

# Internet addiction's impact on bachelor students' social lives

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## ABSTRACT

The internet, a vast global network of interconnected computers, has become an indispensable tool for information access and communication. This study examines the effects of internet addiction on the social lives of bachelor's level students in Nepalgunj. It explores students' attitudes toward interpersonal relationships and self-confidence in self-presentation. While the internet plays a crucial role in enhancing students' global awareness and knowledge, excessive dependence on it can undermine their self-assurance. Data for this study was collected through an online questionnaire distributed via platforms like Google Forms on social media. The findings reveal that 35% of students stay up late to complete college assignments, while 5% do so for family discussions. Additionally, 53% stay awake late primarily for internet browsing, with 7% citing other reasons for their nocturnal activities. The report concludes that excessive internet usage has a negative impact on students' self-assurance, interpersonal skills, and creativity. This dependence hinders social engagement and undermines their ability to participate in face-to-face interactions confidently. Furthermore, internet addiction limits students' creativity, fostering an overreliance on the internet for problem-solving.

**Keywords:** Internet, global network, interconnected computers, social lives, global awareness, social media, internet addiction.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The internet is a collection of millions of computers around the world that are connected to each other, around the world; The internet is a medium that does not have the limitations of information on each user; many people are highly dependent on the internet because the internet has many advantages that can simplify a lot of work. The internet plays a crucial role in enhancing effectiveness and efficiency. The structure of this effectiveness and efficiency, within a specific internet like the Internet encompasses a multitude of services designed to provide users with a high level of convenience and indulgence. The presence of the internet, a product of information and communication technology development, further amplifies its significance. The term "Internet" or "Internet working" refers to the world's largest computer network, which connects all current computer networks (including Intranet, Wide Area Network, Metropolitan Area Networks, Personal Area Networks, etc.) with all computers, connected devices (such as smartphones and tablets), switches, routers, hubs, and other connecting devices, as well as the computer itself, into a single container.

Additionally, it provides several possibilities for students, researchers, and professionals to learn more about a variety of issues, including academic and professional ones. Most computer owners in today's culture use the internet to access information on the Worldwide Web, send and receive messages and documents, and use e-services. The internet is becoming more and more valuable to people all over the world. Millions of people use it daily, and we're just beginning to see a world where it has completely dominated society. The internet should have so many fascinating and alluring characteristics that almost everyone who uses it develops an addiction to it. The millennial generation is most prone to this propensity. Although it has many benefits, frequent use has a detrimental effect on social life. Between 1996 and 2022, there was a notable increase in the time spent on email and browsing. Various internet usage patterns have been associated with both favorable and unfavorable outcomes.

Symptoms of dysphoria have been connected to a range of internet activities, such as shopping, gaming, and research. Furthermore, the findings of the study indicate that internet use stands out as one of the primary causes. Several factors can influence a student's social life and academic achievement, not only in industrialized nations but also in many emerging countries such as Indonesia, India, and China, where internet usage is on the rise. Obsessive internet use can have a detrimental effect on relationships with family members, coworkers, and friends, despite the fact that the time spent online by people in general, can be advantageous. If you can't stop playing online games, unlocking your smartphone, or using another device, or if your child or child feels more comfortable with online pals than with friends in the real world.

### Purpose of the Study

The primary goal of this research is to look into the impact of the Internet's on students' social lives.

To assess the impact of the internet on students' interpersonal communication.

To ascertain the impact of the internet on students' confidence levels.

To investigate the impact of the internet on students' levels of creativity.

To measure the impact of the internet on students' levels of reliance.

### Literature Review

Nowadays, the internet is an essential tool for communication. It has altered how we go about our daily lives at home, in the classroom, and at work. The internet serves numerous purposes in daily life, yet it also possesses unique and distinct attributes that have enhanced its appeal. In today's society, internet has evolved into a fundamental instrument for communication, entertainment, trading, and education. The use of computers and internet for communication has become commonplace in modern society. However, despite the rapid information transfer and potential educational value of the internet, there are several-aspects of it that may encourage addictive behavior. The availability of free, diverse, and limitless social networks without geographic boundaries; anonymity; more significant control over how one presents themselves; and the availability of numerous opportunities to satisfy the need for belonging as well as to flee from emotional difficulties, problematic circumstances, and personal hardships are some of these characteristics.

In the late 1990s, the Internet was still expanding, and many people claimed that access would have a significant positive impact on academic achievement. Indeed, some argue that using computers can help students learn more effectively in subjects such as physics and math. There are numerous definitions for the idea of internet addiction. The relevance of the Internet network is increasing more than anticipated by using online information resources, scientific discoveries, knowledge exchange, scientific interactions between researchers, online learning, access to virtual libraries, and other activities. Elevated and excessive internet usage has been associated with various user concerns. As per research conducted on students, internet addiction has been correlated with significant problems such as a deterioration in academic performance, a decrease in curriculum engagement, anxiety, a decline in interpersonal relationships, reduced physical activity, irregularity, and nutritional disorders.

The social-emotional model of internet addiction was applied to a study involving 330 university students. The analysis suggested that the willingness to self-censor and the inability to self-monitoring cause social anxiety, which in turn increases negative affect. Negative affect, in combination with the daily duration of internet use, leads to internet addiction. Negative affect and daily internet use duration directly impact internet addiction (Savci and Aysan, 2017). The impact of internet use on students is studied. The continuous development of modern and sophisticated internet technology has brought about both benefits and negative effects on users, particularly students. This study, involving a sample of 120 students, examines the addictive nature of internet usage and its impact on learning activities. The findings reveal that internet usage is often associated with negative consequences.

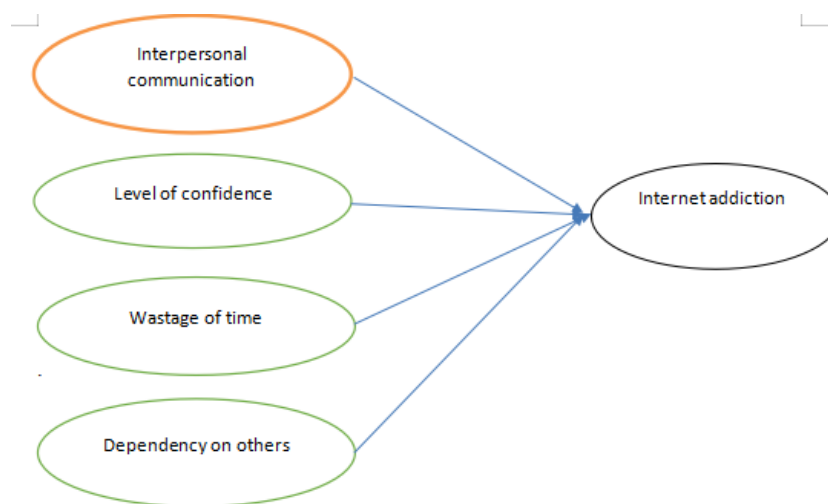
For instance, in terms of social media usage, 82 respondents (68.33%) reported always using the internet for this purpose, while 50 respondents (41.67%) stated that they frequently do so. In the case of online gaming, 65 respondents (54.17%) always utilize the internet for this activity, and 50 respondents (41.67%) frequently engage in online gaming. Additionally, when using the internet to watch YouTube, 56 respondents (46.67%) reported frequent usage, and 62 respondents (51.67%) indicated that they always use the internet for this purpose. However, when it comes to using the internet for learning and seeking information, only 41 respondents (34.17%) reported rare usage (Puspita and Rohedi, 2018; Chakma et al., 2020). Internet usage: significant factors affecting students.

The research findings indicate that factors such as social media usage, internet-related issues, and addiction to social networking negatively influence students and their academic achievements. Specifically, internet usage has a significant impact on university students, with junior male students being the most affected demographic group. According to Kandell, (1998), internet addiction is characterized by a psychological dependence on the internet, irrespective of the activities engaged in upon logging on. One indication of this phenomenon is manifested when individuals display abnormal online activity patterns, as seen in cases of internet addiction (Griffiths, 2000). The condition of internet addiction is delineated as the incapacity to regulate one's behavior in daily life, coupled with a weekly online usage exceeding 38 hours, as defined by (Greenfield, 1999).

The user may experience physical and mental health issues like depression, OCD, low-income family relationships, and anxiety due to of their excessive internet use, which can lead to little sleep, prolonged periods of not eating, and little physical activity. Increased usage of all online services, including email and use of net newsgroups, was linked to both self-reported internet de Elisabeth and Lennart state that "The level of interpersonal skills, personality, and emotional intelligence are related to the extent of internet usage of students, as measured with the Internet addiction Scale of undergraduates". On the contrary, it was asserted that students' internet addiction had a more positive impact than a negative one on their academic performance. Given the aforementioned results, it was considered important to explore how internet addiction affects the social lives of students in Nepalgunj, including dependency and poor academic achievement.

### Theoretical framework

Based on a study of relevant literature, it has been established that internet addiction exerts a detrimental influence on daily activities, health, and parent-child relationships. In contrast, an opposing viewpoint posited that students' internet addiction yields a greater positive impact on their academic performance than negative consequences. In light of the aforementioned findings, there is a recognized significance in delving into the exploration of how internet addiction influences the social lives of students in Nepalgunj.



**Figure 1** Theoretical framework

According to the aforementioned theoretical framework, there is an inverse relationship between internet addiction and interpersonal communication and confidence, as addiction levels rise, so do interpersonal communication and confidence levels, and vice versa (Figure 1). In contrast, there is a positive relationship between internet addiction and time waste and dependence on others, meaning that as addiction levels rise, so do time waste and dependence on others.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research design

The study utilizes a descriptive and exploratory research design to ascertain respondents' internet addiction and its associated behavioral effects.

### Population

The overall population of bachelor level students in Nepal exceeds 50,0000. This research focuses on bachelor level programs in Nepalgunj, where the total population is approximately 20000. The research sample comprises one hundred twenty students (120) from various colleges affiliated with Nepalese universities. Data was collected from different college students selected randomly from different colleges located in Nepalgunj, Nepal. This study enhances our comprehension of the impacts of internet addiction on the social lives of Nepalese students.

### Sampling methods and Procedure

The study employs a non-probability sampling strategy for its sample selection approach. Respondents' information is collected using the judgmental sampling technique within the framework of the non-probability sampling method. The respondents for this study are students enrolled in the bachelor level program across different colleges. The selected colleges include Alpine College of Management (ACM), Mahendra Multiple College (MMC), City College of Management (CCM) and Bageshori Multiple Campus (BMC), all of which contribute to the academic landscape by offering bachelor classes. The recruited total sample size is 120, but 3 of them not participated. Finally, among 117 respondents, 100 were fulfilled the study procedures.

### Data analysis and presentation

Respondents' profile to conduct the study, students of various college, genders, and semesters are included (Table 1). The summary is presented in the (Table 2).

**Table 1** Respondents' Profile

	Gender		Colleges			
	Male	Female	ACM	MMC	CCM	BMC
No. of respondent	49	68	30	30	30	30
Percentage	40.8	55.7	25	25	25	25
Missing	3		-			
Total	120		-	120		

**Table 2** Classification of Internet Users as per Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
17 - 18	5	5%
18 - 19	16	16%
19 - 20	15	15%
20 - 21	31	31%
21 - 22	33	33%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 2 indicates that only 5% of pupils in the 17–18-year-old age range make use of the internet. Likewise, 16% of internet users fall within the ages of 18 and 19. Furthermore, 15% of internet users are aged between 19 and 20. Similarly, 31% of internet users are in the age group of 20 to 21, and 33% fall within the age range of 21 to 22.

**Table 3** Frequency of Internet Users Based on Semester

Semester	Frequency	Percentage
Second	14	14%

Fourth	34	34%
Sixth	17	17%
Eighth	35	35%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 3 reveals that 14% of second-semester students are internet addicts. Similarly, 34% of fourth-semester students use the internet often. Parallel, 35% of students from the eighth semester and 17% of students from the sixth semester are addicted to the internet.

### Time Spent by Students on Internet

Spending a considerable amount of time online can have a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. Students are significantly influenced by the internet, both in negative and constructive ways.

**Table 4** Frequency of Time Spent on Internet

Time spent (in hours per day)	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
0 - 5	30	30%	30%
5 - 10	45	45%	75%
10 - 15	15	15%	90%
15 - 20	10	10%	100%
20 & above	0	0	
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 4 shows the average number of hours per day spent online. According to the survey, 30% of respondents use internet for 0 to 5 hours every day. Similarly, 45% of respondents use internet 5–10 hours a day, which is the highest number of hours spent by respondents daily; 15% use it for 15–20 hours; 10% use it for 15–20 hours; and none use it for more than 20 hours.

### Reasons for utilizing internet

In many ways, the Internet provides numerous advantages for pupils. It serves as an educator for students, allowing them to inquire about any subject and receive prompt responses. The Internet can be employed to rapidly access information and expertise. Beyond academic applications, the internet is also employed for recreational purposes, such as online gaming, watching movies, and more. Additionally, it has significantly contributed to the expansion of students' shopping habits through various e-commerce sites. The following are the primary reasons why students utilize the internet:

Academic purposes

Online gaming

Online shopping

Entertainment (movies, etc.)

Social media

Other activities

According to Table 5, 24% of students spend time on the Internet for academic purposes. Likewise, 47% of students use the internet for social media purposes. Additionally, 13% of students use the Internet for online gaming, while 5% of students use it for online shopping, and 14% of students use it for other purposes. Notably, none of the students use the internet for pornography.

**Table 5** Purpose of Internet Usage

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Academic Purpose	24	24%	24%
Social Media	47	47%	71%

Online Games	10	10%	81%
Online shopping	5	5%	86%
Pornography	0	0%	0%
Others	14	14%	100%
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023

### Reasons for staying awake late at night

Reasons for staying awake late at night include sleep deprivation, which is becoming more common in many industrialized countries. This leads to reduced cognition and various significant individual and societal effects. The so-called "digitization of the bedroom", characterized by our unwillingness to put down our phones, laptops, and TVs before bedtime, has previously been associated with various sleep disorders. The light emitted by our smartphones and laptops inhibits the production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates our sleep cycles. Late-night text messages further disrupt our sleep, and internet addiction has been identified as a critical contributor to sleep deprivation.

**Table 6** Purpose of staying awake late at night

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
College assignments	35	35%	35%
Family discussion	5	5%	40%
Internet	53	53%	93%
Others	7	7%	100%
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 6 illustrates that 35% of students stay up late at night in order to complete their college tasks. Similarly, 5% of students stay up late at night for family chats. Additionally, 53% of students stay awake late at night to use the Internet, while 7% do so for various other reasons.

### Use of the Internet for a specific purpose

The Internet has become an essential element of students' lives, without which they feel unbalanced daily. As a result, most students use it without a specific rationale or objective in mind.

**Table 7** Goal-directed use of the Internet

Level of agreeableness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	7	7%	7%
Disagree	21	21%	28%
Neutral	28	28%	56%
Agree	21	21%	77%
Strongly agree	23	23%	100%
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023

According to Table 7, 7% of students strongly disagree that they use the Internet with a specific objective in mind. Similarly, 21% of students disagree that they utilize the Internet for a specific purpose. Again, 28% of students were undecided about utilizing the Internet for a particular purpose. Similarly, 21% of students hold the belief that they use the Internet with a specific purpose in mind, while 23% express a strong agreement that they utilize the internet with a distinct objective. Feeling frustrated when the Internet goes down or is unavailable this table illustrates the extent to which students have developed a reliance on the internet.

**Table 8** Feeling frustration when the Internet goes down or is unavailable

Level of agreeableness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	5	5%	5%
Disagree	18	18%	23%
Neutral	27	27%	50%
Agree	16	16%	66%
Strongly agree	34	34%	100%
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023, January- march

Table 8, Reveals that 5% of students strongly disagree with the statement that they are frustrated when the Internet down or unavailable. Similarly, 18% of students are against it. Again, 27% of students remained neutral. Again, 16% of students agreed, and 34% strongly disagreed with this assertion. As a result, 50% of students are irritated owing to the lack of internet access.

#### Students have more friends on virtual platforms than in real life

The Internet is an extensive virtual network that connects people from various societies into a single virtual community. Due to the widespread adoption of the Internet, children are increasingly inclined towards the virtual realm rather than the physical world. Consequently, students now tend to have a greater number of friends on virtual platforms compared to their real-life interactions.

**Table 9** Students have more friends on virtual platforms than in real life

Level of agreeableness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	28	28%	28%
Disagree	44	44%	72%
Neutral	14	14%	86%
Agree	8	8%	94%
Strongly agree	6	6%	100%
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023, January- march

According to Table 9, 28% of students strongly disagree that they have more friends on the virtual platform than in real life. Similarly, 44% of students are against it. Similarly, 14% of students remained neutral. Again, 8% of the students agreed with it, whereas 6% strongly disagreed with it. As a result, only 14% of students agree with this assertion.

#### Perception of students on being in tune with people around them

Individuals who are physically present but effectively adrift due to internet addiction cause significant concern. This signifies that even when children coexist within the same confines, be it a household or a classroom, they remain disengaged from those in their proximity. Activities that could otherwise be shared directly with others are increasingly being shared in virtual realms.

**Table 10** Perception of Students on being in tune with people around them

Level of agreeableness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Never	1	1%	1%
Rarely	53	53%	54%
Sometimes	37	37%	91%
Often	9	9%	100%
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023

Based on Table 10, it is noted that 1% of pupils have never experienced a sense of harmony with their surroundings. In a comparable manner, 53% of students seldom experienced such feelings. Furthermore, 37% of students encountered these feelings occasionally, while 9% of students frequently felt this way. The occurrence of face-to-face communication is progressively dwindling.



### Perception of students on feeling isolated

As individuals persist in devoting the majority of their time to the online realm, they often find themselves growing apart from their family and friends. The enduring consequences of internet addiction can amplify the probability of experiencing depressive symptoms and a heightened sense of loneliness.

**Table 11** Perception of Students on feeling isolated

Level of agreeableness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Never	14	14%	14%
Rarely	35	35%	49%
Sometimes	48	48%	97%
Often	3	3%	100%
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023

Referring to Table 11, it is evident that 14% of students have not encountered feelings of isolation. Likewise, 35% of students infrequently experienced such emotions. Furthermore, 48% of students underwent occasional episodes of isolation, whereas 3% of students frequently grappled with this sensation.

### Students fear speaking in front of other people

The Internet allows individuals to express themselves without being physically present. This enhances their confidence in the virtual realm; however, when they face an identical situation in real life, they are consumed by fear 25% of the students, as seen in Table 12, showed no fear when speaking in front of others. Similarly, 35% of the pupils had a faint sense of it. Similarly, 33% of the students experienced severe dread, while 7% experienced extreme fear.

**Table 12** Students fear speaking in front of other people

Level of agreeableness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Not at all	25	25%	25%
Slightly	35	35%	60%
Moderately	33	33%	93%
Very much	7	7%	100%
Extremely	0	0%	-
Total	100	100%	-

Source: Field survey, 2023

## 3. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the sampled participants exhibited a preference for utilizing the Internet, even in the absence of specific objectives. Most students spend 5–10 hours daily on the internet, diverting their time from studying. This form of non-essential internet use involves aimlessly browsing the web for knowledge they cannot retain or recall after class. The time spent online is akin to being drawn into a black hole, which could be better allocated to more significant and beneficial activities fostering the development of students' talents and minds. Face-to-face social interactions are seldom practiced among students during this phase of their lives. While the Internet is designed to foster connection, students rarely make an effort to engage in person-to-person interactions.

The convenience of online accessibility has reduced effort in seeking alternative resources or answers to queries and assignments. With information just a click away, there is less need for exertion or attention. Furthermore, excessive internet usage has been found to encroach upon family time for students. For instance, 53% of students reported staying up late to use the internet, whereas only 5% stayed up late for family discussions. This suggests that devices distract them even during meals or family interactions. An expedient means for students to acquire knowledge is to pose questions to Google rather than engage in independent thinking. Consequently, this reliance on the internet limits the capacity for critical thinking and creativity. Students seek information online rather than engaging their own cognitive faculties. The study indicates that 45% of students prioritize internet searches for problem-solving, while only 2% prioritize their teachers.



Similarly, 24% place friends first, and 27% prioritize family assistance. The study identifies excessive internet usage as a significant factor affecting the social lives of undergraduate and graduate students. Graphical representation illustrates that such excessive usage diminishes social engagement and self-confidence, impacting their ability to communicate, debate, and interact in person. Additionally, Internet addiction correlates with reduced originality and over-reliance on the Internet for problem-solving. The study also highlights a shift in trust towards the Internet rather than immediate friends and family. Consequently, students squander valuable time on unproductive digital platforms, disregarding their potential to utilize their creative minds to transcend internet knowledge. This excessive reliance on virtual interfaces.

**Informed consent**

Not applicable.

**Ethical approval**

Not applicable.

**Conflicts of interests**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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**Data and materials availability**

All data associated with this study are present in the paper.

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