



Research Article

An Exploration into the Correlation between Excessive Internet Usage and the Psychological Well-Being of College Students

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Abstract

The internet has become an important tool for communication, education, and entertainment, yet too much time on the net raises concerns about its possible effects on mental health. Because psychological well-being is a significant aspect of mental health and causes stress, anxiety, and general dissatisfaction with life, the association between the two must be explored. The study focuses on the relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of 155 undergraduate students at Aligarh Muslim University. The result showed that 26.5% of students enjoy good mental health and that 73.5% of students suffer from poor mental health. Among the students, 31.6% reported low dependency on the Internet, but 68.4% were found to be addicted. Internet addiction and mental health do correlate moderately positively, with a correlation coefficient of 0.58. However, it had a small relationship between internet addiction and poor mental health, showing an $r = 0.313$. A weakly positive correlation with a value of 0.469 was found between Internet addiction and mental health. It is evident that, although there is a correlation between the internet and mental health, this relationship probably accounts only for part of one's psychological well-being, not exclusively. Further, the study on gender has not shown any significant difference between mental health and addiction to the internet based on gender among the students. This implies that even if students today may depend increasingly on the internet, various other factors at work need to be explored.

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KEYWORDS: Excessive Internet usage, Mental Health, College Students, Psychological Well-being.

1. INTRODUCTION

An increase in people manifesting addictive behaviours directed towards new technologies, the Internet included, is a defining feature of society today. Such an escalating malaise indeed creates a challenge to the international community, thus rendering it timely in consideration of developments in communication technologies (Wegmann *et al.*, 2015) ^[1]. The

Internet is an instrument that skews any conventional meaning of communication by providing a wide array of information, communication, and business activities. Conceived as a reliable and fault-tolerant communication network since the 1960s, by the 1990s, it had grown into a worldwide academic and commercial resource. With how pervasive and influential the Internet is in the modern world, one begins to worry about

panicking over the possibility of an Internet addiction disorder. Although this perspective may stir up some controversy, the reading of the imminent crawling into DSM-V of Internet addiction disorder calls for more investigation (Holden, 2010) [2]. Such that it has become an indispensable part of modern life, offering a wide range of services such as communication, research, education, financial transactions, and real-time updates, among many others. It makes possible speedy and simple communication through video conferencing, social networking, and email. In this respect, Grohol (2014) [3] identifies the key reason why people spend such a significant amount of time engaged in communication online through e-mail, discussion boards, chat rooms, and online games, pointing to the Internet's ability to create social interactions. Access to knowledge has increased because all learning materials have been made available by the Internet. It has transformed and shaped ties through social media.

Despite the merits of the Internet, its abuse may not only lead to addiction but also to other complications, such as ignoring work and relationships. But all the same, its plus points of education, connections, and communication easily make the Internet an essential feature of modern culture. So far, many etiologic paradigms have sprouted from various viewpoints such as the reward-debt model, learning theory, cognitive behavioural theory, social learning, culture, genetics, and neuroscience. There are general controversies, conceptual ones (are behavioural addictions?), technical ones (what particular aspect of Internet use is the person "addicted to"?), and practical ones (having established that it is a real construct, how do we proceed to diagnose Internet addiction?). According to Singh & Barmola, 2015 [4], internet addiction, or IA, is characterized by excessive behavioural involvement in activities conducted on online media outlets that negatively affect daily functioning and compromise relationships when they are not removed. Ognibene, Fiore, & Gu, 2019 [19]. Among the public health focus, internet addiction (IA) has gained particular attention among adolescents and up to this point, remains a major area of research. Results have often proved inconsistent, but the evidence for the link between IA and several psychological outcomes, opposite to social problems, stresses, anxieties, and depression, is palpable (Saikia, Das, Barman, and Bharali, 2019) [20]. Other online disadvantages include the like, spam that inundates an inbox with unsolicited mail, threatens security, and leads to disgruntlement; and vehement, virulent malware such as Trojan horses and viruses. They expose computer users, especially businesses, to serious risks, which can even lead to total loss of information and high financial liabilities.

Moreover, the Internet does present the risk of breaches of private information, thereby exposing consumers to online fraud. Another concern is internet addiction, as it could affect social life, lead to physical problems like obesity, and deteriorate mental and emotional health. Parents should play a watchdog role as the children are left to view some obscene sites where adults could be of benefit. The most recognized characteristic of addiction to the internet is a fixation on

activities on the internet that the person often neglects real-life priorities and obligations, as well as real-life relationships. This quite unpleasant addiction might take many forms, including compulsive web browsing and cybersex, hiding within digital avenues of online gambling, and then casting a spell of misery over destiny. Common signs include spending too much time online, frustration with the Internet, and physical ailments caused by inactivity. Such causes of Internet addiction include mood swings, tolerance, symptoms of withdrawal, and friction with interactions in real life. These things provide grounding for responsible and balanced usages of the Internet, just to avoid the negative consequences identified.

Mental health is the way that it influences how people feel, think, or behave. Mental health comprises not only the absence of mental diseases but also the ability to manage stress, to be productive at work, and to contribute sensibly to the community. Well-being is a factor in all stages of life, from infancy to old age, that possesses great importance. Well, with mental health services, it is noted that much money is left out, especially in low- and middle-income countries, where most funding is directed toward specialized treatment, leaving behind a gap even in the development of comprehensive care systems. They should not be the only care source for people with mental illness, but should close their gap by applying community-based services and integrating them with primary health care. Less funding has been directed towards promoting mental the very approach to promoting general well-being towards treatment services, and hence needs a multi-sectoral approach for effectiveness. It is in these terms that more complex and multifactorial causes explain the development of mental problems: external influences, for instance, early adverse experiences and current stressors; cultural aspects, case in point; biological factors related to alterations in the brain chemistry; genetic factors may have a hereditary component within them. Thus, the diversified causes show that the holistic approach to mental care promotion would be effective.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the levels of mental health of students in the study.
2. To find out the levels of internet addiction of students in the study.
3. To know the relationship between internet addiction and mental health in the study.
 - 3.1 To know the relationship between Poor Mental Health and Internet Addiction of students in the study.
 - 3.2 To know the relationship between Good Mental Health and Internet Addiction of students in the study.
 - 3.3 To estimate the relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of male students in the study.
 - 3.4 To estimate the relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of female students in the study.

Hypothesis of the study

H₀-1: There is no significant relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of the total sample.

H0-2: There is no significant relationship between poor mental health and internet addiction of the total sample.

H0-3: There is no significant relationship between good mental health and internet addiction in the total sample.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examined research work done in India and abroad. A huge number of research studies have been conducted in India. For example, Anand, N. et.al (2018) ^[5, 11] studied trends of internet use, internet addiction (IA), and its relationship with psychological distress among engineering students in Mangalore, India. The study states IA is common and adversely affects students' academic performance and long-term career goals. This was a significant citation regarding the detection and treatment of IA and psychological issues in pupils. Priya et.al. conducted a cross-sectional study on internet habits among medical students in the year 2018 at U.P. Moradabad. The study through Young's Internet Addiction Scale found that out of the total sample, 5.76% had an addiction to the Internet, 60.21% had a mild addiction, and 11.78% were average users. Internet usage was considered mainly for online gaming, social networking, and media content downloads by most of the respondents. Tripathi, A. (2017) ^[6] examined the nexus between internet addiction and mental health and revealed the prevalence of internet addiction and online gaming disorder (IGD), resulting in increasing mental health issues such as diminished self-worth, disrupted sleep, and mood disorders. Therefore, this study proposed an integrative approach to yoga and mindfulness for efficacious treatment. The study was conducted by Bhatia, Rajpoot, and Dwivedi in the year 2016 ^[7] to see the internet addiction among students of private schools in Gwalior and found that obsessive internet usage is proving to be more and more interfering into life of teenagers. This is more so addressed by using Young's Internet Addiction Test, with a view that balanced advice of parents and institutions would be dispensed to aid internet usage applications towards academics and the areas of physical activity. As of a study by Bagdey et al. (2016) ^[8] on Nagpur, the largest population of college students revealed using the internet for online discussions and then online shopping. The significance of awareness to the parents and students on the benefits and drawbacks of internet use was highlighted by the study. Mishra and Jayakrishnan (2015) ^[9] evaluated internet addiction prevalence among Bhubaneswar University students and the relation of addiction with psychopathologies. The study revealed a different profile of internet addiction, which varies with different academic years and disciplines, but did not find any correlational result on psychopathologies when analysing internet addiction levels using IAT scores. Chauhan et al. (2022) ^[10] found that roughly 58.87% of medical students were internet addicts, an addiction predicted by gender, age at which internet use started, and use of mobile devices. Awareness-raising and preventive efforts are thus recommended by the study in combating internet addiction. Anand et. al. (2018) ^[5, 11] evaluated the internet addiction behaviour of college students in

South India in a 2018 study. 43.5% were not addicted, 15.2% were moderate, and 41.3% were mild addictions. Internet addiction was significantly correlated with factors such as gender, field of study, and time spent online. According to Sharma et al. (2015), a study on school children from Mumbai found that internet addiction persists with psychopathology. Girls showed a higher prevalence of internet addiction (1.62%) as compared to boys (3.96%). The study highlighted the relationship between patterns of internet usage and stress. Sharma et al. (2014) ^[13] reported rising trends of internet addiction among professional degree students in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, to promote safe and healthy use of the internet. 11.8% of high school students from Ahmedabad suffer from internet addiction, according to findings by Yadav et al. in 2021, who also noted a significant association between IA and stress, anxiety, and depression. The findings reinforced the need to test students with these psychological problems for IA. The foreign studies help shine a light on the multi-dimensional impacts of Internet use and addiction on different facets of human life. Soegoto and Tjokroadiponto reveal that, generally, while being on the Internet can largely increase one's academic performance, it can negatively affect social aspects. PhD students and Menicol and Thorsteinsson (2017) ^[15] study what drives Internet addiction in different age groups, citing avoidant coping as the main mediator between mental distress and Internet addiction. This is claimed to connote significant relations between the increase in Internet usage and with greater development of cases characterized by depression, anxiety, and stress, accompanied by increased dependency on mobile phones, denoting the role of intervention. Emeka and Nyeche's (2016) ^[16] study reveals the benefits that come with Internet use in both learning and practicing, and talks about problems like ignorance of computer usage or slow server speed. Akin and Iskender 2011 ^[18] state that there is a positive relationship between Internet addiction and the levels of host depression, anxiety, and stress, which strongly proves that lack of restraint in internet engagement translates directly to mental condition deterioration. These studies together speak to a complex and two-sided reality of the Internet, the positives and negatives of such use.

4. METHODOLOGY

The design of the survey pursues a cross-sectional investigation of the population, which is distinct and inflexible. The survey depicts an exploration into the correlation between excessive internet usage and the psychological well-being of college students of Aligarh Muslim University. For the procedure, simple random sampling and structured questionnaires are used for data collection. The methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge. Typically, it encompasses concepts such as paradigms, theoretical models, phases, and quantitative or qualitative techniques. In the present study, the target population consists of students studying in various undergraduate courses at Aligarh Muslim University,

Aligarh. The sample of this study consisted of 155 undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Arts & Social Science, & Faculty of Commerce of Aligarh Muslim University. Out of 155 students, male students were 90 while female students were 65. The final tool of Mental Health consisted of 25 questions. Another tool used in the study was to analyse the internet addiction of students. The questionnaire for Internet Addiction (IA) was self-administered. It was employed to collect information about internet addiction with their mental

health. The final form of the questionnaire for internet addiction consisted of 25 questions. In the current study, the researcher has used many descriptive and statistical techniques for the analysis of the data scientifically and systematically, following the purposes and objectives of the study. The analysis of the data has been done with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software. The following statistical techniques were used according to the needs and nature of the study: Percentage Analysis, Mean, Correlation studies, Standard Deviation, and t-test.

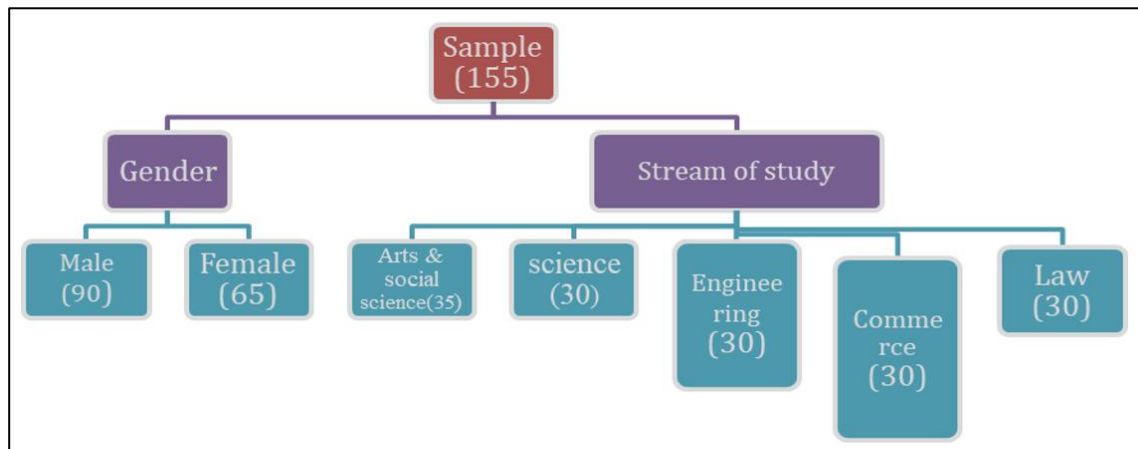


Figure 1: Total sample of the Study

5. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data has been analysed and interpreted to examine the relationship between internet addiction and the mental health status of undergraduate students of Aligarh Muslim University. For analysing the data, the researcher, first of all, fits the raw data into MS Excel. Then, raw data is fed into the IBM SPSS-20.0 software.

Objective 1: To explore the levels of mental health of students in the study

To analyze this objective, the percentage of students was calculated in response to the data collected from the

questionnaire on mental health. The following data was obtained:

Table 1: Levels of mental health of students

Variable	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Standard deviation
Mental Health	155	29.0	84.0	57.49	8.95

The total number of students in the sample of the study was 155, the minimum score was 29, and the maximum score was 84. The mean was calculated to be 57.49, and the standard deviation was estimated to be 8.95.

Table 2: Percentage of students in each level of mental health

Mental Health Level	N	Percentage of students (%)
Good	41	26.5%
Poor	114	73.5%
Total	155	100.0

N=Number of students

The levels of mental health were estimated from the scores obtained in the questionnaire used in the study. The levels were identified as good mental health and poor mental health. The scores about good mental health ranged from 63 and above,

whereas the scores defining poor mental health ranged from 62 and below. Out of 155 students, 73.5% of students have poor mental health, and 26.5% of students have Good mental health. It is clearly shown through the table and graph as given.

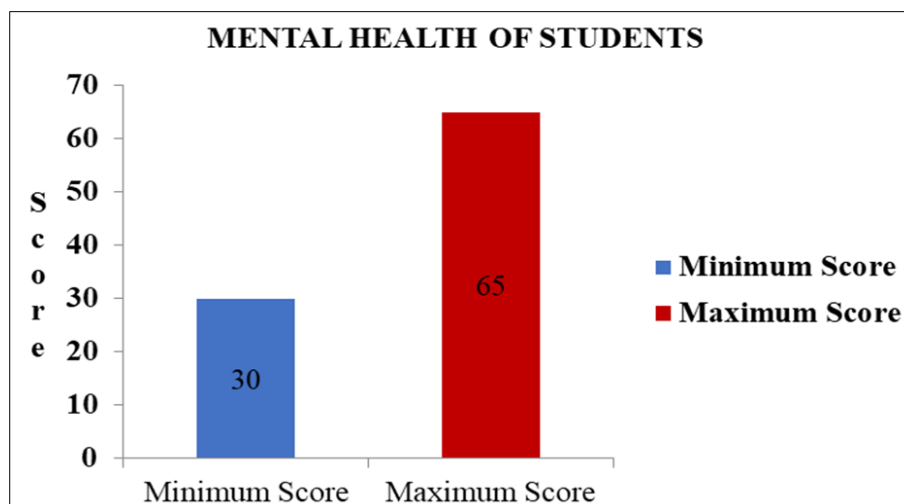


Figure 2: Levels of mental health

The data given in the tables have been depicted in the following figure:

Objective 2: To find out the levels of internet addiction of students in the study

To analyse this objective, the percentage of students was calculated in response to the data collected from the questionnaire on Internet addiction. The following data was obtained:

Table 3: Levels of internet addiction of students

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Internet Addiction	155	30.00	65.00	46.97	7.38

N= Number of students

The total number of students in the sample of the study was 155. The minimum score was 30, and the maximum score was

65. The mean was calculated to be 46.97, and the standard deviation was estimated to be 7.38.

Table 4: Percentage of students in each level of internet addiction

Levels of Internet Addiction	N	Percentage of students (%)
High	49	31.6%
Low	106	68.4%

N= Number of students

The levels of internet addiction were estimated from the scores obtained in the questionnaire used in the study. The levels were identified as high internet addiction and low internet addiction. The scores for high internet addiction ranged from 50 and above, whereas the scores defining low internet addiction ranged from 49 and below. Out of 155 students, 31.6% of students have a high internet addiction, and 68.4% of students have a low internet addiction. It is clearly shown through the table and graph as given.

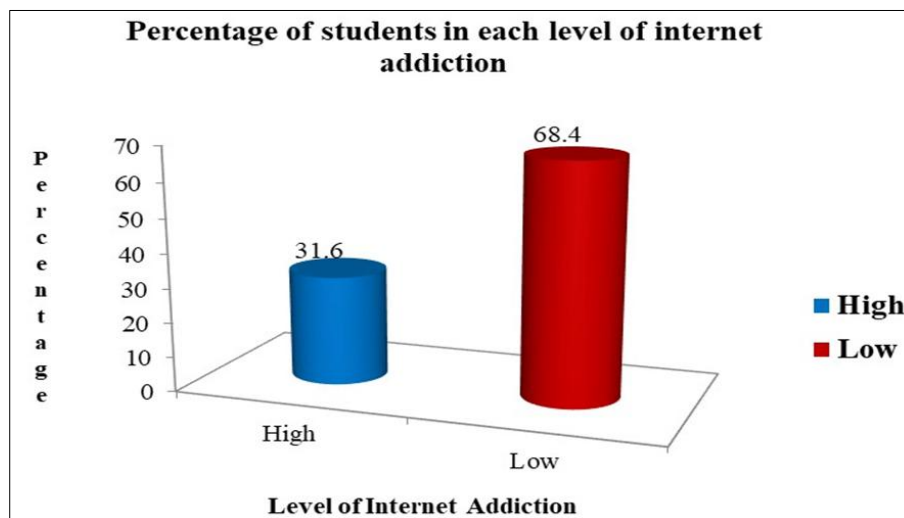


Figure 3: Percentage of students at each level of internet addiction

Objective 3: To know the relationship between internet addiction and mental health in the study
To analyze the objective, the correlation was used for the data. The correlation analysis was done on data collected for internet addiction and the mental health of students in the sample.

Table 5: Correlation between internet addiction and mental health

Variable	Total No. of students	Correlation
Mental Health	155	0.58
Internet Addiction		

The value obtained for correlation came out to be 0.58. The value implies that there's a positive relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of students in the sample. However, the relationship is average and not strong.

Objective 3.1: To know the relationship between poor mental health and internet addiction of students in the study
To examine the relationship between poor mental health and internet addiction in the total sample, the researcher used correlation analysis. The results are shown in the following table.

Table 6: Relationship between poor mental health and internet addiction

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Correlation
Poor Mental Health	114	53.38	6.06	0.313
Internet Addiction	155	46.97	7.38	

To analyze the objective, the correlation was used for the data. The correlation analysis was done on data collected for internet addiction and poor mental health of students in the sample. The value obtained for correlation came out to be 0.313. The value implies that there's a positive relationship between internet addiction and the poor mental health of students in the sample. However, the relationship is not strong and low. This shows that although a relationship exists between internet addiction and mental health, students with internet addiction are not generally exhibiting poor mental health.

Objective 3.2: To know the relationship between good mental health and internet addiction of students in the study
To examine the relationship between good mental health and internet addiction of students in the study, the researcher used correlation analysis. The result is shown in the following table.

Table 7: Relationship between good mental health and internet addiction

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Correlation
Good Mental Health	41	68.93	4.72	0.469
Internet Addiction	155	46.97	7.38	

N= Number of students

To analyze the objective, the correlation was used for the data. The correlation analysis was done on data collected for good mental health and internet addiction of students in the sample. The value obtained for correlation came out to be 0.469. The value implies that there's a positive relationship between

internet addiction and the good mental health of students in the sample. However, the relationship is not strong and low. This shows that although a relationship exists between internet addiction and mental health, students with internet addiction are not generally exhibiting poor mental health.

Objective 3.3: To estimate the relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of male students in the study
To examine the relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of male students in the study, the researcher used a t-test. The result is shown in the following table.

Table 8: Relationship between internet addiction and mental health of male students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Correlation
Internet Addiction	90	47.83	7.73	0.101
Mental Health		58.19	6.71	

N= Number of students

To analyze the objective, the correlation was used for the data. The correlation analysis was done on data collected for internet addiction and the mental health of male students in the sample. The value obtained for correlation came out to be 0.101. The value implies that there's a positive relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of male students in the sample. However, the relationship is not strong and low. This shows that although a relationship exists between internet addiction and mental health.

Objective 3.4: To estimate the relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of female students in the study
To examine the relationship between internet addiction and the mental health of female students in the study, the researcher used a t-test. The result is shown in the following table.

Table 9: Relationship between internet addiction and mental health of female students.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Correlation
Internet Addiction	65	45.77	6.74	0.727
Mental Health		56.52	11.34	

N= Number of students

To analyze the objective, the correlation was used for the data. The correlation analysis was done on data collected for internet addiction and the mental health of female students in the sample. The value obtained for correlation came out to be 0.727. The value implies that there's a positive relationship between internet addiction and the good mental health of female students in the sample. However, the relationship is strong. This shows that although a relationship exists between internet addiction and mental health, female students.

6. RESULTS

The findings of the current study are discussed as follows:
The findings revealed scores for positive mental health that lay between 63 and above, and for negative mental health that lay between 62 and below. From the sample of 155 students, 73.5% suffered from poor mental health, while 26.5% enjoyed good

mental health. The data also revealed that scores for high internet dependency were 50 and over, whereas scores for low internet dependency were 49 and below. For this survey, 31.6% of students showed high internet addiction, while 68.4% showed low internet addiction. The correlation coefficient computed was found to be 0.58, thus establishing a positive relationship between internet addiction and mental well-being among the students studied; however, this relationship could be defined as moderate, not strong. The calculated correlation coefficient was 0.313, demonstrating a positive correlation between internet addiction and poor mental health among the students in the study. This association remains weak and marginal. Findings indicate that although there is some relationship between internet addiction and mental health, not all students with internet addiction display the symptoms of poor mental health. On the findings, the correlation coefficient was found to be 0.469, thus indicating a positive correlation between internet addiction and good mental health among the students in the study. However, the correlation is considered weak. These results suggest that, although there is some correlation between internet addiction and mental health, all students with internet addiction generally display good mental health compared to those with poor mental health.

7. CONCLUSION

As it passes, along with the avant-garde advances of science and technology, it becomes a very major thing in living human beings, particularly in students. From one corner of the world to many others, the student community stretches its hands for the various kinds of objectives that have been served well through the internet. The internet is the most increasingly important in forming such a sense of global identity from various geographic locations, sites, nations, communities, socioeconomic levels, countries, and languages to people's cultures and religions. The present relevance is great for all people. This research analysed the impact of internet dependence on the psychological well-being of undergraduate students from Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh. The report provided scrutiny into the dependency of the students on internet attachment and the mental condition of the sample collected during the research study. It was found that a large number of students in the study sample showed slightly available features of internet addiction. It was often said that so many of the usages of the internet for students were either educational or personal, but addiction tendencies were stated quite less. So, it showed how well the mental status of students was associated with their positive self-assessment in personality, perception of reality, and mental outlook. Modern-day students, therefore, often suffer from pretty shoddy mental health; there may be several reasons for that. The main objective of the study at hand is to show how internet addiction and mental well-being relate to each other among students. The research yielded some interesting results, which showed that there is a positive but weak relationship between internet addiction and mental health. So, the poor mental health of the students cannot be related to their internet usage alone. The relationship between internet addiction and

mental health was also studied by gender. On considering the data, it appeared that the male students showed a weaker association between internet addiction and mental health patterns than their female counterparts in the sample. The study found that there is a strong correlation between internet addiction and mental health among male and female participants in the study. In essence, the study showed that students today are not grossly inclined towards internet addiction but do show poor mental health. The specific causes would need to be further researched and analyzed.

Educational Implications

Support from parents assists their college-going students in developing appropriate behavioural patterns that contribute to keeping up good mental health. It is within the remit of a responsible environment created by parents, teachers, and members of society to develop the sound mental health of young individuals. Internet addiction is one important aspect to consider if college students go seeking help for commonly presenting mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, and stress, at primary care physicians. Because the students engage the internet for academic purposes and personal interests, it is then recommended to inform the authorities of the institution about it, so that accessibility to the internet can be ensured to push students into good use of the internet academically. Teachers should also be encouraged to maximize internet utilization in their instructional practices. This study will sensitize people toward the positive sides of the internet, which are likely to be applied for purposes of socialization, education, dissemination of information, and interaction. A constructive and educational approach to how the internet is put to use in academic institutions can boost the standing of students socially, culturally, and organizationally. Create awareness about the good and efficient usage of the internet among pre-service students, teachers, and parents. Financial support from the administration is important for the access and integration of internet services for successful inclusive classrooms.

Suggestions for Further Research

The investigator, based on the findings of this study, proposed several recommendations for future research:

Within the present investigation, the scholar explores the correlation between internet dependency and psychological well-being, yet additional inquiries are necessary to delve into the impact on physical, societal, and emotional well-being associated with internet addiction. This particular inquiry was conducted within the confines of Aligarh Muslim University; nevertheless, other scholars are encouraged to scrutinize the same or supplementary variables within their respective settings. While this study pertains solely to undergraduates, it would be advantageous to replicate the study across different educational levels. Scholars are urged to examine internet services and their implications on the mental, physical, societal, and emotional well-being of users. Subsequent research endeavours could focus on the repercussions of internet

addiction on everyday activities, commerce, educational advancements, and so forth. Comparable investigations could be undertaken by incorporating psychological factors such as Frustration, Anxiety, Stress, Motivation, and Creativity. Subsequent investigations could be expanded to encompass a larger sample size.

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