



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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## INTERNET ADDICTION AND ITS RELATION WITH DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND STRESS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT:

*The aims of this study the examine the relationship between student's internet addiction with depression anxiety, and stress. A correlational study was conducted among university students. The sample consisting 150 undergraduate students, 75 boys and 75 girls age range between 17-21years randomly from Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. Young's Internet Addiction scale (Young 2007) and depression, anxiety, and stress scale (DASS-42) were used in the study. Correlation test used to find the association between Internet addiction and depression, anxiety, and stress. The findings of the study 51.3% of students found a problematic stage in addiction while 42.7% were normal and 6% were considered a significantly problematic stage in internet addiction. There is a positive relationship between internet addiction anxiety and stress and no relation to depression. There was a significant difference between girls and boys in relation to anxiety and stress. It was found that boys show more stress and anxiety due to internet addiction but no significant relation to depression. In conclusion internet addiction is a type of e-addiction and there is a positive correlation among university students who need counseling to be conscious and careful about internet addiction. Most youths have the energy to spend time online and the majority of student's addicted to the university environment. The corrective measures must be taken only when the internet addiction is severe and start affecting their academic and family relationship.*



**KEYWORDS:** Internet addiction, DASS, Higher education.

### BACKGROUND

Since the inception of internet, there is a meteoric rise of global netizens as estimated 4.9 billions, means 63 per cent of world population is now online (ITU, 2021) and India with internet penetration rate 61 per cent in 2021, from just 21per cent in 2017 has second highest number of internet users after China. Internet has changed the way human communicate and transforms their interactions. The rise of netizens reflects the integrated life with internet. The strongest growth of internet users reported in the Asia-Pacific region with 10.5 per cent. Nearly four hours Indian youth spent on internet consumptions. Among the internet using population, the majority of Indian youth age groups between 20-29 years and male are relatively higher to female internet users (statista.com). It

indicates mostly the internet users are college and universities students and youth are more connected than the rest of the population. This population contributes substantial part of this growth.

Internet technologies enabling smartphones, it becomes readily accessible to individual across all socioeconomic groups (Saikia et al, 2019). Students access internet related to their academic exercises and participate in academic community for constructive discourse, information exchange, academic research, entertainment, communication, and commerce (Widyanto, Griffiths & Brunson, 2011). As a result, this affects users' daily routine activities for a while but has lasting effects on socio-psycho well-being, personal as well as occupational, academic, physical, etc. Despite the concerning higher education students' internet usage, it essentially needs to be addressed because they are among the first groups to use the Internet with a high degree of danger to the different psychosocial problems (DiNicola, 2004). The term 'addiction' defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterised by compulsive behaviours, continued use despite harmful consequences and long-lasting changes in brain' and considered both a complex brain disorder and a mental illness (NIDA, 2022). Internet addiction has emerged as a serious affliction (Saikia et al, 2019). Young (1996) diagnoses internet addiction as pathological gambling disorder and impulse-control disorder which does not involve intoxicant. It is a non-chemical or behavioural addiction that involves human-machine interaction, that can be either passive, such as viewing movies or active, such as playing computer games (Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006). Bergmark, Stensson, Bergmark (2016) reported as internet addiction making of a new addiction. Moreover, internet addiction is defined as a maladaptive use of the internet that can lead to social and functional impairment (Solomon, 2009). It is characterised by excessive preoccupations, urges, or behaviours regarding internet use resulting in impairment or distress (Schreiber & Grant, 2013)

The young learning community is the most active user of the internet and is most vulnerable to negative consequences even benefits from it. Internet invites young minds with amazing navigations to the world of huge information, most of the time they are deeply involved in accessing data leads to overuse and suffering from negative impacts. Possible reason for internet addiction There exists a positive and significant correlation between the level of anxiety and internet addiction (Nima & Nazarin, 2012). Individual experiencing depression are likely in a population risk for internet addiction. (D'Angelo, 2020).

Internet addiction is a mental condition characterized by excessive use of the detriment of the user. Addiction is generally understood to be a mental disorder involving compulsive behaviour, when someone is constantly online, they may be described as addicted to it. While it is recognized as a problem professionals have yet to agree on whether to recognize the term as a distinct form of addiction. The internet itself is mostly a harmless tool. But the over use and incorrect use of it encourages the risk of addiction. That this phenomenon has brought many problems for young people. Internet addiction has changed the human beings to the abandoned ones and affects their social relationship influence, in several studies (KO et al, 2008). Over and excessive use of internet One of the worst effects of internet addiction is anxiety, stress, and depression. An increase in using the internet makes some problems that one of which is internet anxiety (Nima & Nazarin, 2012).

Internet addiction has been recently addressed as a mental disorder and gradually the number of patient referrals to psychiatric clinics because of this disorder is increasing the interest is not an enemy, but the people depend on it for various reasons, because it goes them away from their real life and has a negative impact on their life.

The authors report that there are a number of emotional factors which may be related to college students' internet addiction (Kandell, 1998).

Depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act fortunately it is also treatable depression causes feelings of sadness and loss of interest in activities once enjoyed it can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease person ability. Internet addict adolescents have been reported that depression lowers self-esteem and lower life satisfaction clinical depression associated with increased levels of internet usage (Young, 1998, Yen et al 2008).

Anxiety related disorder your fear or worry does not go away and can get worse over time, it can influence your life to the extent that it can interfere with daily activities like school work and relationship, fear stress and anxiety are normal feelings and experiences but they are completely different than suffering from any of the seven diagnosable disorders plus substance include anxiety obsessive compulsive disorder and trauma or stress. Anxiety could be related to the rate of internet use (Shepherd & Edelman, 2005).

Stress is the body reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response the body reacts to these changes with physical mental and emotional responses. Stress is a normal part of life you can experience stress from your body and your thoughts and also internet addiction even positive life changes

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Internet addiction is a mental condition characterised by excessive use of the internet, usually to the detriment of users. Internet itself is mostly harmless tool but the overuse of it encourages the risk of addiction. There are many studies that have been conducted on the impact of internet addiction. Many research studies found the significant relation between depression, anxiety and stress.

Students with high internet addiction are more likely to be vulnerable to depression, anxiety and stress. (Akin and Iskender, 2011; Saikia et al 2019; Frangos, Fragkos, & Kiohos, 2010; Sargin, 2012). Hasnain (2016) compared genders and men exhibit a greater tendency to be abusive than women overall it can be problematic internet users more than female. Alshehri, Azahrani & Alotaibi (2015) observed no difference between male and females are related to internet addiction.

Problem of internet addiction is real and appropriate attention from authorities. (Azher et al., 2014); significant relation between internet addiction and depression, anxiety and stress. (Bhatia, 2016). Souza, Manish (2016) Sara and Sharma (2017) in addition, high levels of academic stress were associated with high levels of internet addiction has a lot of negative effects on one's mental and physical health. Kathait (2014) internet addiction predicts depression, anxiety and social isolation. Gholamian, Shahnazi and Hassanzadeh (2017), Kumar and Kumar (2018) Internet addiction seems to be associated with increasing prevalence of depression, anxiety and stress.

Jamwal, Shekhan & Choudhry (2016) a positive relationship between (IA) and (DASS) was found IA positively predicts DASS. Chou, Condron, and Belland (2012) suggested overuse of technology can have negative influence in our lives.

Various studies have reported internet addiction and its relative effectiveness from time to time. Overuse of internet sometimes leads to different mental illness. Understanding the optimum use of internet and its importance in students' academic life, the addiction issues should be addressed to prevent long lasting morbidities. However, use of internet is not scary unless it is used at normal level. In view of this, the present study undertaken to determine the relation between internet addiction with depression, anxiety and stress and compare in relation to gender.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study the internet addiction level of university students
2. To examine the relationship between the internet addiction and depression, anxiety and stress on student.
3. To examine the differences between internet addiction and anxiety, depression, stress in relation to gender.

## HYPOTHESIS

H0 There is no significant relation between internet addiction and depression, anxiety and stress on student of higher education.

H1 There is no significant difference between internet addiction and anxiety, depression, stress in relation to gender.

## METHODS

Correlational study was conducted among university students in of Cuttack district of Odisha from January-May 2019. The sample of study comprised the 150 students of Ravenshaw University and selected through random sampling method.

Sample Source	Male	Female	Total
Under Graduate 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	25	25	50
Under Graduate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	25	25	50
Under Graduate 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	25	25	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>150</b>

## Tool

Internet Addiction Test (IAT) by Young (2007) and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-42) by Akin and Cetin (2007) used to collect information.

Before administering the questionnaire, students were briefed and distributed randomly to the randomly selected students. Data were analysed using spreadsheet and SPSS-20.

## Results

Levels of Internet Addiction: In terms level of internet addiction about 51.3% of students were found problematic stage with moderate addiction while 42.6% of students were found to be normal with mild internet addiction only (6%) of students were found to be significantly problematic in stage with severe internet addiction level.

Level of Addiction	N
Normal	64(42.7%)
Problematic	77(51.3%)
Significant Problematic	9 (6%)
Total	150

### Level of Internet Addiction and DASS

Variables	Internet Addiction	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
<b>Male</b>	Mild (49.05)	Moderate (14.18)	Moderate (13.14)	Mild (12.73)
<b>Female</b>	Moderate (57.34)	Moderate (13.54)	Moderate (11.37)	Mild (11.34)

The male shows mild with 49.05 while female moderate with 57.34 internet addiction. Both male with 14.18, and female with 13.54 have moderate depression, and moderate anxiety male with 13.14 and female with 11.37. Stress level is mild to both male with 12.73 and female with 11.34. The findings reveal male with mild internet addiction have moderate depression and anxiety, while female with moderate internet addiction having moderate depression and anxiety. Stress is mild in case of both the gender.

**Relation Between Internet Addiction with DASS**

		<b>Internet Addiction</b>	<b>DASS</b>
<b>Internet Addiction</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	111
<b>DASS</b>	Pearson Correlation	.507**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	111	111

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Correlation measures the strength and direction of linear relationship between internet addiction and DASS. the calculated coefficient of correlation 0.507, 0.019 and 0.004 between addition with depression, anxiety and stress respectively shows that depression, anxiety and stress are positively related and significant at 0.01 level. There is a significant association between internet addiction and DASS, hence null hypothesis rejected at 0.01 level.

It has been found that there is positive relation between internet addiction and depression, anxiety and stress among university students.

There is no relation between internet addiction and depression among university students.

There is positive related to internet addiction internet addiction and anxiety among university students.

There is positive related to internet addiction and stress.

**Internet Addiction and DASS in relation to gender**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Internet Addiction</b>	Male	49.05	14.40	148	-3.519	Sig
	Female	57.34	13.64			
<b>Depression</b>	Male	14.18	4.34	148	.681	Not sig
	Female	13.54	6.88			
<b>Anxiety</b>	Male	13.14	4.84	148	1.963	sig
	Female	11.73	6.13			
<b>Stress</b>	Male	12.37	5.82	148	1.412	sig
	Female	11.34	6.20			

Those having internet addiction are found to be more anxious and stress. The female as compared to male slightly more addicted to internet.

There is a significant difference between internet addictions in relation to gender. It is found that female is comparatively more addicted to internet than male.

There is no significant difference between male and female in relation to depression.

There is significant difference between male and female in relation to anxiety it is found that male shown more anxiety than female.

There is significant difference between male and female in relation to stress it is found that male shown more anxiety than female.

**DISCUSSION**

The study tried to find the internet addiction level and its various correlates in university students. It also tried to find the association between addiction to depression, anxiety and stress among university students. Highest number of students with 51.3% are in problematic stage with moderate addiction to internet, 42.7% are normal with mild and 6% are in significant problematic stage. The present study requires more in-depth quantitative and qualitative research. However, Gholamian, Shahnazi and Hassanzadeh (2017), Kumar and Kumar 2018) Khan et.al (2014), were found male

students are more prevalence than female students. Goel et al (2018) Female students had higher levels of internet addiction (Mean, 57.3) as compared to their male counterparts (Mean, 49.05). Saikia et, al (2019), Gupta et, al (2018) similar finding reported that significant association of internet addiction to depression, anxiety and stress, and present study findings also reveals the same. While female addiction was found higher and low in depression, anxiety and stress and same time male were less addicted to internet and relatively higher in depression, anxiety and stress. Male students need counselling with problematic they can be normal and 42% normal students are conscious and careful about the internet usage. This could be attributed to the relative addiction of female and male and its impacts on psychological morbidities.

## CONCLUSION

Internet addiction is a type of e- addiction which is currently on the rise lurching of internet brought about a revolution in the field of communication and information technology. now days the most of students grow out of their internet addiction within one two years. Most youth have energy to spend time online and the majority of student's addicted at university environment. The corrective measures must be taken only when the internet addiction is severe and start affecting their academic and family relationship. An outright ban on internet contents is not feasible solution due to the vastness of web recourses available. More studies with larger sample size are required to explore the pattern of internet addiction and its impacts on students' health and academic performance.

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