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The Impact of Leisure Time Activities on the Academic Performance among College Students

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Abstract: ***One of the most important aspects of life is leisure time activities, especially for students because they allow them to participate in extracurricular activities outside of the classroom and advance their development of active behaviour. The purpose of the study is to ascertain how students spend their free time and how it impacts their academic achievement. Students in higher education institutions participate in a variety of activities, including sports, leisure pursuits, social networking, etc. Our selection of the six components—physical activities, indoor activities, social activities, reading activities, dating/relationship activities, and recreational activities—is based on literature review findings showing students engage in a variety of leisure activities. College students between the ages of 18 and 30 were taken into account for this study. A questionnaire-based method was utilised to collect the data, and it was distributed to 168 students studying in various universities in India in a variety of academic fields. The research's conclusions gained significance on the effects that each of the six components has on academic success.***

I. INTRODUCTION

Students today lack the knowledge necessary to manage their time effectively. While some students utilise their free time to study, complete schoolwork, and participate in other school activities, others spend it using technology, social media, and online gaming. The other half of their time is divided between various extracurricular and leisure activities. This study can shed light on how students' extracurricular activities affect their academic achievement. The purpose of the study is to look into how learners' academic performance is related to their leisure activities.

“Leisure as an activity helps people to keep themselves engaged in different activities during their free time". When someone pursues happiness, self-expression, and meaningful engagement in their free time, it is an activity that they themselves approve and find intrinsically compelling. In the current generation, we have come a long way and see a variety of other leisure activities that we can engage in that can develop us academically, personally, socially, recreationally, and culturally through and provide a secure, encouraging environment that gives a variety of possibilities. We have been able to engage ourselves in various leisure activities from a very young age, be it reading a book during our free time or going out and playing with our friends. Students participate in a variety of academic and extracurricular activities, therefore it's critical to comprehend how they prioritise and balance these activities in order to stay focused and maintain a healthy balance. One of the issues college students encounter most frequently is how distractions and difficulties can make it difficult for many students to concentrate on their academic achievement.

Leisure activities help to develop physical, mental, emotional and social competencies of an individual. There have been numerous research studies conducted on benefits of exercise for mental health by supporting the theory that exercise is conducive to enhancing positive emotion such as vigor, pleasure, and energy as well as decreasing anxiety, tension, tiredness and anger. Caldwell, L. L. (2005).

This study has concentrated on several extracurricular activities that are popular among college and university students and their effects on academic outcomes. More particular, it looks into how participation in these activities affects students' GPAs and average grades. We looked at six categories of leisure activities, including dating (committed relationship, casual dating), reading (newspaper, research journal, blogs, fiction, non-fiction), socialising (whatsapp, instagram, linkedin), indoor activities (art & craft, online games, music), and physical activities (jogging, yoga, gyming, sports, dancing). We also observed and reviewed various other research papers as well as those written by our fellow students (shopping, spending time with friends and family, volunteering).

Leisure signifies individual choice to spend their discretionary time fulfilling certain interests or needs or performing gratifying experience for the sake of wellness or personal development (Alli, 2007; Barcelona 2002). It is believed that when a child is given free time to learn in his/her interest learning areas/centres, that child tends to be more creative which, in the other hand improve their academic performance. (Shalley, Zhou & Oldham, 2004).

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Academic performance refers to how well a learner is accomplishing his/her task and studies (Scortt, 2012). Academic performance refers to "how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers. It is also the ability to study and remember facts and being Able to communicate your knowledge verbally or down on paper" Also in order to understand the Academic performance we have taken the recent CGPA of the students in his or her particular institute they are studying in.

It was concluded after examining and analysing multiple studies from various journals that increasing the amount of leisure time activities leads to improved concentration and a longer attention span as well as the potential for discontent. However, we have taken into account the six leisure activities listed above and have primarily focused our study on how it affects and influences a student's performance in the classroom. It has aided us in developing a clear grasp of how a student's daily life is impacted by their leisure time.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1) To understand the various leisure time activities that students engage in during their free time
2) To analyse the relationship between leisure time activity and student academic performance
3) To analyse relationship between leisure activities and academics with gender as control variable

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

On reviewing and analysing various research papers we see how many papers have contradicting views on if leisure activities affect academic performance of a student in a positive or negative way. Also, previous studies have proven that extracurricular activities are beneficial in building and strengthening academic achievement even though these activities may not have any obvious relationship with academic. (Guest,A., & Schneider,B.(2003). Various articles focused on different leisure activities be it recreational, social media, engagement in indoor and outdoor activities. However, we have picked on and reviewed a few of them. It has been proposed that recreational activities are outlets for expression of excess energy which brings about satisfaction and pleasure to the participants without compulsion. Roger (2005) He also, opined that recreation creates a medium to express excess energy channelling such into socially acceptable activities that fulfil individual as well as societal needs, without need for compulsion, and providing satisfaction and pleasure for the participants. Roger (2005). Thus, we understand that recreational activities generates a positive energy and leads to satisfaction as well as a positive mindset.

On understanding how social media plays a role, it was observed that "Today's youth are confronted with a media environment that is rapidly changing. The time spent on social media, whether for the purpose of school-related or non-school related learning has influenced youths more than before" (Raj,2012). The internet and social networking websites seem to bring positive influence on adolescents as it allows them to express themselves in their own unique ways. (Boyd, 2007). Studies done by Carvin (2006) and Ogedebe (2012) found strong correlations of Internet access with academic performance. Both studies agreed that the use of Internet has improved students' academic performance as Internet assists them to have better preparation for exams. A study done by Kabre and Brown (2011) on the influence of Facebook usage on academic performance and the quality of life of college students reveals that the number of hours spent on Facebook influences both academic performance and the quality of life among the students.

Several studies suggested that increased physical activity during the school time could induce arousal and lessen boredom, which lead to increase classroom concentration and attention span. (SHEPHARD RJ.) In addition to that, one study suggested that increased activity levels might be related to improve classroom behaviour as well as academic performance. Athletic participants score higher grades in school and have higher educational aspirations than non-participants have. (Marsh HW, Kleitman S). According to studies done by Darling, Caldwell, and Smith (2005), and Bashir and Hussain (2012), adolescents who participated in extracurricular activities are reported to achieve higher grades in their academic performance. Besides, they have more positive attitudes towards school, and have higher academic aspirations

Guthrie, Benneth & McGough, (2007) believe that "reading" is the act of getting meaning from printed or written words, which is the basis for learning and one of the most important skills in everyday life. (Issa et al 2012). The concentration reading is the most important type of reaching the desired outcome. It is the bedrock and the result oriented reading which makes for achievement (Ogbodo, 2010). It means that through reading, the individual is able to build or fix things, enjoy stories, discover what others believe and develop ideas or beliefs of their own. Thus, reading provides the key to all forms of information necessary for our day-to-day survival and growth.

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Perhaps, due to lack of good reading habits among students, academic performance with respect to their examination result has been dismal nowadays creating a great source of worry and concern for all stakeholders in the educational sub-sector (Issa et al, 2012) "Laws die but books never." Indeed, books are the most suitable medium through which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation (Issa et al, 2012).

During the Covid-19,disease containment measures like social isolation have enabled families to spend more time together. Many Parents have reported increased sense of closeness and intimacy with their children. (Nazish Imran, Muhammad Zeshan,and Zainab Pervaiz, 2020). A very recent Canadian National Survey on the Impact of the COVID-19 virus outbreak on movement and play behaviors of Canadian children and youth concluded that as a result of stay-home policies during the pandemic and limited access to sports-recreational facilities, families tried to create new hobbies and activities for maintaining healthy movement habits . Precisely, parents reported that children were more involved in indoor activities, like household chores and activities including dance and physical education exercises, and outdoor activities, like riding a bicycle, walking, playing badminton, street basketball and hockey . The same study established that parental encouragement and co-participation were associated with increases in both indoor and outdoor physical activity . Our results clearly support such considerations, even for adolescents from southeastern Europe.(Barb.ara Gilic ,Ljerka Ostojic ,Marin Corluka , Tomislav Volaric and Damir Sekulic,2020) . The above source clearly states that after the event of pandemic there is an increase in the rate of engagement in indoor activities among youth and children.

From an economic viewpoint, time devoted to dating can be analysed either as a cost for individuals who are searching to marry, or reciprocally as a consumption good for dating consumers, insofar as this activity provides in itself satisfaction. In the first case, the cost can be both explicit, subscriptions to an online site or restaurant expenses for example, and implicit (since time spent on dating cannot be devoted to paid work (it is leisure time). In the second case, dating is consumption good, a form of leisure. (Véronique Flambard, Nicolas Gérard Vaillant, François-Charles Wolff.2010). For instance, German adolescents, who are comparable to Dutch adolescents, also spend the largest proportion of their leisure time on television, computer games, and dating. (Flammer & Schaffner, 2003; Larson & Seepersad, 2003; Larson & Verma, 1999). It has been observed that dating behaviour among Nigerian youths constitute a very high problem in their psycho-social development including health and academic (Akindele-Oscar, 2014; Ayodele, 2014)

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

A structured self-developed questionnaire is designed to collect information and to achieve the objective of the survey. The research is a Quantitative research. The questionnaire prepared for the survey consists of five broad sections which cover the basic demographic profile of every individual customer and Factors Affecting Consumers' Intention to Buy Smart Watches among Indian youth: (Brand, Health Consciousness, Societal influence, Cost, Operational imperfections), The questionnaire is a close ended type containing Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) and Likert Scale Question. A graded evaluation of their leisure time activities mainly segmented into physical activities, indoor activities, recreational activities, reading, usage of social networking sites & dating and academic performance using a Likert scale. The academic performance was evaluated using the CGPA of the participants. Finally, administrative and academic faculty validated the questionnaire. The questionnaire is a close ended type containing Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) and Likert Scale Question. 4 point Likert Scale have been used in this Questionnaire, as such Strongly agree=4, Agree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1

Primary data was for this study which was collected through circulation of google forms.

The respondents are from across various parts of India and are from various age groups.

The size of the sample is 167 students from different colleges and universities in India , gender composition being 55.68%and 44.31% male and female students respectively .Primary data was for this study which was collected through circulation of google forms within a duration of two months .The respondents are students belonging to the age bracket of 18-30 years. Non-probability Judgmental Sampling is used in this project considering the limitation of time, financial support and other resources. The tools used for statistical analysis are linear regression using and independent T-test using IBM SPSS.

The reliability statistics i.e. the Cronbach's alpha is 0.662.

V. HYPOTHESES

A. *Null Hypothesis*

1) There is no relationship between social media usage and student academic performance
2) There is a relationship between reading habit and student academic performance

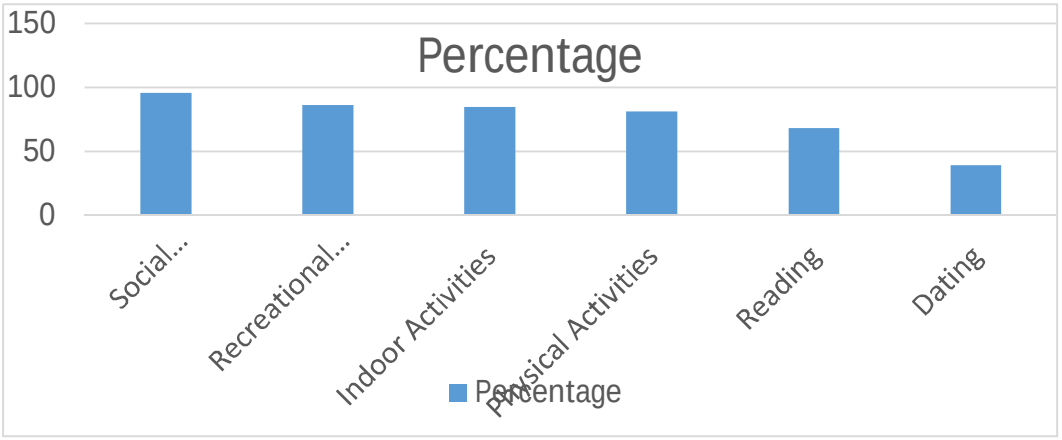
3) There is a relationship between engagement in physical activites and student academic performance
4) There is a relationship between indoor activities and student academic performance
5) There is a no relationship between dating and student academic performance
6) There is no relationship between re-creational activities and academic performance

B. Alternate Hypothesis

1) There is a relationship between social media usage and student academic performance
2) There is no relationship between reading habit and student academic performance
3) There is no relationship between physical activity and student academic performance
4) There is a no relationship between indoor activities and student academic performance
5) There is a relationship between dating and student academic performance
6) There is relationship between re-creational activities and academic performance

VI. RESULTS/ INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1.1 PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENGAGING IN LEISURE ACTIVITIES



From the results of the study that following inferences can we made:
There were six broad categories of leisure activities considered for the study, namely physical activities, indoor activities, social networking sites, reading, dating, and recreational activities.
From the sample size of 167 students , 95.8% of the students prefer social networking sites as their leisure activity , 86.2% of them engage in recreational activities, 85%of them in indoor activities ,81.4% of them in physical activities, 68.2% of them in reading and 39.5% of them in dating.

TABLE 1.2 IMPACT OF GENDER ON LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Independent Samples Test										
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	onfidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Do you engage in any physical activities during your leisure time?	Equal variances assumed	0.854	0.357	4.022	164	0	0.5126	0.1275	0.261	0.7643
	Equal variances not assumed			3.927	138.245	0	0.5126	0.1305	0.2545	0.7707
Do you engage in any indoor activities during your leisure time?	Equal variances assumed	0.813	0.368	-1.013	164	0.312	-0.1131	0.1116	-0.3335	0.1073
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.013	156.395	0.313	-0.1131	0.1116	-0.3336	0.1074
Do you use social networking sites during your leisure time?	Equal variances assumed	1.147	0.286	-1.731	164	0.085	-0.1683	0.0972	-0.3604	0.0237
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.767	163.89	0.079	-0.1683	0.0952	-0.3564	0.0197
Do you engage yourself in reading during your free time?	Equal variances assumed	6.546	0.011	-1.274	164	0.204	-0.1669	0.131	-0.4255	0.0918
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.303	163.978	0.195	-0.1669	0.1281	-0.4198	0.0861
Do you engage in dating during your leisure time?	Equal variances assumed	0.905	0.343	-0.579	164	0.563	-0.1008	0.174	-0.4443	0.2427
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.576	152.396	0.566	-0.1008	0.175	-0.4466	0.2451
Do you engage in recreational activities during your leisure time?	Equal variances assumed	7.1	0.008	-0.127	164	0.899	-0.015	0.1181	-0.2482	0.2182
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.131	162.194	0.896	-0.015	0.1141	-0.2403	0.2104

The above table shows the results of the T-test. It can be concluded that gender does not have a huge impact on the majority of leisure activities taken into consideration for the study. But in the case of reading and recreational activities, it is seen that gender has an influence to an extent. In other words when compared to females, gender – male is more engaged in reading and recreational activities during their leisure time at 95% significance level.

TABLE 1.3 IMPACT Of LEISURE ACTIVITIES ON ACADEMICS

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.784	.366		2.142	.034
	PhysicalActivity	-.085	.072	-.084	-1.173	.243
	IndoorActivity	.144	.087	.135	1.658	.099
	SocialNetworking	.172	.090	.148	1.914	.057
	ReadingActivity	.222	.072	.223	3.106	.002
	RecreationalActivity	.187	.085	.172	2.202	.029
	Dating	.098	.061	.120	1.614	.109

a. Dependent Variable: Academic

- Result as per linear regression analysis indicates that social networking positively influences academic performance.
In other words, social networking (β = 0.172, p-value < 0.10) is statistically significant at 90% significance level, which means the more the usage of social networking sites the higher the probability for better academic performance.
- Result as per linear regression analysis indicates that recreational activities positively influence academic performance.
In other words, recreational activities (β = 0.187, p-value < 0.05) are statistically significant at 95% significance level , which means that higher recreational activities the better the academic performance .
-Result of linear regression indicates that reading activities positively influence academic performance.
In other words reading activities (β = 0.222, p- value < 0.01) is statistically significant at 99% significance level, which means more the student engages in reading the higher the probability for academic performance
- We also made an attempt to understand the student's perception on Dating and its influence on academic performance. And however the results indicate that dating doesn't have any influence on academic performance. They are two different activities independent of each other.
- The analysis also showed that physical activities also do not exert any kind of influence on academics of the students ie. it has neither positive nor a negative impact as far as academics is concerned.
- Similarly , it is observed from the analysis that indoor activities also do not exert any kind of influence on academics of the students ie. it has neither positive nor a negative impact as far as academics

TABLE 1.4 IMPACT Of GENDER AS CONTROL VARIABLE ON LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Coefficients[a,b]

Model				ed Coefficient	t	Sig.
				Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.593	0.693		3.741	0.000
	Do you use social networking sites	0.004	0.159	0.003	0.025	0.980
	How much time do you dedicate towards	-0.160	0.107	-0.165	-1.494	0.139
	Do you engage in recreational activities	0.245	0.131	0.219	1.875	0.064
	How much time do you spend engaging	0.154	0.097	0.181	1.583	0.117
	Do you engage yourself in reading	0.028	0.111	0.027	0.251	0.803
	How much time do you dedicate towards	0.007	0.088	0.008	0.074	0.941
a. Dependent Variable: Please help us with your recent CGPA						
b. Selecting only cases for which Gender = Male						

Out of interest, we also tried to investigate the impact of the control variable - gender. The results of this analysis indicate the following,

- Considering gender as a control variable, we tried to check the impact of gender on the relation between recreational activities and academic performance. Based on the results obtained ,we can conclude that the recreational activities of gender - male have a positive impact(**β** = 0.245 , t= 1.875, p-value < 0.10), however not to a great extent, on the academic performance . On the other hand , with respect to gender male as control variables, it does not have an impact on the other variables considered for the study . In other words recreational activities statistically influence the academic performance (with control variables as gender - male) at the significance level of 90% .

TABLE 1.5 IMPACT Of GENDER AS CONTROL VARIABLE ON LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Coefficients[a,b]

Model			Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.969		2.428	0.018
	Do you use social networking sites during your leisure time?	0.079	0.054	0.399	0.691
	How much time do you dedicate towards Social networking sites	0.297	0.385	2.904	0.005
	Do you engage in recreational activities during your leisure time?	0.213	0.162	1.377	0.173
	How much time do you spend engaging in re-creational activities	-0.039	-0.046	-0.391	0.697
	Do you engage yourself in reading during your free time?	0.105	0.097	0.838	0.405
	How much time do you dedicate towards reading during the week?	-0.149	-0.202	-1.738	0.087
a. Dependent Variable: Please help us with your recent CGPA					
b. Selecting only cases for which Gender = Female					z

- Considering gender as a control variable, we tried to check the impact of gender on the relation between engagement in social networking sites and academic performance. Based on the results obtained ,we can conclude that the engagement in social networking sites of gender - male have a positive impact(**β** = 0.297, t= 2.904, p-value < 0.01),to a great extent on the academic performance . On the other hand , with respect to gender - female as control variables, do not have an impact on the other variables considered for the study . In other words engagement in social networking sites statistically influence the academic performance(with control variables as gender - male) at the significance level of 99% .

TABLE 1.6 IMPACT Of GENDER ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Please help us with your recent CGPA	Equal variances assumed	2.152	.144	-1.848	164	.066	-.257	.139	-.532	.018
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.881	163.569	.062	-.257	.137	-.527	.013

- Out of our interest we further tested the relation between gender and academics using the independent T-test. It was observed that gender does not influence academics .(p > 0.010)

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VII. FINDINGS

1) The study shows that spending time on social networking sites and recreational activities are the most preferred leisure activity and dating and reading are the least preferred leisure activities among students
2) It is also observed that reading habit is reducing in the students of the selected age group
3) It is observed that male students engage more in reading and recreational activities during their leisure time in comparison with female students
4) The study shows that students who engage in social networking sites during their leisure time score well in academics. It is seen that engaging in social networking sites has the a positive impact on academics although not to that extent
5) It is observed that students engaging in reading and recreational activities score high in academics. The study shows that both reading and recreational activities highly influence academics. these two factors have the highest impact on academics, both to the same extent.
6) We have also observed that all the other three leisure activities that students engage in ie. physical activities, indoor activities and dating do not have any impact on student academics. They neither have a positive or negative influence on academic performance.
7) Lastly, we also made an observation about the relation between gender and academics , that gender does not have any influence on student academics.

VIII. DISCUSSION

In our study, physical activity has no positive or negative impact on a student's academic performance. It can therefore be concluded that physical activity depends on how the student is able to balance the two activities in a timely manner. We have seen in numerous studies that physical activity increases concentration and attention span. In a method that allows them to successfully maintain and develop a healthy balance between their study time and their physical activities.

We also observed how recreational activities significantly influence student academics positively. Recreational activities, especially outdoor ones improve one's health like maintaining lower body fat percentages, lowering blood and cholesterol levels, increasing muscular strength, flexibility, muscular endurance, body composition and cardiovascular endurance. Thus, according to studies done by Darling, Caldwell, and Smith (2005), and Bashir and Hussain (2012), adolescents who participated in extracurricular activities are reported to achieve higher grades in their academic performance. Overall, it increases one's stamina and energy level resulting in more focus for academic activities besides also having an impact on one's class attendance and attention thus leading to more learning. When it comes to gender in the case of male we observed that recreational as a leisure activities leads to a positive impact on the academic performance it being that males do love engaging in various different activities during their free times that being in different online games, going out with friends, etc.

Social networking activities according to our study plays a significant positive impact on academic performance in line with the various research articles we have reviewed. On understanding how social media plays a role, it was observed that "Today's youth are confronted with a media environment that is rapidly changing. The time spent on social media, whether for the purpose of school-related or non-school related learning has influenced youths more than before" (Raj,2012). When we look at gender as a controlled variable we observed that female who spend their leisure time on various social networking sites have a positive impact, it being that it leads to a sense of satisfaction maybe scrolling through various shopping websites or gaining knowledge on different education portal. Learning has expanded beyond the classroom, and nearly every top e-learning website now promotes social learning. Students can study from online courses and share their understanding or questions via various social media platforms. NPTEL, Udemy, YouTube, etc. Students frequently apply for internships and employment through social networking sites like LinkedIn.

Perhaps, due to lack of good reading habits among students, academic performance with respect to their examination result has been dismal nowadays creating a great source of worry and concern for all stakeholders in the educational sub-sector (Issa et al, 2012). The findings of the study support the above statement. It is observed that reading habit among students is declining. It is one of the least preferred leisure activity among students these days. Guthrie, Benneth & McGough, (2007) believe that "reading" is the act of getting meaning from printed or written words, which is the basis for learning and one of the most important skills in everyday life. (Issa et al 2012). As shown by earlier studies , this study also supports the findings that reading helps in learning. Moreover, it is observed that the students who engage in reading perform well in academics compared to those students who do not so much engage in reading. The results show that gender has an impact on leisure activity when it comes to reading. Findings of the study show that men engage more in reading during their leisure time when compared to woman.

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As in the case of indoor activities as leisure, it is observed that students actively engage in indoor activities and it is the third most preferred leisure activity according to the results of the survey. Another observation made is that indoor activities is preferred over physical activities by the young college students. This can be in reference to the post pandemic scenario, which slowed down the physical activities of students to a great extent. Physical activity among students have reduced as students started confining themselves to the four walls of their rooms, spending more time on their gadgets, gaming and social networking sites. This can be supported by a very recent Canadian National Survey on the Impact of the COVID-19 virus outbreak on movement and play behaviours of Canadian children and youth concluded that as a result of stay-home policies during the pandemic and limited access to sports-recreational facilities, families tried to create new hobbies and activities for maintaining healthy movement habits.

Precisely, parents reported that children were more involved in indoor activities. It is also observed that gender does not have an impact on indoor activities.ie. neither positive nor negative impact

Although “dating is consumption good, a form of leisure.” (Véronique Flambard, Nicolas Gérard Vaillant, François-Charles Wolff.2010), the results of this study show that the youth do not prefer dating as a leisure activity although they are actively engaging in the same. It has been observed that dating behaviour among Nigerian youths constitute a very high problem in their psycho-social development including health and academic (Akindele-Oscar, 2014; Ayodele, 2014).Contrary to above study , it is observed that dating does not have any effect on student academics .ie neither positive nor negative. The study also showed how gender does not have any impact on the dating habits on individuals among the age bracket of 18-30.

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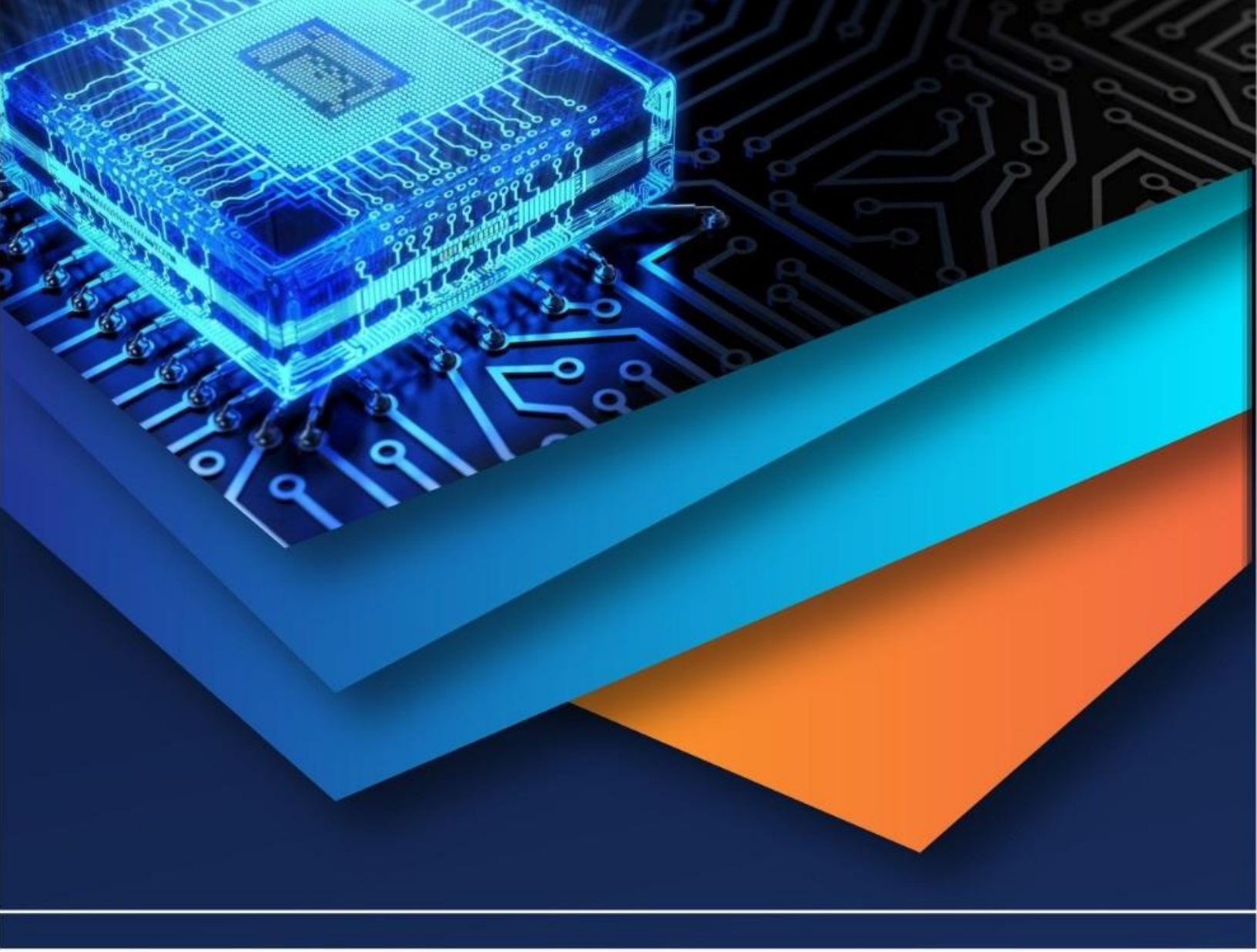

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