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**Internet Addiction in the Digital Age: Behavioural Patterns and
Long-Term Consequences for Young Adults**

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital technologies and internet-based communication has transformed the social, educational, and professional lives of young adults. However, excessive and uncontrolled internet use has emerged as an important behavioural and psychosocial concern. This study examines internet addiction in the digital age, focusing on behavioural patterns and its potential long-term consequences for young adults. It explores patterns of excessive internet use, including prolonged social media engagement, online gaming, video streaming, continuous browsing, and compulsive checking of digital devices. Particular attention is given to behavioural indicators such as loss of control over internet use, difficulty reducing screen time, neglect of responsibilities, sleep disruption, social withdrawal, and reduced academic or occupational productivity. The study further examines the possible long-term effects of problematic internet use on psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, physical health, academic performance, and work-life balance. It considers how factors such as loneliness, stress, anxiety, peer influence, and the need for social validation may contribute to problematic digital behaviors. The research also highlights the importance of digital literacy, self-regulation, healthy online habits, family and peer support, and appropriate institutional interventions in preventing harmful patterns of internet use. Rather than viewing internet use itself as inherently harmful, the study emphasizes the distinction between beneficial digital engagement and persistent, compulsive use that interferes with everyday functioning. Overall, understanding behavioural patterns and long-term consequences can support the development of balanced digital practices and healthier approaches to technology use among young adults.

Keywords: Internet addiction, digital age, young adults, problematic internet use, social media, behavioural patterns, screen time, psychological well-being, digital literacy, mental health, technology use.