

# INTERNET USAGE AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The present study focuses towards studying the Physical health status of secondary school students on the basis of their Internet Usage Level, Gender and Locale. The Internet Usage Level of the respondents have been determined on the basis of scores attained by the respondents on the Internet Usage Scale by Saini and Kaur. The Physical Health of the respondents has been determined on the basis of certain selected health parameters (Height, Weight, BMI, Vision Problem and Hearing Problem only). The respondents have been selected from the rural and urban based secondary schools of Jalandhar District only. The findings indicate that majority of the students have either average or good physical health. Physical health of female students is better than the male students, Physical health of rural students is better than the urban students. Physical health of students having either Low or Average Internet Usage level is better than the Physical health of students having High Internet Usage Level.*

**Key Words: Internet Usage, Physical Health, Secondary School Students.**

## **I INTRODUCTION**

Internet is contributing remarkably in facilitating the life of people in a number of ways. Internet is no more a facility but it is a necessity for people now a days. Internet is penetrating in the lives of people in such a way that it is becoming the favorite activity of people of all age groups and particularly the adolescents. Although there are a lot of positive benefits of Internet in enhancing the knowledge and learning of the students but excessive non essential use of Internet is a cause of concern for all of us. Researchers have found that excessive nonessential use of Internet have various negative effects on the academics, work productivity, Mental Health, Physical Health, Social Skills, and Relationships with Family. The excessive internet usage contributes to physical and psychological harms like tiredness, hostility, depression and loneliness [1] & [2]. Researchers reported certain educational harms like wasting of time, decrease in academic performance and communication problems with peers due to prolonged internet usage [1], [3], [4], & [5]. Adolescence is a crucial stage of development wherein adolescents are undergoing various biological and hormonal changes in their body which are responsible for the overall growth and development of all aspects of personality such as physical, mental, emotional, social, moral and spiritual. Adolescents along with their teachers, parents and family need to pay proper attention towards the proper growth and development of the adolescents. But it is observed in the present

society that adolescents spend majority of their time on the internet usage and are negligent towards the Physical health requirements of their body. This negligence may lead to poor physical health which will further affect the Mental Health of the adolescents because a sound mind lives in a sound body. Moreover poor physical health will result into absence from schools, poor academics, poor sports and lesser confidence. Therefore it is important that the parents, teachers, stake holders and the students themselves be sensitized towards the need of ensuring a sound physical health of the adolescents because the adolescents are the future of the nation. And sound physical health of the adolescents will help in building sound development of the Nation.

## II LITERATURE REVIEW

Vijayanti, Makharam, Afroz and Gajekar studied the Gender differences in the prevalence and features of internet addiction among Indian college students. The findings of the study revealed that 8.8% of the adolescents were found to be addicted to the internet. Internet addiction was significantly higher in males than in females. Students with internet addiction suffered real life social impairment, arguments with parents, isolation from groups and academic disruption. There was physical impairment of insomnia (26.8%) day time sleepiness (20%) eye strain (19%). Addicted students reported to be using internet for up to 5 hours per day and missed their classes and studies [6].

Singh studied the Internet Usage in relation to selected developmental task among adolescents. The findings of the study revealed out of 432 internet users 47.17 % boys and 22.82% girls were found to be internet addicts. It was further found that mean internet addiction scores of boys were significantly higher than the mean internet addiction scores of girls. It was further found that grade, age, subject, socio demographic characteristics like age, grade stream and living area has no association with Internet Addiction tendency. With regard to Internet usage pattern it was found that majority of the adolescents use internet for more than 10 hours per week. With regard to the consequences of the internet use on the physical health it was reported by 44.65% addict adolescents had moderate physical discomfort due to computer use. 81.68% non addicts have mild physical discomfort due to computer use and 23.27% addict adolescents reported severe physical discomfort due to Internet Usage [7].

## III OBJECTIVE

The objective of the research study is “To Study and Compare the Physical Health of Secondary School Students on the basis of Gender, Locale and Internet Usage Levels.”

## IV METHODOLOGY

The present research study is a descriptive research study. The data has been raised from randomly selected 1000 secondary school students (class IX and X only) selected in equal proportion from the rural and urban based secondary schools of Jalandhar district only. The Internet Usage Level of the respondents has been determined on the basis of scores attained by the respondents on the Internet Usage Scale by Saini and Kaur [8].

The students were asked to fill the Internet Usage Scale. The scores attained by 1000 students were arranged in ascending order and by following the Kelly's 28% division method [9] three groups of Internet Usage Level were maintained. The High Internet Usage Level group composed of top 28% scorers, Low Internet Usage Level composed of bottom 28% scorers and the Average Internet Usage composed of remaining respondents. The Physical Health of the respondents has been determined on the basis of certain selected health parameters (Height, Weight, BMI, Vision Problem and Hearing Problem only). Each parameter has been assigned a score and the Physical Health status of the students has been created based on the scores obtained by the students. The Height and Weight of the students is used to determine their BMI level. Normal BMI accounts for 1 score. Absence of Vision problem accounts for 1 mark and absence of Hearing problem accounts for 1 mark. The scoring and the categories created are as follows:

**Table: I**

**Physical Health Status Scoring and Categories**

Sr. No	Scores	Health Status
1	3/3	Good
2	2/3	Average
3	1/3	Poor
4	0/3	Very Poor

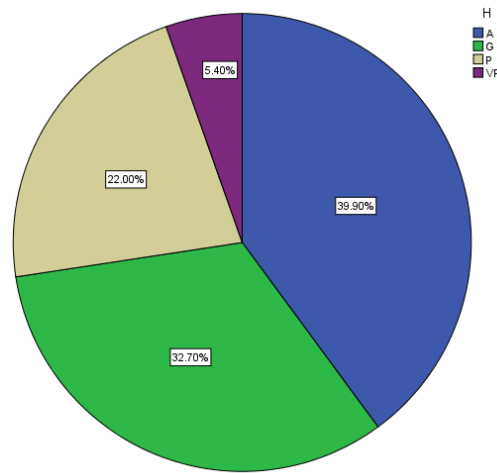
## V RESEARCH FINDINGS

**I: Physical Health Status of Secondary School Students:** The Table below depicts the Descriptive statistics for the Physical Health Status of the 1000 secondary school students followed by the graphical representation of the physical health status of the secondary school students.

**Table: II**

**Descriptive Statistics for the Physical Health Status of the Secondary School Students**

Sr. No.	Physical Health	Frequency	Percentage
1	Good Physical Health	327	32.70%
2	Average Physical Health	399	39.90%
3	Poor Physical Health	220	22.00%
4	Very Poor Physical Health	54	05.40%
<b>Total Students</b>		1000	100%



**Fig: I: Physical Health Status of Secondary School Students**

**Interpretation:** The data related to the Physical Health Status of 1000 secondary school students depicts that 32.7% students have Good Physical Health 39.9% students have Average Physical Health, 22% students have Poor Physical Health and only 5.4% students have Very Poor Physical Health.

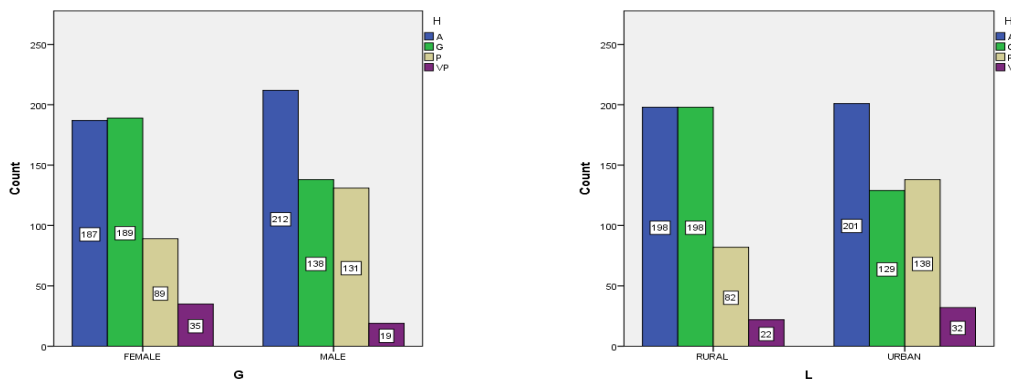
**II: Physical Health Status of Secondary School Students based on Gender and Locale:** The Table below depicts the Descriptive statistics for the Physical Health Status of the secondary school students on the basis of Gender and Locale followed by the graphical representation of the physical health status of the secondary school students on the basis of Gender and Locale.

**Table: III**

**Descriptive statistics for the Physical Health Status of the secondary school students based on Gender and Locale**

Variable	Category	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male (500)	Good	138	27.6%
		Average	212	42.4%
		Poor	131	26.2%
		Very Poor	19	3.8%
	Female (500)	Good	189	37.8%
		Average	187	37.4%
		Poor	89	17.8%
		Very Poor	35	7.0%
<b>Total Students</b>			<b>1000</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Locale</b>	Rural (500)	Good	198	39.6%
		Average	198	39.6%
		Poor	8	1.6%

		Very Poor	22	4.4%
Urban (500)		Good	129	25.8%
		Average	201	40.2%
		Poor	138	27.6%
		Very Poor	32	6.4%
		<b>Total Students</b>		<b>1000</b>



**Fig. II : Physical Health Status of the secondary school students based on Gender and Locale**

**Interpretation:** The data related to the Physical Health status of the secondary school students on the basis of Gender and Locale has been depicted in the Table and the figures above. The data reveals that out of 500 males 27.6% have Good Physical Health, 42.4% have Average, 26.2% have Poor and 3.8% have Very Poor Physical Health. Out of 500 female students 37.8 % have Good Physical Health, 37.4% have Average, 17.8% have Poor and 7.0 % have Very Poor Physical Health. Regarding the Physical Health Status of the secondary school students on the basis of Locale it was found that out of 500 Rural students 39.9% have Good Physical Health, 39.6% have Average, 1.6 % have Poor and 4.4% have Very Poor Physical Health. Out of 500 Urban students 25.8 % have Good Physical Health, 40.2% have Average, 27.6 % have Poor and 6.4 % have Very Poor Physical Health. Overall it can be concluded that the Physical Health of female students is better than male students and the Physical Health of rural students is better than the urban students.

**III: Physical Health Status of Secondary School Students based on Three Levels of Internet Usage:** The Table below depicts the Descriptive statistics for the Physical Health Status of the secondary school students belonging to the three groups of Internet Usage Levels followed by the graphical representation of the physical health status of the secondary school students belonging to three groups of Internet Usage Levels.

Table: IV

Descriptive statistics for the Physical Health Status of the secondary school students for three levels of Internet Usage

Category	N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
High Internet Usage	274	Good	09	3.28%
		Average	98	35.76 %
		Poor	129	47.08%
		Very Poor	38	13.87 %
Average Internet Usage	456	Good	225	49.34%
		Average	149	32.67%
		Poor	70	1.53%
		Very Poor	12	2.63 %
Low Internet Usage	270	Good	169	62.59%
		Average	76	28.15 %
		Poor	21	7.77 %
		Very Poor	04	1.48 %
<b>Total Students</b>			<b>1000</b>	<b>100%</b>

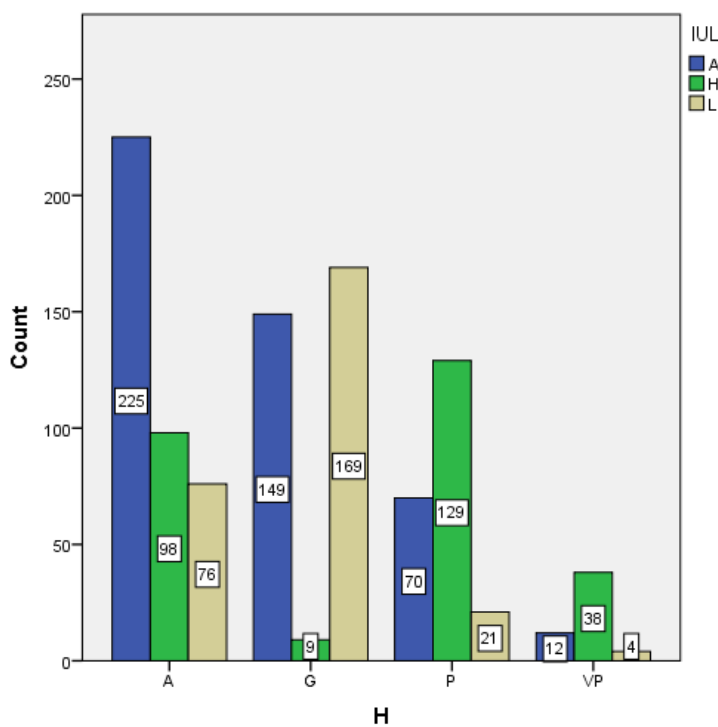


Fig. III: Physical Health Status of the secondary school students for three levels of Internet Usage

**Interpretation:** The table and the figure above depicts that out of 274 students having High Internet Usage the Physical Health of the 3.28% students is Good, 35.76% is Average, 47.08% is Poor and of 1.87% students is Very Poor. Out of 456 students having Average Internet Usage the Physical Health of the 49.34% students is Good, 32.67 % is Average, 1.53 % is Poor and of 2.63 % students is Very Poor. Out of 270 students having Low Internet Usage the Physical Health of the 62.59 % students is Good, 28.15 % is Average, 7.77% is Poor and of 1.48 % students is Very Poor.

## VI CONCLUSION

The research findings conclude that the majority of the secondary school students have average physical health, followed by good physical health and very few students have very poor physical health. Regarding the physical health status on the basis of gender it was found that majority of the male students have average physical health and majority of the female students have either good or average physical health. It indicates that the physical health of female students is better than the male students. Regarding the physical health status on the basis of locale, it was found that majority of the urban students have average physical health and majority of the rural students have either good or average physical health. It indicates that the physical health of rural students is better than the urban students. Regarding the physical health status on the basis of three levels of internet usage it has been found that majority of the students having low internet usage level have good physical health, majority of the students having average internet usage level have average physical health and majority of the students having high internet usage level have average physical health. Further it has been found that approximately 10% of the students having low internet usage level have either poor or very poor physical health, approximately 5% of the students having average internet usage have either poor or very poor physical health and approximately 60% of the students having high internet usage level have poor or very poor physical health. It indicates that the physical health of students having either low or average internet usage level is better than the physical health of the students having high internet usage level. The findings of this research are consistent with the findings of the research studies undertaken by Wanajak [10] that internet usage has a negative impact on the school problems, physical health problems and mental health problems of school students. Singh [7] stated that with regard to the consequences of the internet use on the physical health it was reported by 44.65% addict adolescents that they experience moderate physical discomfort due to computer use. 81.68% non addicts experienced mild physical discomfort due to computer use and 23.27% addict adolescents experienced severe physical discomfort due to internet usage. Zheng, Li, Zhu and Ning [11] found that higher amount of time on internet is strongly associated with the physical health complaints. A sound and healthy mind lives in a healthy body. The students, teachers, parents and the other stakeholders should be sensitized towards the need of a healthy body for the proper growth and development and sound mental health of the adolescents. If the students will be trapped in the net of internet and be negligent towards their physical health and hygiene then the consequences will be dangerous for the students society and the nation as a whole.

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