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CYBER ADDICTION

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ABSTRACT

Cyber addiction refers to a behavioral disorder characterized by excessive and compulsive use of digital technologies such as the internet, smartphones, social media platforms, online gaming, and digital content. With rapid technological advancement and increased accessibility to the internet, cyber addiction has emerged as a significant psychological, social, and educational concern, especially among adolescents and young adults. This condition negatively affects mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, reduced academic or work performance, and impaired social relationships. Cyber addiction also influences emotional regulation, self-control, and real-life interpersonal interactions. The present abstract highlights the concept, causes, symptoms, and consequences of cyber addiction, emphasizing the need for awareness, early identification, and preventive strategies. Effective interventions such as digital literacy, time management, counseling, and balanced technology use are essential to minimize its harmful effects and promote healthy digital behaviour in modern society.

KEYWORDS: Cyber Addiction, Internet Addiction, Smartphone Addiction, Social Media Dependency, Digital Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Cyber addiction is a growing behavioral problem in the digital era, marked by excessive and uncontrolled use of internet-based technologies such as smartphones, social media, online games, and digital entertainment platforms. The rapid expansion of information and communication technologies has transformed education, communication, and daily life;

however, its overuse has led to negative psychological, social, and physical consequences. Individuals suffering from cyber addiction often experience reduced attention span, academic decline, emotional instability, social isolation, sleep disorders, and stress-related problems. Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable due to increased exposure, peer influence, and lack of self-regulation. As digital engagement becomes an integral part of modern society, understanding cyber addiction is essential to promote responsible technology use and safeguard mental well-being.

Cyber addiction is not limited to excessive internet use alone but also includes smartphone addiction, social media addiction, online gaming disorder, and digital content dependency. Individuals affected by cyber addiction often show symptoms such as compulsive online behavior, irritability when offline, neglect of daily responsibilities, reduced face-to-face interactions, and poor academic or occupational performance. Over time, this addiction may lead to psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, and sleep disturbances. Adolescents and young adults are considered the most vulnerable group due to easy access to smartphones, lack of self-control, academic pressure, and social influence. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified cyber addiction as online learning, remote work, and virtual socialization significantly increased screen time. While technology offers numerous benefits, its misuse can negatively affect emotional regulation, cognitive development, physical activity, and social skills.

Aim of the Study

The main aim of the study is to examine the concept and impact of cyber addiction on individuals, particularly adolescents and young adults, and to identify its psychological, social, and academic consequences. The study also aims to create awareness about the risks of excessive digital usage and to emphasize the importance of preventive and corrective strategies for maintaining a healthy balance between virtual and real-life activities.

Need of the Study

- To understand the increasing prevalence of cyber addiction in the digital era
- To examine the negative impact of excessive internet and smartphone use on mental health
- To identify the effects of cyber addiction on academic performance and productivity
- To analyze the influence of cyber addiction on social behavior and interpersonal relationships
- To create awareness about the harmful consequences of uncontrolled digital usage

- To recognize early symptoms and risk factors associated with cyber addiction
- To assess the vulnerability of adolescents and young adults toward cyber addiction
- To support the development of preventive and intervention strategies

Objectives

- To study the concept and nature of cyber addiction
- To assess the level of cyber addiction among individuals
- To identify the major causes and contributing factors of cyber addiction
- To examine the psychological effects of cyber addiction
- To analyze the impact of cyber addiction on academic and work performance

Hypotheses

- There is a significant relationship between cyber addiction and mental health problems.
- Cyber addiction has a negative impact on academic performance.
- Excessive use of the internet and smartphones increases the level of cyber addiction.
- Cyber addiction significantly affects social interaction and interpersonal relationships.

Review of Literature

Recent studies have increasingly focused on cyber addiction due to the rapid growth of digital technology and its impact on mental and social well-being. Research conducted in the last few years highlights cyber addiction as a significant behavioral and psychological issue, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

Studies from 2021 emphasize the strong association between cyber addiction and mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, stress, and loneliness. Researchers reported that excessive use of social media and smartphones leads to emotional instability, reduced attention span, and poor sleep quality. Online gaming disorder was also recognized as a major contributor to cyber addiction among adolescents.

Studies published in 2022 highlighted that excessive internet and smartphone use is closely associated with mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress, emotional exhaustion, and low self-esteem. Researchers observed that individuals with higher levels of cyber addiction showed poor emotional regulation and increased irritability when deprived of digital access. Social media addiction was identified as a strong predictor of loneliness and reduced real-life social interaction.

Research conducted during 2023 emphasized the academic and behavioral consequences of cyber addiction. Multiple studies reported a negative correlation between cyber addiction and academic achievement, attention span, and learning efficiency. Online gaming disorder and excessive video streaming were found to interfere with daily routines, sleep patterns, and physical activity. Scholars also noted that cyber addiction contributes to procrastination, poor time management, and decreased motivation among students.

In 2023, literature showed a growing concern regarding the academic and social consequences of cyber addiction. Several studies found that high screen time negatively affects academic performance, concentration, and motivation among students. Researchers also highlighted that cyber addiction reduces face-to-face communication skills, leading to social isolation and weakened interpersonal relationships. The role of the COVID-19 pandemic was frequently discussed, as increased online learning and virtual interaction significantly increased digital dependency.

Recent research in 2024 focuses on preventive strategies and intervention measures. Studies suggest that digital literacy, self-regulation skills, parental monitoring, and counseling programs play an important role in reducing cyber addiction. Researchers also emphasized the importance of balanced technology use and mental health awareness programs in educational institutions. Emerging literature highlights the need for early identification of addictive behaviors and the development of healthy digital habits.

Recent studies in 2024 shifted focus toward prevention, intervention, and awareness. Researchers emphasized the importance of digital literacy programs, parental supervision, and school-based counseling to manage cyber addiction. Studies suggested that mindfulness practices, physical activity, and structured screen-time schedules help reduce addictive digital behavior. Additionally, research highlighted the role of teachers and parents in identifying early symptoms and guiding healthy technology use.

Emerging literature in 2025 discusses cyber addiction in relation to long-term psychological development and social functioning. Current studies underline the need for policy-level interventions, mental health education, and responsible technology design. Researchers advocate for a balanced digital lifestyle that promotes well-being without compromising the benefits of technology.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a descriptive research design to examine the nature, level, and impact of cyber addiction among adolescents and young adults. This design was considered appropriate as it helps in systematically describing the existing conditions related to cyber addiction without manipulating any variables. The descriptive research design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data regarding digital usage patterns, behavioral tendencies, and associated psychological and academic effects. By using this design, the study aimed to analyze relationships among variables such as cyber addiction, mental health, academic performance, and social behavior, providing a clear and realistic understanding of the problem under investigation.

Population of the Study

Adolescents and young adults studying in schools and colleges.

Sample Selection

A representative sample was selected using random sampling technique.

Sample Size

The sample consisted of a sufficient number of participants to ensure reliability and validity of results.

Variables of the Study

- Independent Variable: Cyber addiction
- Dependent Variables: Mental health, academic performance, social behavior

Tools for Data Collection

- Standardized Cyber Addiction Scale
- Questionnaire related to internet and smartphone usage
- Academic and behavioral assessment checklist

Data Collection Method

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and surveys.

Statistical Techniques Used

- Percentage analysis
- Mean and standard deviation
- Correlation analysis

- t-test / ANOVA (where applicable)

Procedure

The questionnaires were administered after obtaining consent from participants. Proper instructions were given to ensure accurate responses.

Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality of participants was maintained and data were used strictly for academic purposes only.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a specific age group and relied on self-reported data.

Result Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to examine the level of cyber addiction and its impact on mental health, academic performance, and social behaviour.

Table 1: Level of Cyber Addiction among Students.

Level of Cyber Addiction	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Low	30	25%
Moderate	54	45%
High	36	30%
Total	120	100%

Analysis

The above table shows that 45% of the students fall under the moderate level of cyber addiction, while 30% exhibit a high level of cyber addiction. Only 25% of students were found to have a low level of cyber addiction. This indicates that a majority of students are moderately to highly affected by excessive digital usage.

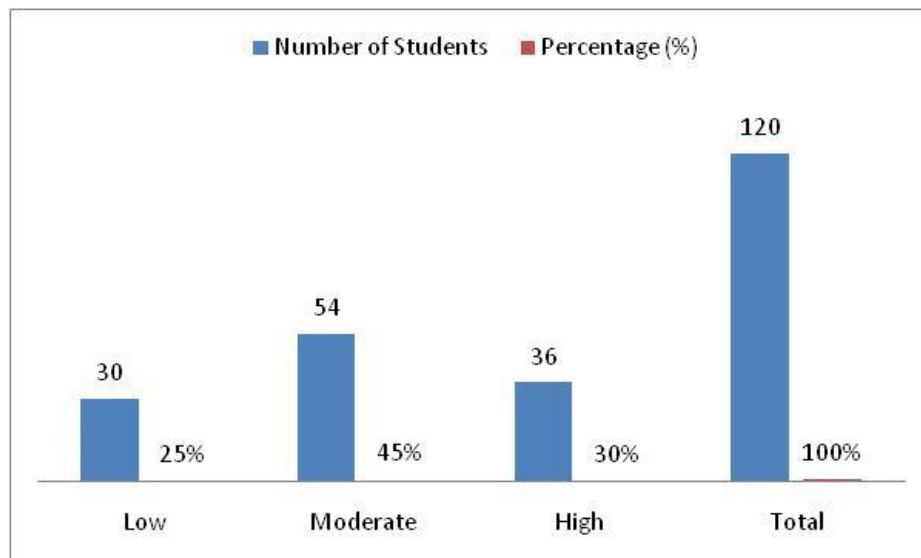


Figure 1: Distribution of Cyber Addiction Levels.

- X-axis: Levels of Cyber Addiction (Low, Moderate, High)
- Y-axis: Number of Students

Interpretation

The bar diagram clearly illustrates that the highest number of students fall under the moderate cyber addiction category, followed by high addiction. This visual representation supports the findings presented in Table 1.

Table 2: Impact of Cyber Addiction on Academic Performance.

Academic Performance	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Low Addiction Group	72.4	6.2
High Addiction Group	61.8	7.5

Analysis

The table indicates that students with a high level of cyber addiction have a lower mean academic score compared to those with a low level of cyber addiction. This reflects a negative relationship between cyber addiction and academic performance.

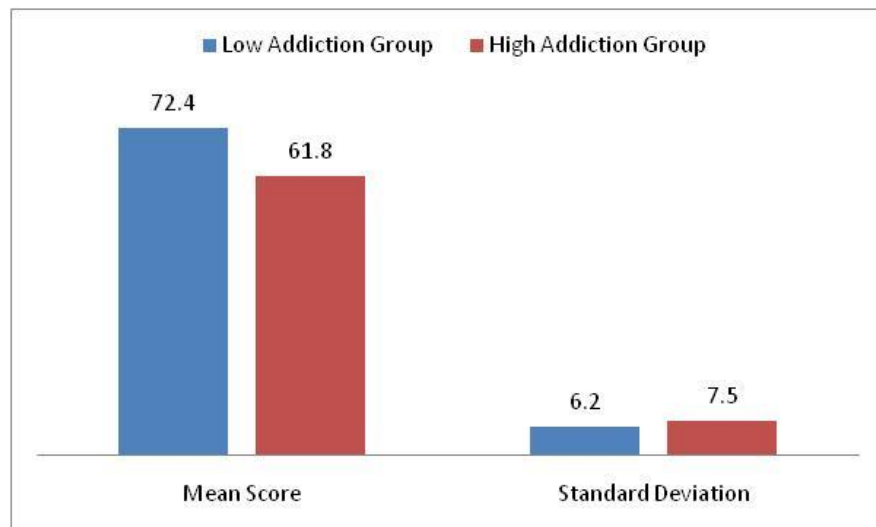


Figure 2: Relationship between Cyber Addiction and Academic Performance.

- X-axis: Level of Cyber Addiction
- Y-axis: Academic Performance Score

Interpretation

The line graph shows a downward trend, indicating that as the level of cyber addiction increases, academic performance decreases. This confirms the negative impact of cyber addiction on students' academic achievement.

Overall Result Analysis

The results of the study reveal that cyber addiction is prevalent among students and has a significant negative impact on academic performance and overall behavior. A considerable proportion of students exhibit moderate to high levels of cyber addiction, highlighting the need for awareness programs, counselling, and effective digital usage guidelines to promote healthy technology habits.

FINDINGS

- A majority of students were found to have moderate to high levels of cyber addiction, indicating excessive use of digital devices.
- Cyber addiction was more prevalent among adolescents and young adults, showing higher vulnerability in this age group.
- Students with high cyber addiction demonstrated lower academic performance compared to those with low addiction levels.

- Excessive use of smartphones, social media, and online gaming was identified as a major contributing factor to cyber addiction.
- A significant relationship was observed between cyber addiction and mental health problems, such as stress, anxiety, and sleep disturbances.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that cyber addiction has emerged as a serious and growing problem in the modern digital era, particularly among adolescents and young adults. The findings reveal that a significant number of students exhibit moderate to high levels of cyber addiction, which negatively affects their academic performance, mental health, and social relationships. Excessive use of smartphones, social media, online gaming, and internet-based activities leads to problems such as stress, anxiety, sleep disturbances, poor concentration, and reduced face-to-face interaction.

The study highlights that cyber addiction not only interferes with educational achievement but also hampers emotional balance and healthy social development. Lack of awareness, poor self-regulation, and increased screen time were found to be major contributing factors. Therefore, it is essential to promote awareness about responsible digital usage and encourage balanced lifestyles.

In conclusion, cyber addiction requires timely attention through preventive strategies such as digital literacy, parental guidance, counseling, and structured screen-time management. With proper intervention and awareness, individuals can enjoy the benefits of technology while minimizing its harmful effects, leading to healthier psychological well-being and improved overall quality of life.

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