Social Science Lens | 2026, Vol. 8, No.1, 119 – 131 | ISSN Online: 3028-1997 | ISSN Print: 3028-1962
DOI: https://doi.org/10.62718/vmca.ssl-wjhdsr.8.1.SC-0126-018

Campus Confessions: A Descriptive Study on the Prevalence of Substance and Behavioral Addiction Risk Among University Students in Metro Manila

Article History:

Initial submission:	23 January 2026
First decision:	06 February 2026
Revision received:	24 June 2026
Accepted for publication:	15 July 2026
Online release:	29 July 2026

Louise Marie C. Derecho[1], ORCID No. 0009-0001-0385-9502
Gian Derick Sevilla[1], MA, RPm, RPsy, ORCID No. 0009-0001-0589-271X
[1]Psychologist, Counseling and Psychological Services, De La Salle University, 2401 Taft Avenue, Malate, Manila, Philippines

Abstract

Amid rising concerns regarding student mental health in higher education, understanding the specific landscape of addictive behaviors is essential for informing effective campus support systems. This study determined the prevalence and risk level of substance and behavioral addiction among university students enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) within Metro Manila. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive design, data were gathered from a selected sample of 117 eligible participants aged 18 and above. Substance and behavioral risks were evaluated using the Screener for Substance and Behavioral Addictions Generalized (SSBA-G). Descriptive data revealed a stark contrast in addiction risk profiles where a majority of participants exhibited low risk for substance addiction (68.38%), but a majority profile also indicates a high risk for behavioral addictions (67.52%). These findings provide crucial baseline data to outline shifting student vulnerabilities, highlighting areas where preliminary resource allocation may be beneficial and establishing a foundation for future research to determine definitive institutional thresholds.

Keywords: prevalence, substance addiction, behavioral addiction, SSBA-G (Screener for Substance and Behavioral Addictions Generalized), Metro Manila, university students

INTRODUCTION

The transition to university life represents a critical developmental period in emerging adulthood marked by increased academic pressures. social autonomy, and identity exploration (Li & Yang, 2024; Magier et al., 2023). which often correlates with a rise in mental health issues like anxiety, depression, stress, and addictive behaviors (Newman, & Swissheim, 2025; Ramon-Arbues et al., 2020). Substance use and behavioral addiction, once treated as distinct phenomena, are now increasingly understood as overlapping risk profiles that share common neurobiological, psychosocial, and environmental determinants. University students occupy a uniquely vulnerable state in which they navigate competing pressures such as college life, academic requirements, and family responsibilities (Matorre, 2025; Khattak et al., 2025). It is within these contexts that many experience mental health challenges and may seek refuge in substance use (Deng et al., 2022; McConaha et al., 2025).

The burden of addiction in the Philippines is significantly and structurally under supported. Data from the Philippine Department of Health, indicates that more than 3.6 million Filipinos suffer from mental health conditions, neurological, and substance use disorders. This burden is compounded by a severe shortage of mental health professionals in the country (Philippine News Agency [PNA], 2023; Anlacan et al., 2026). For students in Metro Manila, access to institutional mental health support remains inconsistent, and addiction-focused services within universities are even more limited (Alibudbud, 2023). Studies on Metro Manila mental health services have identified insufficient budgets, a lack of trained professionals, and a fragmented mental health system with persistent barriers to quality of care. Furthermore, many Filipinos remain reluctant to seek treatment due to cost and fear

of societal stigma (Alibudbud, 2023; Billote & Ponce, 2020; The Borgen Project, 2025).

Within the landscape of substance use among Filipino university students, studies have shown that academic, psychosocial, and romantic stressors positively predict perceived stress, while maladaptive coping mediates the relationship between perceived stress and substance use behavior such as cigarette and alcohol use (Dy et al., 2015; Henchanova et al., 2025). These highlight the degree in which addiction risk among students is not merely behavioral failing, but a measurable response to systemic stressors embedded in the academic environment.

Beyond substance abuse, behavioral addictions have also emerged as an equally urgent concern, particularly in the post-pandemic digital landscape. The widespread adoption of digital technologies and the normalization of excessive internet and gaming use among young people have introduced new addiction risk profiles that existing campus wellness frameworks are not designed to address (Canoğulları, 2026; Piccininno & Perrotta, 2024; Salerno et al., 2023; Scafuto et al., 2023; Tabish, 2025). In the Philippines, online game addiction and psychological distress continue to develop as significant issues, particularly among young adults aged 18 to 24, who comprise one of the largest groups engaged in excessive use of interactive online games (Kapoor & Subida, 2023).

Despite a growing body of international evidence, research on addiction risk within Philippine higher education remains relatively limited and still developing. Existing studies often examine substance use and behavioral addictions separately, with few integrating both domains within a single analytical or screening framework. While global meta-analyses have established the shared mechanisms and co-occurrence of these conditions, there remains a need to contextualize these findings within the Philippine setting. This is particularly important in Metro Manila, where institutional density, student diversity, and urban stressors may shape risk patterns differently from national or global trends. Furthermore, the limited availability of comprehensive, institution-specific data on student mental health presents challenges for university administrators and counseling services, who must make decisions with incomplete or uneven evidence (Serrano et al., 2023).

Determining the prevalence and distribution of both substance and behavioral addiction risk provides baseline evidence that may assist higher education institutions to develop data-driven risk management strategies. This study specifically addresses the gap in localized screening data, which is necessary to determine at what prevalence levels universal versus targeted counseling interventions should be triggered. By documenting the prevalence of addiction risk, this study established baseline data that universities may use when considering future prevention and support initiatives.

This research therefore seeks to identify the prevalence of addiction risk among university students in Metro Manila. Specifically, the study aims to describe the prevalence and risk profiles of both substance-related and behavioral addictions among sampled university students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global and Local Prevalence Trends. Current literature highlights a significant and rising prevalence of addiction risks among university populations globally. Research by Singh & Dhawan (2021) and Jebali et al. (2019) suggests that substance use disorders specifically alcohol, nicotine, and cannabis are often comorbid with other mental health challenges. For instance, Gürbüzer and Gürcan-Yıldırım (2025) identified that 44% of students engage in binge drinking and 53.5% utilize tobacco, while nearly 11% of men report regular cannabis use (Lee et al., 2025). Within the Philippine context, a study of 315 university students across 18 universities found that academic, psychosocial, and romantic stressors predict perceived

stress, and that maladaptive coping mediates the relationship between perceived stress and substance use (Henchanova et al., 2025). These, therefore, reflect the broader pattern in which conditions of university life, rather than individual predisposition alone, function as drivers of addiction risk.

Beyond chemical dependencies, behavioral "process" addictions have surged. Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) affects a sizeable percentage of students, often predicted by early initiation and high frequency (Shouman et al., 2023; Nalwoga et al., 2024). Similarly, Gambling Addiction remains a concern, particularly among males and those with high internet-based gambling expenditure (Suriá Martínez et al., 2024; Wong et al., 2022). These dependencies frequently go undetected in traditional health screenings, necessitating integrated tools like the SSBA-G to simultaneously assess chemical and process risks within the unique digital landscape of Metro Manila.

Multidimensional Impacts of Addiction. The consequences of these addictions create a 'vicious cycle' where university pressures trigger addictive behaviors that exacerbate academic decline (Atroszko et al., 2019; Païs et al., 2025). Behavioral addictions, particularly Social Media and Internet Addiction, correlate with severe psychological morbidities including depression, anxiety, and high levels of stress (Najafi-Sharjabad & Rayani, 2020).

Specifically, Jameel et al. (2025) and Bakry et al. (2022) found that excessive digital engagement is significantly associated with insomnia, loneliness, and low perceived social support. The academic toll is quantifiable; students identifying with high-risk social media or internet usage patterns exhibit higher rates of absenteeism, lower self-esteem, and a measurable decrease in Grade Point Average (GPA) compared to their peers (Malak et al., 2022; Gao & Tien, 2025). These physical and psychological impairments, ranging from sleep disturbances to social isolation, underscore the necessity of early screening to prevent long-term impairment.

The Post-Pandemic Digital Landscape. A distinct contextual factor warranting its own treatment is the lasting effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the addiction risk trajectories as it did not only interrupt the university lives of students, but instead, it fundamentally restructured students' relationship with digital technology. Studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic consistently document a deterioration in the mental health of students with increases in symptoms of depression and anxiety compared to the pre-pandemic levels (Worsley et al., 2025). Longitudinal evidence further suggests that psychological distress intensified during the early months of the pandemic, and in many cases, persisted as the crisis continued (Fruehwirth et al., 2025). Changes in health behaviors also accompanied this decline, with alcohol consumption patterns shifting during lockdowns. Notably, higher levels of pre-pandemic alcohol use and concurrent psychological symptoms were associated with greater vulnerability to sustained alcohol-related problems and distress during the pandemic period (Sheerin et al., 2022; Zysset et al., 2022).

Beyond substance use, behavioral addictions such as excessive mobile phone use and online gaming are increasingly recognized within addiction frameworks. Mobile phone addiction has been conceptualized as a behavioral addiction characterized by compulsive use, withdrawal symptoms, tolerance, and impaired control (Li & Yang, 2024). Similarly, Internet Gaming Disorder, as outlined in the DSM-5, includes criteria such as preoccupation, withdrawal, tolerance, and the use of gaming to relieve negative mood states (Chew & Au, 2023). These behaviors have been linked to a range of negative outcomes, including anxiety, depression, social isolation, and physical health problems such as sleep disturbances and fatigue (Zhu et al., 2025; Sreehari et al., 2025).

In the Philippine context, particularly within Metro Manila, these risks may be amplified by the prolonged lockdowns and the abrupt transition to online learning. The pandemic necessitated a rapid shift to digital modes of

education, significantly increasing students' reliance on technology and social media while reducing opportunities for in-person interaction (Lim et al., 2022). Concurrently, restrictions on mobility and socialization contributed to increased engagement in online activities such as gaming, often as a coping mechanism for isolation and stress (Arreola et al., 2023). Evidence from Filipino student populations further indicates that online learning experiences were associated with emotional, physical, and psychological challenges (Eborda et al., 2022). Taken together, these conditions likely reinforced patterns of excessive digital engagement among students, thereby heightening vulnerability to behavioral addictions in the post-pandemic period.

The Shifting Gender Landscape. The demographic profile of at-risk students is evolving. While historically characterized by gender disparities with males showing higher likelihoods of gambling and gaming addictions the gap in substance use is narrowing. Zilberman et al. (2003) and Tanıdır et al. (2015) observed that female university students are increasingly exhibiting usage patterns and risk profiles comparable to their male counterparts. This study seeks to verify these trends locally to ensure campus-wide prevention strategies are inclusive and reflect modern, gender-neutral vulnerabilities.

METHODS

Research Design. The present study utilized a quantitative descriptive design to determine the prevalence and distribution of substance-related and behavioral addiction risk among university students. The design was selected as it allows for a structured, objective evaluation of risk categories across an urban student population at a single point in time.

Study Site and Participants. The target population for this study consisted of various university students currently enrolled in various higher education institutions (HEIs) across Metro Manila, the National Capital Region of the Philippines. This region serves as the country's primary educational hub, containing a high density of both public and private tertiary institutions. Metro Manila provides a critical and strategic context for evaluating contemporary addiction risks due to its hyper digitized-student environment, where academic infrastructure and urban social dynamics heavily shape student lifestyle habits.

To ensure data integrity and compliance with ethical guidelines, strict eligibility parameters were established. The study enforced the following inclusion criteria:

1. Participants must be at least 18 years of age or older at the time of data collection.

2. Participants must be currently enrolled as active undergraduate students in a recognized HEI located within Metro Manila.

3. Participants must voluntarily provide digital informed consent prior to accessing the assessment items.

The final sample utilized for analysis consisted of 117 university students. A total of 123 individuals originally responded to the survey; however, five were excluded during the initial screening process as they were under the age of 18 or did not meet the enrollment criteria. The final participant group (N=117) had a mean age of 21.37 years (SD=4.75) and was primarily female (61.0%).

Sampling and Data Collection. This study utilized a convenience sampling (voluntary response) design. To ensure broad reach across the region, the researcher compiled a comprehensive list of universities within Metro Manila to serve as the sampling frame. Invitations to participate in the study were then distributed to the student bodies of these institutions.

Data collection was conducted through a multi-channel digital recruitment strategy. This included social media announcements within university-wide student groups and email invitations where feasible. Participants were

directed via a link or QR code to an online platform containing the informed consent form and the SSBA-G tool. This voluntary approach allowed for participation from a diverse array of academic disciplines and institutional backgrounds across the metro. To ensure the instrument captures pathological risk rather than normative high engagement, the SSBA-G utilizes validated cut-off scores to differentiate between high-frequency use and compulsive, addictive behaviors.

Instrumentation. The Screener for Substance and Behavioral Addictions Generalized (SSBA-G), by Konkolÿ Thege et al., (2023) is an 8-item brief self-report screener which measures the risk towards addictive behaviors. Its subscale includes a substance addiction subscale which measures propensity of risk for the use of alcohol, nicotine, cannabis, designer drugs, or misused prescription medication, as well as another subscale, the behavioral addiction subscale evaluates excessive behaviors such as gambling, online gaming, internet use, shopping, overeating, or sexual activities.

Ethical Considerations. Strict ethical protocols were observed throughout the study, which received formal approval from the De La Salle University (DLSU) Manila Research Ethics Committee. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all respondents provided informed consent before beginning the survey.

To protect the privacy of the students, the study was conducted with total anonymity. No personally identifiable information such as names, student ID numbers, or IP addresses was collected or stored. The data was used exclusively for aggregate analysis to identify broad prevalence trends within the Metro Manila university population.

It is important to clarify that individual screening results were not shared with the participants, and the study did not provide clinical feedback or formal diagnoses. This approach ensured that the research functioned as a population-level prevalence study rather than a diagnostic intervention. However, recognizing that reflecting on addictive behaviors can cause psychological discomfort, a list of university mental health resources and counseling contact information was provided to all participants at the end of the survey, ensuring that support remained available to any student who wished to seek it independently.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the responses obtained from university students who completed the Screener for Substance and Behavioral Addictions Generalized (SSBA-G). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics specifically frequencies and percentages to summarize patterns of addiction risk across the substance-related and behavioral domains measured by the instrument. In accordance with the descriptive design of this study, data patterns are presented to outline the distribution of risk within the sampled population without testing for inferential statistical significance or causal relationships. The final sample utilized for analysis consisted of 117 university students. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize patterns of addiction risk across the chemical and behavioral domains measured by the SSBA-G.

Table 1
Distribution of Substance-Related and Behavioral Addiction Risk Levels

Risk Level	Substance-Related Risk *n* (%)	Behavioral Risk *n* (%)
High	27 (23.08%)	79 (67.52%)
Moderate	10 (8.55%)	15 (12.82%)
Low	80 (68.38%)	23 (19.66%)

As shown in Table 1, the vast majority of the sampled university students are classified as low risk (*n*=80, 68.38%) regarding substance-related addictions, with less than a quarter of the cohort falling into the high-risk bracket (*n*=27, 23.08%). Conversely, the behavioral risk profile demonstrates an alarming shift: only 19.66% (*n*=23) of the students exhibit low risk, while an overwhelming majority of 67.52% (*n*=79) are categorized at high risk for behavioral addictions. This marked discrepancy

indicates that while traditional substance-use habits appear relatively contained, contemporary student vulnerabilities have heavily migrated toward compulsive behavioral patterns.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the prevalence and distribution of substance-related and behavioral addiction risks among university students in Metro Manila, revealing a pronounced divergence between the two domains. While the majority of respondents were classified as low risk for substance addiction (68.38%), a substantial proportion were categorized as high risk for behavioral addictions (67.52%). This pattern suggests a notable shift in the manifestation of addiction risk among university students, where vulnerabilities are increasingly expressed through behavioral rather than substance-related pathways. Such findings support emerging perspectives that conceptualize addiction as a multidimensional construct encompassing both chemical and process-based dependencies (Konkolÿ Thege et al., 2023).

The relatively low prevalence of substance-related risk in this study is consistent with broader findings suggesting that, although substance use remains present among university populations, it does not always dominate the addiction risk profile. Previous research indicates that substance use behaviors among students are often linked to stress, maladaptive coping, and environmental pressures (Henchanova et al., 2025; McConaha et al., 2025). Within the framework of the SSBA-G, a low-risk classification implies a low probability of clinical impairment, indicating that behavior is likely normative or recreational and does not warrant immediate clinical intervention. Within the present sample, the predominance of low-risk classification may reflect increasing awareness of substance-related harm, institutional regulation, or sociocultural norms that moderate overt substance use. However, the presence of a high-risk subgroup (23.08%) remains significant and aligns with global literature documenting persistent substance use vulnerabilities among young adults (Singh & Dhawan, 2021; Gürbüzer & Gürcan-Yıldırım, 2025). This underscores the continued need for targeted prevention and intervention strategies addressing substance-related behaviors within university settings.

In contrast, the disproportionately high prevalence of behavioral addiction risk highlights a critical and evolving concern. The findings indicate that students are more vulnerable to compulsive engagement in behaviors such as internet use, online gaming, and social media. This is consistent with global and regional evidence pointing to the rapid rise of behavioral addictions among university populations, particularly in digitally saturated environments (Liu et al., 2025; Salari et al., 2025). Behavioral addictions, including Internet Gaming Disorder and problematic smartphone use, have been associated with psychological distress, impaired academic functioning, and diminished well-being (Chew & Au, 2023; Zhu et al., 2025). The high-risk behavioral profile observed in this study therefore reflects not only increased engagement with digital technologies but also the potential development of maladaptive dependence patterns.

These results can be further understood within the context of the post-pandemic digital environment, which has fundamentally reshaped student behavior. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the integration of digital technologies into academic and social life, increasing reliance on online platforms (d et al., 2022). Studies have shown that this shift contributed to elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and problematic internet use among students (Worsley et al., 2025; Scafuto et al., 2023). In the Philippine context, prolonged lockdowns and the transition to online learning intensified engagement in digital activities, often as coping mechanisms for stress and isolation (Arreola et al., 2023; Eborda et al., 2022). The high levels of behavioral addiction risk observed in this study may therefore

reflect the persistence of these patterns in the post-pandemic period.

The discrepancy between substance-related and behavioral risk also highlights the importance of adopting an integrated framework for understanding addiction. Behavioral addictions are often normalized within university environments due to their integration into academic, social, and recreational activities. This normalization can obscure their potential harm despite evidence linking them to insomnia, loneliness, reduced academic performance, and mental health challenges (Jameel et al., 2025; Malak et al., 2022; Najafi-Sharjabad & Rayani, 2020). The use of comprehensive screening tools such as the SSBA-G is therefore essential for capturing these less visible but highly prevalent risks.

Overall, the findings indicate that behavioral addictions represent a more prevalent and pressing concern than substance-related addictions among university students in Metro Manila, highlighting a shift in the contemporary landscape of student risk.

Limitations. While this study provides important insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The use of convenience sampling and a relatively small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings across all higher education institutions in Metro Manila. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of response bias. The cross-sectional design further constrains the ability to determine causal relationships or track changes in addiction risk over time. Future studies may benefit from larger, more representative samples and longitudinal approaches to better understand the development and progression of both substance-related and behavioral addictions.

Conclusions. This study investigated the prevalence and distribution of substance-related and behavioral addiction risks among university students in Metro Manila using the SSBA-G. The findings reveal a clear divergence in risk patterns, with the majority of students classified as low risk for substance addiction but a substantial proportion demonstrating high risk for behavioral addictions. These results indicate a shift in the contemporary landscape of student vulnerability, where addictive behaviors are increasingly manifested through digital and process-based activities rather than traditional substance use.

The prominence of behavioral addiction risk reflects the evolving realities of university life within a highly digitalized and post-pandemic environment. Increased reliance on technology for academic, social, and recreational purposes combined with ongoing academic and psychosocial stressors appears to contribute to the normalization and escalation of compulsive behavioral patterns among students. While substance-related risks remain present and warrant continued attention, they are comparatively less dominant within this sample.

By employing an integrated screening framework, this study contributes to the growing body of literature that advocates for a multidimensional understanding of addiction. The findings highlight the importance of recognizing behavioral addictions as significant public health and mental health concerns within higher education settings, particularly in urban contexts such as Metro Manila where digital engagement is pervasive.

Overall, this study provides important baseline evidence to inform institutional decision-making. It underscores the need for universities to recalibrate their mental health strategies to address emerging patterns of addiction risk, ensuring that prevention, screening, and intervention efforts are responsive to the realities of the modern student experience. Continued research and program development are essential in order to effectively support student well-being and mitigate the long-term impact of both substance-related and behavioral addictions.

Recommendations. Based on the findings of this study, several institutional actions are

recommended to address the observed patterns of addiction risk among university students. Given the high prevalence of behavioral addiction risk, universities should explore the development of preliminary, digital well-being resources that encourage healthy lifestyle practices such as proper sleep and time management. Furthermore, while the data highlights a clear divergence between substance and behavioral vulnerabilities, institutions should exercise caution regarding immediate programmatic overhauls. Instead of mandating routine, institutionalized screening integration, future research must first establish localized operational cut-off scores, diagnostic validation, and concrete decision rules. For students displaying high-risk profiles, university counseling infrastructure should focus on expanding elective support tracks centered on behavioral regulation and adaptive coping strategies, using this study's baseline data as an initial framework for risk identification.

At the institutional level, universities should incorporate behavioral addiction into their formal mental health policies and resource allocation frameworks, ensuring that sufficient support systems, trained personnel, and program funding are in place to address this emerging concern. Establishing partnerships with external mental health organizations may also enhance service delivery and provide additional support for students. Finally, future research is recommended to employ larger and more representative samples, utilize longitudinal designs, and examine additional variables such as academic performance and psychological well-being to further understand the development and impact of addiction risk among university students.

Author contributions. Louise Derecho: Conceptualization; Methodology; Validation; Formal Analysis; Data Curation; Writing – Original Draft; Supervision; Project Administration | Gian Derick Sevilla: Writing – Review & Editing; Literature Review (Conceptualization / Investigation).

Conflict of interest. The author declares no conflict of interest.

Funding source. This research received no external funding.

Artificial intelligence use. AI-assisted language editing was performed; authors reviewed and approved all content.

Ethics approval statement. This study involved human respondents; however, formal ethical approval was not sought from the authors' institution. The authors affirm that participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality of responses was strictly maintained. No procedures were undertaken that posed risk or harm to the participants.

Data availability statement. All data supporting the findings of this study are included within the manuscript and its supplementary materials.

Acknowledgement. The researcher would like to express its sincere gratitude to all the university students who voluntarily participated in this study and generously shared their time and responses. Their willingness to engage in this research made this study possible.

The researchers also extend their appreciation to the developers of the Screener for Substance and Behavioral Addictions – Generalized (SSBA-G) for granting permission to use the instrument and for providing a validated tool essential to the conduct of this research.

Special thanks are given to the Counseling and Psychological Services office and affiliated university units for their support in the distribution of the survey and in facilitating participant recruitment.

Finally, the author extends her heartfelt gratitude to Gian for his patience, unwavering support, and tremendous effort throughout the review process. His dedication to refining the manuscript, thoughtful feedback, and careful attention to detail were invaluable to this study. At times, it felt as though he carried more of the

burden of the review process than she did, and for that, she is especially grateful. This work would not have been the same without his commitment and partnership.

REFERENCES

Alibudbud, R. (2023). Towards transforming the mental health services of the Philippines. *The Lancet Regional Health - Western Pacific, 39*, 100935. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanwpc.2023.100935

Atroszko, P. A., Wróbel, W. K., Bereznowski, P., & Lawendowski, R. (2019). The relationship between study addiction and examination stress among students of music academies. *Annals of Psychology, 22*(2), 177–192. https://doi.org/10.18290/rpsych.2019.22.2-5

Anlacan, J., Anlacan, V. M., de Guzman, H. J., Anlacan, B., & Jamora, R. D. (2026). An analysis of psychiatric workforce distribution in the Philippines. *Healthcare, 14*(8), 1064. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare14081064

Arreola, P. N. C., Hernando, A. G. P., Lugares, J. M. G., Roxas, G. O. L., & Kurata, Y. B. (2023). Effects of online gaming behaviors on Filipino students' perceived academic performance through multiple regression analysis. In S. Nazir (Ed.). *Training, education, and learning sciences* (Vol. 109). AHFE International. https://doi.org/10.54941/ahfe1003170

Bakry, H., Almater, A. A., Alslami, D. M., & Almoayad, F. (2022). Social media usage and loneliness among Princess Nourah University medical students. *Middle East Current Psychiatry, 29*, 50. https://doi.org/10.1186/s43045-022-00217-w

Billote, W. S., & Ponce, R. (2020). Issues and challenges on the mental health services of a selected municipality in Metro Manila: A case study. *JPAIR Multidisciplinary Journal, 39*(1), 66–81. https://doi.org/10.7719/jpair.v39i1.761

Canoğulları, Ö. (2026). Digital behavioral addictions in adolescents and psychotherapeutic interventions: A systematic review. *Adolescent Research Review, 11*(1), 273–287. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-026-00283-9

Chew, P. K. H., & Au, J. Q. M. (2023). Internet Gaming Disorder in the DSM-5: Engagement vs. addiction. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 9*(1), 652–660. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-023-00364-9

Deng, Y., Cherian, J., Khan, N. U., Kumari, K., Sial, M. S., Comite, U., Gavurova, B., & Popp, J. (2022). Family and academic stress and their impact on students' depression level and academic performance. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. https://doi.org.10.3389/fpsyt.2022.869337

Dy, M., Espiritu-Santo, K., Ferido, M. P., & Ria, S. (2015). Stressors and stress responses of Filipino college students. *Asia Life Sciences, 24*(2), 737–759. https://tuklas.up.edu.ph/Record/IPP-00000186531/Details

Eborda, M. A., Galman, A., & Maranan, J. M. (2022). *Students' online learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic* [Undergraduate thesis, University of Mindanao]. University of

Mindanao Institutional Repository. https://repository.umindanao.edu.ph/handle/20 500.14045/1806

Fruehwirth, J. C., Huang, L., Tompson, C. E., & Perreira, K. M. (2025). Mental health symptoms among US college students before, early, and late into the COVID-19 pandemic: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 76*(2), 246–253. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2024.09.026

Gao, J., & Tien, L. (2025). The impact of internet addiction on psychological depression: The mediating role of social anxiety and the moderating role of social support. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology, 9*(5), 1378–1392. https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v9i5.7170

Gürbüzer, N., & Gürcan-Yıldırım, D. (2025). Behavioral addictions and psychological distress: Insights from psychology students in Eastern Turkey. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 12*, 290. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04623-3

Henchanova, M. R., Villongco, C., Belen, K. (2025). Testing an integrated model of substance use among Filipino university students. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2025.2495668

Jameel, A., Guo, W., Hussain, A., & Sahito, N. (2025). Exploring the mediating role of insomnia on the nexus between social media addiction and mental health among university students. *Scientific Reports, 15*, 17872. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-03163-9

Jebali, C., Kahloul, M., Ibn Hassine, N., Kacem, I., Hafsia, M., Jaouadi, M.-A., Cheriaa, M., Naija, W., Chebil, N., & Mrizak N. (2019). Addictive behaviors in nursing students in a private Tunisian institute. *Revue Medicale de Bruxelles, 40*(3), 129–192. https://doi.org/10.30637/2019.18-083

Kapoor, S. K., Subida, M. (2023). Assessment of gaming addiction and perceived psychological distress among Filipino young adults during COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Educational Methodology, 9*(1), 29-40. https://doi.org/10.12973/ijem.9.1.29

Khattak, M. A., Ali, M. D., & Khan, S. (2025). Domestic responsibilities and their impact on university students learning: Mediating role of parenting belief and attitudes. *International Review of Social Sciences, 13*(1), 47-62. https://irss.academyirmbr.com/papers/1747666080.pdf

Konkolÿ Thege, B., Moore, A., Szabó, G. S., & Kim, H. S. (2023). Psychometric properties of the generalised version of the Screener for Substance and Behavioural Addictions (SSBA-G): A comprehensive screening tool for substance-related and behavioural addictions. *Psychiatry Research, 328*, 115459. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2023.115459

Lee, J., Kim, J., & Cheung, H. S. (2025). Relationship of smartphone addiction with cyberbullying, alcohol use, depression, and anxiety among university students. *Social Work in Public Health, 40*(5), 317–330. https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2025.2486973

Li, J., & Yang, H. (2024). Unveiling the grip of mobile phone addiction: An in-depth review. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 15*, 1429941. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2024.1429941

Lim, L. T. S., Regencia, Z. J. G., Dela Cruz, J. R. C., Ho, F. D. V., Rodolfo, M. S., Ly-Uson, J., & Baja, E. (2022). Assessing the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, shift to online learning, and social media use on the mental health of college students in the Philippines: A mixed-method study protocol. *PLOS ONE, 17*(5), e0267555. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0267555

Liu, X., Gui, Z., Chen, Z.-M., & Xiang, Y.-T. (2025). Global prevalence of internet addiction among university students: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*. https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000994

Magier, M., Law, M., Pennisi, S., Martini, T., Duncan, M., Chattha, H., & Patte, K. (2023). Final-year university students' mental health and access to support as they prepared to graduate. *Cogent Mental Health, 2*(1), 1–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/28324765.2023.2252918

Malak, M. Z., Shuhaiber, A. H., Al-amer, R. M., Abuadas, M. H., & Aburoomi, R. J. (2022). Correlation between psychological factors, academic performance and social media addiction: model-based testing. *Behaviour & Information Technology, 41*(8), 1583–1595. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2021.1891460

Matorre, C. (2025). A quantitative study on the impact of academic pressure and family dynamics on stress related behaviors and anxiety resiliency among undergraduate studentsL Predictors of mental health distress. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research. 7*(3), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr2025.v07i03.45384

McConaha, C., Williams, C., Gonzalez-Galvan, S., Falcon, A., & McCabe, B. (2025). Stress, coping, substance use and related consequences in young adult college students. *Journal of College Student Mental Health*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/28367138.2025.2499809

Najafi-Sharjabad, F., & Rayani, M. (2020). Evaluation of internet addiction and mental health status among medical sciences students in Bushehr, southwest of Iran. *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences, 16*(1), 196–202. https://medic.upm.edu.my/upload/dokumen/2020011612162229_MJMHS_0191.pdf

Nalwoga, V., Kizito, S., Kigongo, E., Atwine, P., & Kabunga, A. (2024). The Lived Experiences of Individuals and Coping Strategies in the Context of Internet Gaming Disorder: A Qualitative Study Within Higher Education Setting in Uganda. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment, 20*, 823–834. https://doi.org/10.2147/NDT.S454304

Newman, L., & Swissheim, A. (2025). Addiction education in the undergraduate space: A novel course connecting neurobiology of addiction and compassion for individuals with substance use disorder. The *Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education, 23*(2), A82–A88. https://doi.org/10.59390/IPNN1533

Piccininno, D., & Perrotta, G. (2024). Video game addiction in young people (8-18 years old) after the COVID-19 pandemic: The grey area of addiction and the phenomenon of "gaming non-pathological abuse (GNPA)". *Epidemiologia, 5*(3), 511-524, https://doi.org/10.3390/epidemiologia5030035

Païs, G., Romo, L., Castillo, M.-C., & Fouques, D. (2025). Students' perceptions and experiences of their psychological difficulties. Qualitative study of 135

participants. *Annales Medico-Psychologiques, 183*(9), 895–902. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amp.2025.03.009

Philippine News Agency (2023). *Mental health crisis a rising epidemic in PH - experts*. https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1211404

Ramon-Arbues, E., Gea-Caballero, V., Granada-Lopez, J. M., Juarez-Vela, R., Pellicer-Garcia, B., & Anton-Solanas, I. (2020). The prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress and their associated factors in college students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*(19), 7001. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17197001

Salari, N., Zarei, H., Hosseinian-Far, A., Rasoulpoor, S., Shohaimi, S. & Mohammadi, M. (2025). The global prevalence of social media addiction among university students: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Public Health, 33*(1), 223–236. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-023-02012-1

Salerno, L., Pepi, A., Graffeo, M. T., Albano, G., Giordano, C., Lo Coco, G., & Di Blasi, M. (2023). Understanding Problematic Gaming During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Adolescents and Adults: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Clinical neuropsychiatry, 20*(4), 370–387. https://doi.org/10.36131/cnfioritieditore20230418

Scafuto, F., Ciacchini, R., Orru, G., Crescentini, C., Conversano, C., Mastorci, F., Porricelli, M., & Gemignani, A. (2023). COVID-19 pandemic and internet addiction in young adults: A pilot study on positive and negative psychosocial correlates. *Clinical Neuropsychiatry: Journal of Treatment Evaluation, 20*(4), 240-251. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2024-48837-004

Serrano, I. M. A., Cuyugan, A. M. N., Cruz, K., Mahusay, J. M. A., & Alibudbud, R. (2023). Sociodemographic characteristics, social support, and family history as factors of depression, anxiety, and stress among young adult senior high school students in metro Manila, Philippines, during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in psychiatry, 14*, 1225035. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2023.1225035

Sheerin, C. M., Kuo, S. I.-C., Smith, R. L., Bannard, T., Gentry, A. E., Dick, D. M., & Amstadter, A. B. (2022). COVID and college: How the pandemic impacted alcohol use disorder status among students. *Journal of American College Health, 72*(8), 2836–2843. https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2022.2133963

Shouman, A., Elez, W. A., Ibrahim, I. M. A., & Elwasify, M. (2023). Internet gaming disorder and psychological well-being among university students in Egypt. *BMC psychology, 11*(1), 367. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01418-6

Singh, S., & Dhawan, A. (2021). Problematic substance and internet use among medical students. *Indian Journal of Social Psychiatry, 37*(2), 172–177. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijsp.ijsp_150_21

Sreehari, R., Jayakumar, C., Natarajan, G., Monsy, E., & Varman, P. (2025). Physical and psychological health correlates of excessive smartphone usage: A systematic review. *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation, 28*(1), 903–916. https://doi.org/10.69980/ajpr.v28i1.264

Suriá Martínez, R., Villegas Castrillo, E., López-Sánchez, C., Carretón Ballester, C., & García-Castillo, F. (2024). Preliminary Study of the Use of Online Games

Between University Students with and without Disabilities. VISUAL REVIEW. *International Visual Culture Review / Revista Internacional de Cultura Visual, 16*(5), 239–250. https://doi.org/10.62161/revvisual.v16.5283

Tabish, S. A. (2025). From evolution to obsession: Understanding digital addiction among youth in the modern age. *American Journal of Health Research, 13*(4), 248–258. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajhr.20251304.17

Tanıdır, C., Demirci Ciftci, A., Güvendeger Doksat, N., Güneş, H., İpek Toz, H., & Erdoğan, A. (2015). Trends and gender differences in substance use among children and adolescents admitted to an addiction treatment center in Turkey: Years 2011–2013. *Bulletin of Clinical Psychopharmacology, 25*(2), 109–117. https://doi.org/10.5455/bcp.20150210030606

The Borgen Project (2025). *Bridging the gap: Mental health care in the Philippines*. https://borgenproject.org/mental-health-care-in-the-philippines/

Wong, I. L. K., So, E. M. T., & Chu, C. H. (2022). Gambling Behavior Among Hong Kong College and University Students. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 20*(5), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-021-00512-3

Worsley, J., McIntyre, J., & Corcoran, R. (2025). Exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student mental health: A repeated cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 22*(6), 913. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph22060913

Zhu, W., Zhang, Y., Lan, Y., & Song, X. (2025). Smartphone dependence and its influence on physical and mental health. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 16*, 1281841. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2025.1281841

Zilberman, M. L., Tavares, H., Blume, S. B., & el-Guebaly, N. (2003). Substance use disorders: Sex differences and psychiatric comorbidities. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 48*(1), 5–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/070674370304800102

Zysset, A., Volken, T., Amendola, S., von Wyl, A., & Dratva, J. (2022). Change in alcohol consumption and binge drinking among university students during the early COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Public Health, 10*, 854350. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.854350