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A Comparative Study of Internet Addiction among Male and Female Bachelor of Education Students Using the Short Internet Addiction Test (s-IAT)

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Abstract

The internet plays a vital role in modern education by supporting learning, research, communication, and professional development. However, excessive internet use may lead to addiction, affecting academic performance, mental health, and social relationships. This study examined the level of internet addiction among male and female Bachelor of Education students using the Short Internet Addiction Test (s-IAT) developed by Pawlikowski, Altstötter-Gleich, and Brand (2013). A descriptive survey method was used with a sample of 100 Bachelor of education students (50 males and 50 females) selected through simple random sampling. Data were analysed using Mean, Standard Deviation, and the Independent Samples t-test. The findings showed that male students had higher internet addiction scores than female students, with a statistically significant gender difference. The study suggests implementing digital wellness programmes and counselling services in teacher education institutions to promote responsible internet use.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, s-IAT, Gender Difference, Bachelor of education students, Teacher Education.

Introduction

The advancement of information and communication technology has significantly influenced education. The internet has become an essential resource for Bachelor of Education students, supporting lesson planning, research, online learning, and professional development.

However, excessive and uncontrolled internet use may lead to internet addiction, negatively affecting academic performance, psychological well-being, and social relationships.

Since Bachelor of education students are future teachers, maintaining healthy digital habits is important for promoting responsible technology use among learners. Studies suggest that internet addiction may vary by gender, though findings remain inconsistent across different educational settings. Therefore, the present study examines the difference in internet addiction among male and female Bachelor of education students using the Short Internet Addiction Test (s-IAT).

Review of Related Literature

Young (1998) introduced the concept of Internet Addiction Disorder and developed the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), one of the earliest standardized tools for assessing problematic internet use.

Pawlikowski, Altstötter-Gleich, and Brand (2013) developed the Short Internet Addiction Test (s-IAT), a concise 12-item instrument that measures loss of control, time management problems, and social consequences related to internet use. The scale has demonstrated high reliability and validity among university students.

Kuss and Griffiths (2017) reported that internet addiction has become increasingly common among adolescents and young adults and is associated with anxiety, depression, poor academic achievement, and reduced social interaction.

Anderson, Steen, and Stavropoulos (2017) concluded that excessive internet use negatively influences psychological well-being and educational performance among college students.

Studies conducted in India have also reported moderate levels of internet addiction among university students, emphasizing the importance of awareness programmes and counselling interventions. However, relatively few studies have specifically examined gender differences among Bachelor of Education students using the s-IAT.

Need and Significance of the Study

Internet technology is an essential part of teacher education, supporting learning, teaching practice, assignments, and research. Excessive internet use may negatively affect academic performance, emotional well-being, and professional growth.

Understanding gender differences in internet addiction helps educators provide guidance for responsible internet use. Findings can support the inclusion of digital wellness and digital citizenship in teacher education programmes.

Promoting healthy internet habits among Bachelor of education students helps develop competent and responsible teachers.

Statement of the Problem

"A Comparative Study of Internet Addiction among Male and Female Bachelor of Education Students Using the Short Internet Addiction Test (s-IAT)."

Objectives of the Study

To assess the level of internet addiction among Bachelor of Education students.

To compare internet addiction between male and female Bachelor of Education students.

To determine whether gender significantly influences internet addiction among Bachelor of Education students.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in internet addiction between male and female Bachelor of Education students.

Operational Definitions

Internet Addiction: Internet addiction refers to excessive, compulsive, or uncontrolled internet use that interferes with the academic, social, emotional, and personal functioning of Bachelor of Education students.

Gender: Gender refers to the classification of Bachelor of Education students into two categories: male and female.

Sample

A total of 100 Bachelor of Education students were selected from teacher education colleges using the simple random sampling technique. The sample consisted of 50 male and 50 female students, ensuring equal representation of both groups for comparative analysis.

Research Methodology

The present investigation adopted the descriptive survey method, as it was considered appropriate for assessing the existing level of internet addiction and comparing it between male and female Bachelor of Education students without manipulating any variables.

Variables

Independent Variable: Gender (Male and Female)

Dependent Variable: Internet Addiction

Tool Used

Short Internet Addiction Test (s-IAT) Developed by Pawlikowski, Altstötter-Gleich, and Brand (2013) based on Young's Internet Addiction Test (1998). The scale consists of 12 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Never (1) to Very Often (5). Higher scores indicate greater levels of internet addiction.

Statistical Techniques

The following statistical techniques were employed:

Mean

Standard Deviation

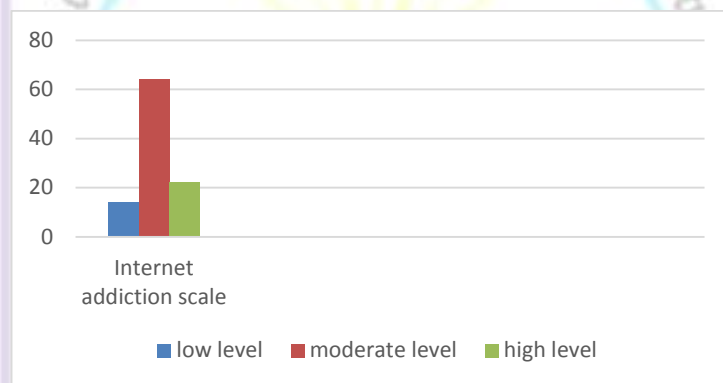
Independent Samples **t-test**

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1:Level of Internet Addiction among Bachelor of Education Students

Level of Internet Addiction	Number of Students	Percentage
High	22	22%
Moderate	64	64%
Low	14	14%
Total	100	100%

Figure 1: Level of Internet Addiction



Interpretation

The data indicate that **64%** of the Bachelor of Education students exhibited a **moderate level** of internet addiction, while **22%** showed a high level and **14%** demonstrated a low level of internet addiction. The findings suggest that although most students use the internet in a balanced manner, a considerable proportion are at risk of problematic internet use. This highlights the need for awareness programmes on responsible internet use among prospective teachers.

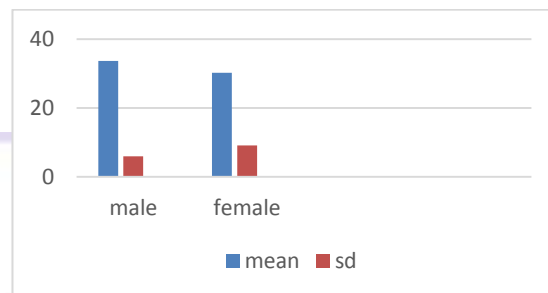
Table 2:Comparison of Internet Addiction (s-IAT) Scores among Male and Female Bachelor of education students: Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and Independent Samples *t-test*

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	Level of Significance
Male Students	50	33.68	5.99		
Female Students	50	30.22	9.13	2.24	Significant at 0.05 level

Degrees of freedom (df)=98

Critical t-value at 0.05 level = 1.98

Figure 2. Mean,SD of Internet Addiction Scores male & female



Interpretation: The mean s-IAT score of male Bachelor of education students ($M = 33.68$, $SD = 5.99$) was higher than that of female students ($M = 30.22$, $SD = 9.13$). The obtained t -value (2.24) was greater than the critical value (1.98) at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the difference between male and female students' internet addiction scores was found to be statistically significant.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that male Bachelor of education students exhibited significantly higher levels of internet addiction compared to female students. Gender appears to influence internet-use behaviour among prospective teachers.

Overall Interpretation: The results reveal that male Bachelor of education students had significantly higher internet addiction levels than female students. The findings suggest that gender has a significant influence on internet-use behaviour among prospective teachers.

Educational Implications

Digital wellness and responsible internet use should be incorporated into the Bachelor of Education curriculum. Teacher educators should organize workshops and awareness programmes on healthy internet-use practices and necessary skill should be developed by life skill education.

Student teachers should be encouraged to maintain a balance between online academic activities and offline social interactions.

Suggestions for Further Research

Similar studies may be conducted with larger samples drawn from different universities.

Comparative studies may be undertaken among undergraduate, postgraduate, and teacher education students.

Future researchers may examine the relationship between internet addiction and academic achievement, stress, anxiety, or emotional intelligence, life skills.

Conclusion

The internet is an important educational resource for Bachelor of Education students, supporting learning, teaching, communication, and professional development. However, excessive use may affect academic performance and well-being. This study compared internet addiction among male and female Bachelor of education students using the s-IAT. The findings showed a moderate level of internet addiction among most students, with males reporting significantly higher scores than females, indicating gender differences in internet-use behaviour. Teacher education institutions should promote healthy digital habits through awareness programmes, counselling, and digital citizenship education to develop responsible and competent teachers.

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