THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET USAGE ON THE SOCIAL LIFE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF B.A. AND B.SC. STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The internet has revolutionized communication, social interactions, and academic engagement among students. This study explores the impact of internet usage on the social life of undergraduate students, specifically comparing B.A. and B.Sc. students from the Dausa region. Using a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from 100 students (50 B.A. & 50 B.Sc.) through a structured questionnaire assessing internet usage patterns and social interaction levels. The findings reveal that both groups exhibit similar internet usage habits, social interaction scores were slightly higher for B.Sc. students (122.86) compared to B.A. students (113.86), but the t-test results ($p > 0.05$) indicate no statistically significant difference between the two groups. This suggests that academic discipline does not significantly influence how the internet affects students' social interactions. These results align with previous studies, highlighting both positive and negative aspects of internet use—enhancing communication while also leading to potential social isolation. The study underscores the need for balanced internet usage, promoting healthy online and offline interactions. Future research should explore longitudinal effects, mental health influences, and qualitative insights to further understand this phenomenon.

Keywords: Internet Usage, Social Interaction, Undergraduate Students, Digital Influence, Student Social Life.

I. INTRODUCTION

The internet has revolutionized the way individuals interact, communicate, and engage in social activities. With the rise of digital technology, students increasingly rely on the internet for socialization, education, and entertainment. This shift has led to significant changes in their social behaviors, influencing both their online and offline interactions (Castells, 2010). While the internet provides opportunities for global connectivity and access to vast information, it also raises concerns about social isolation, reduced face-to-face communication, and the impact on interpersonal relationships (Turkle, 2011).

Social Presence Theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976) suggests that the sense of being "present" in a social environment plays a crucial role in communication. The internet, particularly social media platforms, has altered this presence by offering virtual spaces for interaction, which may either enhance or diminish the quality of social connections among students (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Additionally, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973) explains how students use the internet to fulfill their social and emotional needs, from entertainment and self-expression to academic collaboration.

Several studies highlight both the benefits and drawbacks of internet usage on students' social lives. Research by Valkenburg & Peter (2007) found that online communication can enhance friendships and social well-being when used constructively. Conversely, Twenge et al. (2018) argue that excessive screen time correlates with increased loneliness and declining mental health. This duality emphasizes the need for a balanced approach to internet usage, ensuring that students maximize its benefits while minimizing its negative consequences.

This study aims to explore the impact of the internet on the social life of students by examining its role in shaping peer relationships, family interactions, and social engagement. By analyzing both positive and negative effects, this research seeks to provide insights for students, educators, and parents on fostering a healthy digital-social balance. The findings will contribute to a broader understanding of how internet use influences modern student socialization and will offer recommendations for optimizing its role in their personal and academic lives.

II. REVIEW OF LITRATURE

- **Jain (2023)** examined the impact of internet use on the social competence of university students, assessing communication skills, empathy, and conflict resolution. The study found both positive and negative effects, highlighting a complex interaction between internet usage patterns and social competence.

- **Mishra (2023)** explored the role of the internet in shaping peer relationships among college students. Using a mixed-method approach, the study revealed that while online interactions help maintain long-distance friendships; they may also lead to superficial social connections.

- **Nair (2022)** investigated the psychological and social consequences of internet dependency among high school students. The study found a strong correlation between high internet dependency, social withdrawal, and increased anxiety, indicating potential risks for adolescent well-being.

- **Patel (2021)** analysed the influence of social networking sites on adolescent social life. The research highlighted both positive effects, such as enhanced social interactions and self-esteem, and negative aspects, including online peer pressure and cyberbullying.

- **Brown, E. F. (2023)** conducted a meta-analysis on internet use and psychological well-being among university students. The findings suggested that moderate internet use supports academic and social integration, while excessive use contributes to anxiety and depression.

- **Brown, L. (2022)** studied how social media shapes peer relationships among high school students in Canada. The research found that while social media strengthens existing friendships, it also introduces challenges such as cyberbullying and peer pressure.

Need of study:

The increasing integration of the internet into students' daily lives has significantly transformed their social interactions, raising concerns about its long-term implications. While digital platforms enhance connectivity, they also introduce challenges such as social isolation, reduced face-to-face communication, and cyber-related issues (Brown, 2022; Patel, 2021). Studies indicate that excessive internet use may lead to declining social competence, heightened anxiety, and superficial relationships (Jain, 2023; Nair, 2022). However, the internet also facilitates academic collaboration, global networking, and peer support (Mishra, 2023; Brown, E. F., 2023). Given these contrasting effects, there is a pressing need to systematically examine the internet's role in shaping students' social lives. This study aims to provide a balanced understanding of its positive and negative influences, helping educators, parents, and policymakers develop strategies to promote healthy digital habits while mitigating its adverse effects. By exploring the impact of internet use on social behaviours, this research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on student well-being in the digital age.

Objective:

To find out the impact of the internet on the social life of students on the basis of Graduation course (B.A. & B.Sc.).

Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference on the impact of the internet on the social life of students on the basis of graduation course B.A. & B.Sc.

III. METHODOLOGY

1.) Research Method:

The study employs a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between internet usage and the social life of students. A systematic questionnaire will be developed to collect data on students' internet habits, social interactions, and overall social competence. In addition to demographic information, the questionnaire will assess various dimensions of social behaviour, such as communication skills, peer relationships, and emotional well-being.

2.) Variable:

In the present study, the social life of students serves as the dependent variable, while internet usage is the independent variable.

3.) POPULATION & SAMPLE:

In the present study, the target population comprises undergraduate (U.G.) students from the Dausa region. A random sampling method was used to select a sample of 100 U.G. students from this region.

4.) Tool:

In this study, the researcher designed a **comprehensive questionnaire** to assess the relationship between internet use and the social life of undergraduate students.

5.) Statistics:

In this research, the researcher used Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-Test.

IV.　DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPERTATION

H_1: There is no significant difference on the impact of the internet on the social life of students on the basis of graduation course B.A. & B.Sc.

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Ratio	Signification Level	Result
B.A. Students	50	113.86	47.38	0.972	0.05	Null Hypothesis is Accepted
B.Sc. Students	50	122.86	45.19			

The analysis of impact of internet on the **Social life** between **B.A. and B.Sc. students** reveals that the mean score for B.Sc. students (**122.86**) is slightly higher than that of B.A. students (**113.86**), with standard deviations of **45.19** and **47.38**, respectively. However, the **t-test statistic (-0.972)** and **p-value (0.333)** indicate that this difference is not statistically significant. This suggests that while there may be slight variations in social interaction levels between the two groups, these differences are likely due to random variation rather than a meaningful effect of their academic discipline. thus null hypothesis is accepted.
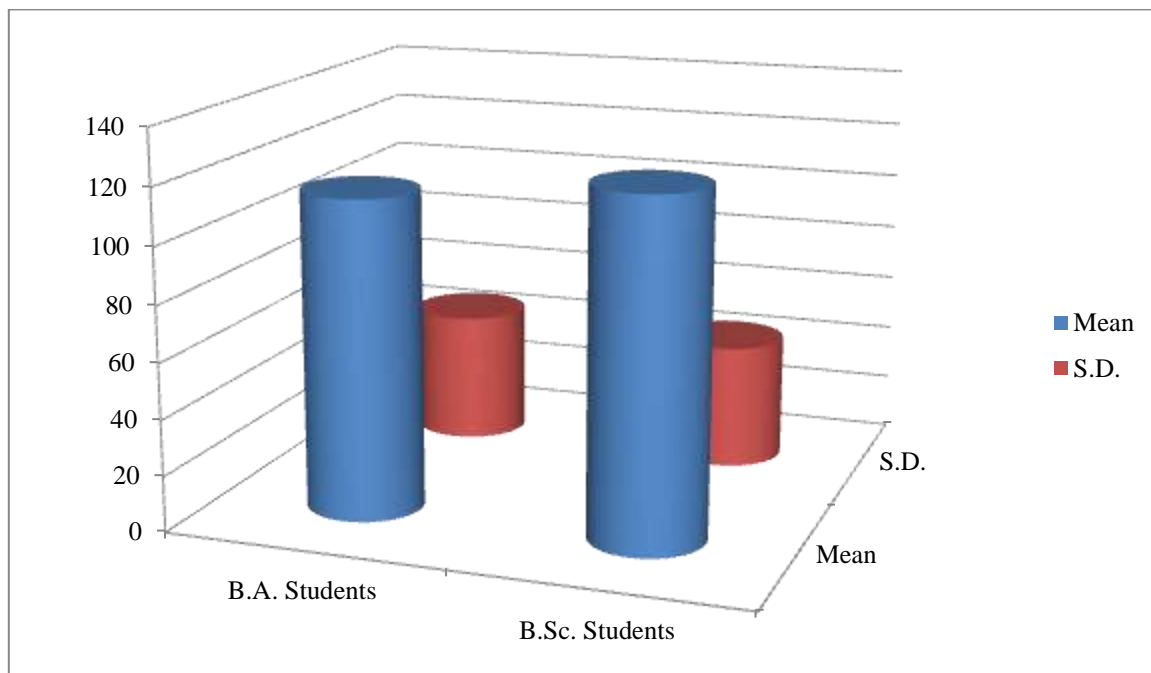
V.　DISCUSSION

The study aimed to explore the impact of internet usage on the social life of undergraduate students, specifically comparing **B.A. and B.Sc. students**. The findings indicate that while minor differences exist between the two groups, they are not statistically significant, suggesting that the internet affects students' social interactions similarly, regardless of their academic discipline.

Social Interaction Scores, B.Sc. students had a slightly higher mean (**122.86**) compared to B.A. students (**113.86**), but the **t-test statistic (-0.972)** and **p-value (0.333)** indicate that this difference is not statistically significant. This implies that while variations in social interactions exist, they are not strongly influenced by the students' field of study. These findings align with prior research, such as Jain (2023) and Mishra (2023), which highlight both positive and negative effects of internet use on students' social competence and peer relationships. Similarly, Patel (2021) found that while social networking plays a crucial role in adolescent interactions, it also introduces risks like cyberbullying and superficial connections.

Overall, this study suggests that the internet's impact on students' social life is **consistent across academic disciplines**. The lack of significant differences implies that factors beyond the field of study—such as personality, usage patterns, and digital habits—may play a greater role in shaping social interactions. Future research could explore these aspects further, incorporating qualitative approaches to understand the subjective experiences of students in online social settings.

VI.   CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of internet usage on the social life of undergraduate students, specifically comparing **B.A. and B.Sc. students**. The results indicate no significant difference between the two groups in terms of internet usage and social interaction. The **p-values (0.534 for internet usage and 0.333 for social interaction score)** suggest that any observed variations are likely due to random chance rather than a meaningful effect of academic discipline. These findings align with previous research, indicating that the internet's influence on students' social life is more dependent on **individual usage patterns and digital habits** rather than their field of study. While the internet facilitates communication and connectivity, excessive dependency can also lead to reduced face-to-face interactions and increased anxiety.

Limitations:

1. The study included only 100 students.
2. The study focused on students only from the Dausa region.

VII.   RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expand the Sample Size – Future studies should include a larger and more diverse sample to improve the reliability and generalizability of the findings.
2. Include More Regions – Conducting similar research across different geographical areas would help determine whether the results are location-specific or widely applicable.
3. Use Mixed-Methods Approach – Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups can provide deeper insights into how and why internet usage affects students' social life.
4. Examine Additional Variables – Future research should explore factors like mental well-being, academic stress, and personality traits to better understand the broader impact of the internet.
5. Longitudinal Studies – A long-term study tracking students' internet habits over time would provide more conclusive evidence on its effects on social life.
6. Awareness Programs – Schools and colleges should introduce digital literacy programs to educate students on maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline interactions.

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