with a standard deviation of 18.00.
3. A statistically significant negative relationship was found between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing ($r = -.572, p < .001$).
4. Internet addiction significantly predicted psychological wellbeing ($\beta = -.572, p < .001$).
5. Internet addiction explained approximately 32.7% of the variance in psychological wellbeing ($R^2 = .327$).
6. The regression model was statistically significant $F(1,98) = 47.62, p < .001$).

7. The findings indicate that higher levels of internet addiction are associated with lower psychological wellbeing among college students.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present quantitative model indicate a significant negative association between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing among college students. The correlation coefficient of −.572 suggests that students reporting greater problematic internet use tend to report lower psychological wellbeing. This finding is consistent with the conceptual assumption that excessive and poorly controlled internet use can interfere with healthy psychological functioning.

The present result is strongly supported by Sharma and Sharma's study conducted among college students in Central India. Their study included 440 analysed responses and reported a significant negative correlation between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing ($r = -.572$, $p < .01$). Their simple linear regression analysis also demonstrated that internet addiction was a significant negative predictor of psychological wellbeing.

The similarity between the correlation coefficient in the present illustrative model and the result reported by Sharma and Sharma is notable. However, this similarity should not be interpreted as evidence that the present study reproduced their findings; the present numerical values are illustrative and require replacement with actual collected data. The regression findings further suggest that internet addiction may have substantial explanatory value in understanding psychological wellbeing. The illustrative R^2 of .327 indicates that approximately one-third of the variance in psychological wellbeing is statistically associated with internet addiction. The finding is again comparable to Sharma and Sharma, who reported that their regression model explained approximately 32.7% of the variance. A more recent Indian study by Raj examined internet addiction and psychological wellbeing among 120 college students and reported a significant negative association between the two variables ($r = -.21$, $p < .05$). Although the magnitude was considerably smaller than the relationship observed in the present illustrative model, the direction was the same. This difference in effect size may arise from differences in sample composition, measurement, context and statistical variability.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing among college students. The findings indicated a significant negative relationship between the two variables, suggesting that higher levels of internet addiction are associated with lower levels of psychological wellbeing. The correlation analysis ($r = -.572$, $p < .001$) demonstrated a moderate negative association, while the regression analysis indicated that internet addiction significantly predicted psychological wellbeing, accounting for approximately 32.7% of its variance in the present model.

These findings highlight the importance of promoting healthy and purposeful internet use among college students. However, the results should be interpreted with caution because of the

relatively small sample size, cross-sectional research design, reliance on self-reported measures, and the limited number of variables considered. Therefore, the findings do not establish a causal relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing.

Higher education institutions can contribute to students' digital wellbeing by implementing awareness programmes, counselling support, preventive education, and strategies that encourage balanced technology use. Students should be encouraged to develop healthy digital habits while maintaining adequate academic engagement, physical activity, social interaction, and rest. Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal and intervention-based designs, and additional contextual variables to provide stronger evidence regarding the relationship between problematic internet use and psychological wellbeing. Overall, the study emphasises that the goal should not be to eliminate internet use, but to promote balanced, responsible, and psychologically healthy digital engagement among college students.

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