

# A Study on Prevalence of Behavioural Addictions among College Students

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**K.Abilash**

*Department of Psychology, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India*

**M.Keerthika**

*Department of Psychology, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India*

**S.Bharathi**

*Department of Psychology, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India*

Volume: 6

Issue: 4

Month: April

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2321-788X

Received: 16.03.2019

Accepted: 30.03.2019

Published: 02.04.2019

Citation:

Abilash, K., et al. "A Study on Prevalence of Behavioural Addictions among College Students." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2019, pp. 27–33.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v6i4.350>



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## Abstract

*Background: Behavioural addictions is associated with an uncontrollable urge, loss of control, preoccupation with use and despite consequences. Aim: To study the prevalence of behavioural addictions among college students. Methods & Materials: 300 students are served as participants within the age group of 17 to 19 years. Behavioural addiction questionnaire is administered on 300 college students. Results: The pattern of behavioural addiction screening among college students revealed that the presence of high percentage of addictive use for Cellphone (28.6%), Shopping (22.4%), Internet (20.4%) and television (20.6%). There is significant difference between the behavioural addictions and dimensions of behavioural addictions (Craving, loss of control, compulsion and impact on others). Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between Eating Addiction and compulsion, Shopping addiction with dimensions of compulsion and impact on others, Sexual addiction with craving and loss of control, cell phone addiction and dimensions of craving, loss of control and impact on others, television addiction with craving, loss of control and impact on others, internet addiction with craving and impact on others.*

**Keywords:** Addictions, Behavioural Addictions, Craving and Compulsion, Cell Phone usages, Loss of control, Internet addiction

## Introduction

Addiction of any kind is traditionally associated with an uncontrollable urge, often accompanied by a loss of control, a preoccupation with use, and continued use despite problems the behaviour causes (Kimberly S. Young, 2004). Contrary to the earlier concept that the term addiction should be applied only to cases involving the ingestion of a drug (Rachlin, 1990), currently, defining addiction has moved beyond, to include a number of behaviours that do not involve an intoxicant, such as compulsive gambling (Griffiths, 1990), video game playing (Keepers, 1990), overeating (Leisure & Blume, 1993), exercise (Morgan, 1979), love relationships (Peele & Brodsky, 1979) television viewing (Winn, 1983) and Internet use it has been alleged by some academicians that excessive Internet use comes under the more generic label of technological addiction (Griffiths, 1996).

Technological addictions are operationally defined as behavioural addictions that involve human-machine interaction. Technological addictions can be both active and passive and include inducing and reinforcing features which may contribute to the promotion of addictive tendencies (Griffiths, 1995).

The addiction that is said to be technological can be viewed as a subset of behavioural addictions (Marks, 1990) and feature the core components of addiction, (i.e., salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse (Griffiths, 1996).

Dependency on the Internet could also be conceptualized as a “behavioural addiction” (Bradley, 1990; Marks, 1990). Behavioural addictions work on a modified principle of the classic addiction model; however, under the rubric of addictions, the validity and clinical usefulness of classifying certain mental disorders and behaviors such as compulsive spending, gambling, hyper sexuality, kleptomania, overeating, etc. has been questioned (Holden, 2001; Miele et al., 1990).

Others (Greenberg et al., 1999) have reported, that there is a tendency for individuals to have overlapping addictions between common substances such as alcohol and cigarettes and “addictions” to certain kinds such as Internet use, gambling, exercising, and television.

The concept of psychological dependence is the most important factor to both models of substance and behavioural addictions, in which no physiological exchange, such as ingestion of a substance, occurs (Bradley, 1990; Marks, 1990). Thus, the principle of psychological dependence may lend itself to the pull of the Internet for problematic Internet users since no physiological exchange has taken place. Nevertheless, this also arguably describes a process of conditioning rather than of “addiction”.

There are 6% of the U.S adult shops compulsively and most are women (Donald W. Black, 2013). Food addiction is about 62.6% in the areas of Madurai (Tamilnadu) (Almarsukka & SahulHameed, 2015). Sexual addiction was about 28% and are mostly women admitting to it (Sex leadership Journal survey, 2003). The compulsive use of the world wide web may occupy up to 11hrs out of an internet addicts’ other studies suggest that internet use affects 6to14% of internet users. It has been found that 6% of college students in U.S.suffer from serious gambling problem that can lead to psychological difficulties, unmanageable debt and failing grades. About 5 to 10 percent of all Internet users appear to show web dependency (Murali Doraiswamy, 2013).

All developed and developing countries started to assess the behavioural addictions among youth and college students. Meanwhile, the technology usages are increasing the number in developing countries like India. Around 2.66 billion internet users are in India (i.e. 1. Delhi, 2. Mumbai, 3. Bangalore 4. all other major cities). Still, research is ongoing about Internet addiction in all over the world. But there is a gap to assess all behavioural addictions among college students. So, the present study is to find out the prevalence of behavioural addictions among college students and it will be helpful to identify and make therapeutic module for them.

## **Methodology**

### **Aim**

To study the prevalence of behavioural addictions among college students

### **Objectives**

- To find out the prevalence of behavioural addictions among college students
- To see the relationship between the behavioural addictions and its dimensions

### **Sample**

Three hundred students were served participants in this study. The age group were taken from 17 to 19years and those who are studying the first year under graduation participated. Samples were selected from private colleges from Coimbatore city using random sampling. Those who are not using any one of the behavioural addictions were excluded.

### **Tools**

1. Socio-demographic data sheet: This sheet was prepared by the investigator and is intended to gather information regarding the name of the participant, age, education, and other demographic details. Some general questions related to the internet were also included.
2. Behavioural Addiction Questionnaire: It was developed by Sharma et al., in 2013. It consists 29 yes or no questions. It has 7 behavioural addictions in such as Cell phone, Internet, Shopping, Eating, television, Sex and Work, has four dimensions (i.e. Craving, Loss of control, Compulsion and Impact on others).

3. Facebook Intensity Questionnaire: It was developed by Ellison in the year 2007. This questionnaire measures Facebook usage beyond simple measures of frequency and duration, incorporating emotional connectedness to the site and its integration into an individual's daily activities.

**Period of study**

To practically emerge, analyse, interpret and to explore the findings, the study took a period of one month 23 days.

**Procedure**

The colleges in Coimbatore city are approached for getting their permission to collect data from the students who were studying in their colleges. Informed consent is taken from the college to the administration of Socio-Demographic data, Behavioural Addiction Questionnaire and Facebook Intensity Questionnaire. The random sampling method was used. The sample comprised of 300 college students (Male=69 & Female=231) an average age of 17 years were taken 98.3% of the sample had 13 years of education. 68% have 1 sibling. Out of the total sample, 75.3% were from nuclear families, 98.3% were unmarried.

**Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were performed to find out the prevalence of behavioural addictions among college students. Correlation analysis was done for seeing the association between dimensions and behavioural addictions.

**Results**

**Table 1 shows that frequencies and percentages of technological devices used by college students**

Variables		Frequency	%
Desktop Computer	No	228	76.0%
	Yes	72	24.0%
Laptop	No	213	71.0%
	Yes	87	29.0%
Net book	No	273	91.0%
	Yes	27	9.0%

Smart phone / Mobile	No	92	30.7%
	Yes	208	69.3%
Tab / tablet	No	250	83.3%
	Yes	50	16.7%
Average hours	1-5	253	84.4%
	6-10	37	12.2%
	11-above	10	3.2%

Table-1 reveals that among all the gadgets 69.3% of students have access to smartphones/mobile phones, 50.6% of students started using the internet at the age of 16-17 years of age. 84.4% of students spend an average of 1-5 hours per day in internet. 56.3% Visited Social Networking Sites, 35.3% use internet for entertainment purpose on an average of 4-7 times per week. The majority of the participant's age range is 16 – 18 years (50.6%).

**Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of Behavioural Addictions among college students**

Variables	Score	Frequency	%
Eating Addiction	0-2	277	92.3%
	3-4	23	7.7%
Shopping Addiction	0-3	233	77.7%
	4-6	67	22.4%
Sexual Addiction	0-2	287	95.7%
	3-5	13	4.3%
Cellphone Addiction	0-2	214	71.3%
	3-5	86	28.6%
Television Addiction	0-2	238	79.4%
	3-5	62	20.6%
Internet Addiction	0-2	239	79.6%
	3-5	61	20.4%

Table-2 revealed that, Majority of the college students are addicted to cell phone (28.6%), shopping(22.4%), television(20.6%) and internet(20.4%). Even though 7.7% of the participants are addicted to eating, 4.3% are addicted to sex. On Facebook Intensity, the results showed that 57.3% have got scored 0-15, 40.1% have got scored 16-30, and 2.6% have got scored 31-38.

**Table 3 shows that frequencies and percentages of dimensions of Behavioural Addictions**

Variables	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Eating Addiction	0-2	277	92.3%
	3-4	23	7.7%
Shopping Addiction	0-3	233	77.7%
	4-6	67	22.4%
Sexual Addiction	0-2	287	95.7%
	3-5	13	4.3%
Cellphone Addiction	0-2	214	71.3%
	3-5	86	28.6%

Television Addiction	0-2	238	79.4%
	3-5	62	20.6%
Internet Addiction	0-2	239	79.6%
	3-5	61	20.4%

On dimensions of behavioural addictions, 29% of the participants have the craving, 10.6% of losing control, 15% of compulsion and 24.3% of the impact on others. Hence, most of the users have more urge or preoccupied to use.

**Table 4 shows the association between the Behavioural addictions and dimensions of behavioural addictions**

Variables	Craving	Loss of Control	Compulsion	Impact on Others
Eating Addiction	0.583	0.411	0.395**	0.344
Shopping Addiction	0.105	0.257	0.171*	0.201**
Sexual Addiction	0.417**	0.391*	0.397	0.401
Cell phone Addiction	0.441**	0.415**	0.467	0.335**
Television Addiction	0.393**	0.412**	0.476	0.439**
Internet Addiction	1**	0.411	0.386	0.393**

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant relationship between eating addiction and compulsion; Shopping addiction and compulsion; sexual addiction and craving & loss of control; Cellphone addiction and craving & loss of control; Television addiction and craving & impact on others; Internet addiction and craving & impact on others

### Discussion

This study documents the behavioural addictions among first-year college students based on six categories in such as Eating addiction, Shopping addiction, Sexual addiction, Cell Phone addiction, Television addiction and Internet addiction. The present study also throws light over intensity of Facebook usage among college students.

Based on present study results, it was found that among all the gadgets, 69.3% of students have access to smartphone / mobile phones. This may be due to the increased likeness or craziness for smartphone among college students. Having smart

phones is considered as a relation to status. 50.6% started using internet at the age of 16-17 years of age. Availability of free Wi-Fi in college and other places may be the contributing factors of internet usage. 56.3% visited social networking sites and 35.3% use internet for entertainment purpose. 11.3% used internet for academic-related purpose. This shows that internet usage for an academic purpose is comparatively lesser than that for social networking sites (entertainment, chats and movies). This may be due to peer pressure and poor academic interest. Most of the people in social networking sites say that they are feeling proud to be a member of these sites (facebook, twitter, WhatsApp).

On the pattern of behavioural addiction among college students, it was found that 7.7% were likely to have eating addiction. On contrary, another study shows that food addiction is about 62.6% in the areas of Madurai - Tamilnadu (Almarsukka, Sahul Hameed, 2015). Shopping is about 22.4% among freshers. Other studies show that 6% of the U.S

adults' shops compulsively 20.6%. Sexual addiction was about 28% in adults (Sex leadership journal survey) but in our study sexual addiction is about 4.3% among college students. Cell Phone addiction is 28.6%, which is the highest on comparing to all other addictions in our study. This may be due to the increased use of mobile phones for day to day activities. Television addiction is about 20.6%. This may be due to the increase in technology usage in developing countries like India. Around 2.66 billion internet users in India, this directly contributes to the internet addiction. In our study 20.4% are likely to have internet addiction. Many factors such as free Wi-Fi, easy availability of internet contribute to this.

This study revealed the prevalence of different types of addiction based on 4 criteria: Craving, Loss of control, Compulsion, Impact on others. It was found that craving for addiction is about 29% among first year college students. Loss of control is about 10.6%, Compulsion is about 15% and Impact of others is 24.3%. This shows craving is most commonly found in college students which might lead to addiction and serious problems since craving is a powerful desire for something.

Analysis of Facebook intensity questionnaire shows that 57.3% of students have scored between 0-15. They have low intensity for facebook usage. 40.1% have scored 16-30, which indicates that 40.1% students have high intensity of facebook usage. This might affect them both psychologically and physiologically.

### Conclusion

The present study concluded that there is relationship between Eating addiction, Shopping addiction and compulsion. The compulsive behavior of the students may lead them to addiction. Sexual addiction and craving & loss of control have significant relationship; Cell Phone addiction and craving & loss of control are highly correlated; Television addiction and craving & impact on others have relation; Internet addiction and craving & impact on others are highly correlated.

### Limitations

- The current study included sample within a small geographical area, the study can be extended to

larger geographical area.

- The study did not take into account about the gender difference.
- The included uneven samples for males and females.

### Implications

Further research can be done by including samples with equal number of males and females and gender difference can also be estimated. Also, it should consider college students from different geographical area.

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#### Authors Details

**K.Abilash**, II year Post Graduate Student, Department of Psychology, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. **Email ID:** [abilash.k.1797@gmail.com](mailto:abilash.k.1797@gmail.com)

**M.Keerthika**, II year Post Graduate Student, Department of Psychology, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

**S.Bharathi**, II year Post Graduate Student, Department of Psychology, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.