

# Prevalence and Intensity of Internet Overuse Among Young Adults: An Empirical Study

Suryaprakasa Rao Vyapari<sup>1</sup>, Dr. S. Ravichandran<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Manipur International University (MIU) & Centre for Academic Research (CARE), Brahma Kumaris, Rajasthan, India  
Email: [rao.suryaprakasa\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:rao.suryaprakasa[at]gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Professor in Chemistry, Tagore Institute of Engineering and Technology, Deviyakurichi, Salem-636112, Tamil Nadu, India

**Abstract:** *The rapid expansion of digital technologies has significantly altered lifestyle patterns, particularly among young adults. While internet usage offers numerous advantages, excessive engagement may lead to behavioral concerns commonly described as internet overuse. The present study aims to examine both the prevalence and intensity of such usage patterns among youth. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed, involving 459 respondents aged between 18 and 25 years. Data were collected using a standardized Internet Addiction Scale (IAS), and analyzed through descriptive statistical techniques including frequency distribution and percentage analysis. The findings indicate that a substantial proportion of participants fall within mild to moderate categories of internet overuse, with nearly half demonstrating moderate to high intensity levels. These results suggest that excessive digital engagement is widely prevalent and may pose risks to psychological well-being and daily functioning. The study emphasizes the need for structured awareness programs and preventive interventions to promote balanced and mindful internet usage.*

**Keywords:** Internet overuse, digital dependency, young adults, behavioral patterns, mental health

## 1. Introduction

Digital technologies have become deeply embedded in modern life, transforming communication, education, and entertainment. Among young adults, internet usage is particularly prominent due to academic demands, social interaction, and recreational activities. However, uncontrolled and excessive engagement has raised concerns regarding its potential behavioral and psychological consequences.

Internet overuse is increasingly being recognized as a form of maladaptive behavior characterized by compulsive engagement, reduced control, and negative impacts on daily functioning. It is often associated with emotional distress, reduced productivity, and social isolation.

Understanding how widespread this issue is, along with the varying degrees of its intensity, is essential for developing targeted strategies aimed at promoting digital balance. The present study contributes to this understanding by providing empirical evidence on usage patterns among young adults.

## 2. Contextual Background

The concept of excessive internet use has evolved alongside advancements in digital accessibility. Researchers have identified similarities between behavioral addictions and substance-related disorders, including symptoms such as withdrawal, tolerance, and compulsive use patterns.

Recent global reports highlight the increasing impact of digital over-engagement on mental health, particularly among younger populations. Despite growing awareness, there remains a need for quantitative assessments that clearly categorize individuals based on usage intensity. This study addresses this gap by employing a standardized measurement tool to assess behavioral patterns in a structured manner.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To determine the prevalence of internet overuse among young adults
- 2) To assess the intensity of internet usage behavior
- 3) To classify respondents based on standardized scoring criteria
- 4) To provide evidence for designing digital wellness interventions

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted to assess internet usage patterns at a single point in time.

### 4.2 Sample

The study included **459 young adults** aged between **18 and 25 years**, selected through survey-based data collection methods.

### 4.3 Instrument

Data were collected using a standardized **Internet Addiction Scale (IAS)** developed by Dr. Suresh Kumar Murugesan and Dr. Veenavani Nellapalli. The instrument measures five key dimensions:

- Excessive usage behavior
- Withdrawal-related experiences
- Disruption of daily activities
- Compulsive engagement
- Interpersonal and psychological impact

### 4.4 Scoring Criteria

The total score range (30–150) was interpreted as:

- 30–59: Minimal usage

Volume 15 Issue 5, May 2026

Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal

[www.ijsr.net](http://www.ijsr.net)

- 60–89: Mild usage
- 90–119: Moderate usage
- 120–150: Severe usage

#### 4.5 Statistical Analysis

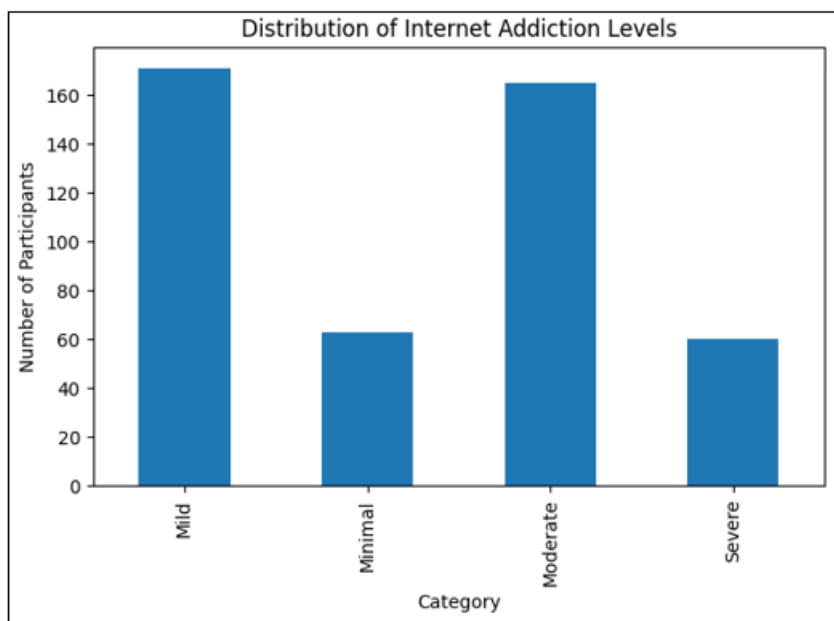
Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, primarily **frequencies and percentages**, to identify distribution patterns.

### 5. Results

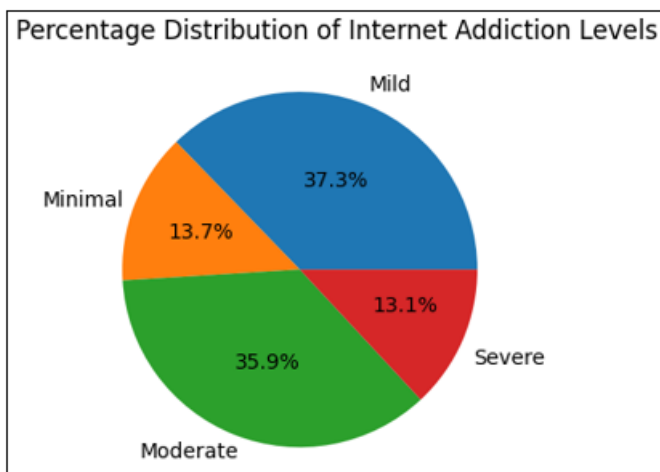
The analysis revealed varied levels of internet usage intensity among respondents:

**Table 1:** Distribution of Participants by Internet Usage Intensity

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Minimal	65	14.2%
Mild	168	36.6%
Moderate	160	34.9%
Severe	66	14.3%
Total	459	100%



**Figure 1:** Distribution of Internet Addiction Levels (Bar Chart)



**Figure 2:** Percentage Distribution of Internet Addiction Levels (Pie Chart)

A majority of respondents demonstrated mild to moderate levels of engagement. Notably, nearly half of the sample fell within moderate to severe categories, indicating a considerable level of high-risk usage behavior.

### 6. Discussion

The findings suggest that excessive internet engagement has become a common behavioral pattern among young adults. The high proportion of individuals in mild and moderate categories reflects normalization of prolonged digital interaction in daily routines.

However, the presence of a significant percentage of respondents in the severe category raises concerns regarding potential psychological and functional consequences. These individuals may experience reduced self-regulation, emotional imbalance, and impaired social functioning.

The results are consistent with earlier studies that highlight the growing influence of digital environments on behavioral health. The study underscores the importance of introducing structured interventions such as awareness programs, counseling support, and mindfulness-based practices to encourage responsible internet use.

### 7. Conclusion

The study concludes that internet overuse is widely prevalent among young adults, with a notable proportion experiencing moderate to high intensity levels. These findings emphasize

the need for immediate attention toward promoting digital well-being and preventing potential adverse outcomes.

Future research should focus on longitudinal approaches to better understand causal relationships and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

## 8. Limitations

- Dependence on self-reported responses
- Cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation
- Restricted generalizability beyond the sample population

## 9. Recommendations

- Implementation of digital wellness education programs
- Promotion of mindfulness and meditation practices
- Integration of behavioral awareness modules in educational settings
- Further longitudinal and experimental research

## 10. Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality of responses was maintained throughout the study.

## References

- [1] Anderson, E. L., Steen, E., & Stavropoulos, V. (2017). Problematic internet use: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 22(4), 430–454.
- [2] Kuss, D. J., & Lopez-Fernandez, O. (2016). Internet addiction and problematic use: A review of clinical research. *World Journal of Psychiatry*, 6(1), 143–176.
- [3] Murugesan, S. K., & Nellapalli, V. (2024). Development and validation of the Internet Addiction Scale.
- [4] World Health Organization. (2023). Digital health and behavioral patterns. WHO Publications.
- [5] Young, K. S. (1998). Internet addiction: Emergence of a new behavioral concern. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, 1(3), 237–244.