



Prevalence of Non-Academic Internet Browsing and Social Media Activity among Adolescents and Young Adults

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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Received on : 06/05/2026
Revised on : 07/07/2026
Accepted on : 16/07/2026
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ABSTRACT

The study found that non-academic internet browsing and social media use are highly prevalent among adolescents and young adults. Most participants spent considerable time on entertainment, social networking, and other recreational online activities. While digital technology offers valuable educational opportunities, excessive non-academic use may negatively affect academic productivity and overall development. The findings emphasize the need to promote responsible internet use, healthy digital habits, and greater awareness to encourage the effective use of online resources for educational and personal development.

KEY WORDS

Prevalence, Social Media, Adolescents, Young Adults.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed the internet into an indispensable component of everyday life, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Easy access to smartphones, affordable internet services, and the widespread popularity of social media platforms have significantly increased online engagement in this age group. Although the internet serves as an important resource for formal, informal, and self-directed learning, a considerable proportion of online activity is devoted to non-academic purposes, including social networking, video streaming, online gaming, entertainment, and recreational browsing.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, and similar applications have become central to the daily lives of young people by facilitating communication, self-expression, information sharing, and entertainment. While these platforms offer several educational and social benefits,

excessive non-academic internet use has been associated with reduced academic productivity, poor time management, increased screen time, and potential risks to psychological well-being and healthy development. Recent evidence suggests that the effects of social media depend not only on the duration of use but also on the nature and purpose of online engagement.

Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to prolonged internet use because of developmental characteristics, peer influence, constant connectivity, and the engaging design of digital platforms. Understanding the prevalence and patterns of non-academic internet browsing and social media activity is therefore essential for educators, researchers, parents, and policymakers. Such evidence can contribute to the development of effective strategies that promote responsible digital behavior, healthy online habits, and the productive use of internet resources for academic, personal, and social development.

Review of Literature

The review of literature indicates that non-academic internet browsing and social media use have become increasingly prevalent among adolescents and young adults. Studies by **Arvind Sharma et al. (2014)**, **Sneha D. Patil et al. (2017)**, and **S. Ghosh and S.P.H. Chatterjee (2018)** reported a growing prevalence of internet addiction among students and highlighted its adverse effects on academic performance and behaviour. **Awasthi et al. (2020)**, **Barsha Sensua et al. (2021)**, and **Tahir M.J. et al. (2021)** found that excessive internet use is associated with poor sleep quality, stress, anxiety, depression, and psychological distress. International studies by **Zeeshan Haroon et al. (2018)**, **M. Kassim and M.A.A. Roslan (2021)**, **Sumbal Khalid et al. (2022)**, and **Ong Wing En (2024)** further demonstrated that excessive social media engagement negatively influences students' mental well-being, browsing behavior, and academic productivity.

Despite these contributions, the literature reveals significant research gaps. Most studies have focused on internet addiction, mental health, or medical students, while limited attention has been given to the prevalence and behavioral patterns of non-academic internet browsing among adolescents and young adults, particularly in urban and rural areas of Chhattisgarh. Emerging digital trends and post-COVID-19 browsing behaviors also remain underexplored. Therefore, the present study aims to bridge these gaps by examining the prevalence and patterns of non-academic internet browsing and social media activity among adolescents and young adults in the regional context of Chhattisgarh.

Statement of the Problem

The problem selected for the present study was:

“Prevalence of Non-Academic Internet Browsing and Social Media Activity among Adolescents and Young Adults.”

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to examine the prevalence and patterns of non-academic internet browsing and social media use among adolescents (12–18 years) and young adults (19–25 years). Specifically, the study aimed to assess the average daily time spent on non-academic internet browsing and social media platforms, identify the most frequently used platforms and peak usage periods, examine the influence of socio-demographic factors, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and social influence on internet and social media use, and explore the association of these behaviors with academic performance, sleep hygiene, and mental well-being.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a sample of 100 adolescents and young adults from selected educational institutions in Chhattisgarh. The findings were based on self-reported questionnaire responses and focused only on non-academic internet browsing and social media activities, which may limit the generalizability of the results.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant prevalence of non-academic internet browsing and social media use among adolescents and young adults.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant prevalence of non-academic internet browsing and social media use among adolescents and young adults across different age groups, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Delimitations of the Study

The present study is delimited to adolescents and young adults aged 13–25 years studying in schools, colleges, and universities of urban and rural areas of Chhattisgarh. It focuses exclusively on the prevalence and patterns of non-academic internet browsing and social media activities, excluding academic internet use. The study is based on self-reported questionnaire responses collected during the specified period and examines their association with selected psychological variables, including stress, anxiety, distraction, and academic concentration. The findings are limited to internet use through smartphones, laptops, and tablets and do not include detailed investigation of physical or medical health consequences.

For a journal publication, the Research Sample, Research Tool, and Evaluation should be brief and written in a scientific style. Based on your study, you can write them as follows:

Sample

The study was conducted on a sample of 100 respondents, comprising 50 adolescents (13–18 years) and 50 young adults (18–25 years) selected from schools, colleges, and universities in Chhattisgarh using stratified random sampling.

Tool

Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher to assess the prevalence and patterns of non-academic internet browsing and social media activity. The tool consisted of Yes/No items and was designed in accordance with the study.

Evaluation

Responses were scored using a dichotomous scoring method (Yes = 1, No = 0), with reverse scoring for negative items. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentage, mean, and standard deviation, to determine the prevalence and patterns of non-academic internet browsing and social media use.

Analysis of Data

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were employed to examine the prevalence and patterns of non-academic internet browsing and social media use among adolescents and young adults. The findings were interpreted in relation to the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

Percentage Distribution of Internet Browsing Activity

Type of Internet Browsing	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Non-Academic Browsing	074	074%
Academic Browsing	026	026%
Total	100	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Findings of the Study

1. A majority (74%) of respondents were involved in non-academic internet browsing.
2. Only 26% of respondents mainly used the internet for academic purposes.
3. Adolescents and young adults showed high involvement in social media activities.
4. The mean score (14) indicated a high level of non-academic internet usage.
5. The standard deviation (2) showed moderate variability among respondents.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that parents and educators should promote responsible internet use through regular monitoring, digital literacy, and awareness programmes. Educational institutions should encourage balanced internet usage, implement time-management strategies, and provide counselling and digital wellness programmes to foster healthy online behavior among adolescents and young adults.

Suggestions

Future studies may include larger and more diverse samples, compare rural and urban populations, examine the psychological and academic consequences of excessive internet use, and investigate gender differences in non-academic internet browsing and social media activity.

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