

## AN INVESTIGATION OF INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG XI SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

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**Abstract:** The word "internet addiction" refers to compulsive and excessive internet use that negatively impacts a person's life in a variety of ways. Research on internet addiction has significantly increased as a result of the recent, global, and swift increase in internet usage. Studies have indicated that internet addiction, especially among school-age children, can have detrimental impacts on an individual's life. Indian school children who use the internet excessively have been linked to several negative outcomes, including skipping class, playing video games in defiance of their parents, becoming addicted to social media, and engaging in other juvenile offenses. Indian research suggests that schoolchildren's addiction to the internet is becoming a major issue. Their general well-being, social relationships, and academic success are all significantly impacted by this problem. Parents, legislators, and educational institutions must acknowledge the issue of internet addiction in children and take the preventative steps described in this article to successfully address and prevent it.

**Keywords:** Internet addiction, internet usage, psychological well-being, guidance and counselling

**Highlights of this Study:** The research on internet addiction and psychological factors among Indian schoolchildren is important because it has the potential to guide the development of laws, programs, and public awareness campaigns aimed at addressing this rising problem and, ultimately, advancing the welfare of the next generation in the digital age.

### Introduction

India's schoolchildren are becoming more and more accustomed to using the internet, which is a noteworthy development in recent years. This development is the result of multiple causes that are changing how students interact with the outside world, communicate, and obtain knowledge. An outline of the main causes of the increase in internet usage among Indian schoolchildren is provided below:

#### Technological Progress:

The proliferation of reasonably priced smartphones and other electronic gadgets has been instrumental in driving up internet usage among students. With their own gadgets, many kids may now easily access the internet.

#### Digital Education Initiatives:

The adoption of digital learning platforms and online educational resources has become more common in schools. With the growth of e-learning, students often need internet access to participate in online classes, access study materials, and collaborate on projects.

**Social Media and Networking:**

The popularity of social media platforms among youth has led to increased internet usage for socializing, sharing content, and staying connected with peers. There is now a strong social media presence in students' lives.

**Entertainment and Content Consumption:**

The availability of streaming services, online gaming platforms, and other digital entertainment options has contributed to a surge in internet usage for recreational purposes. Students often use the internet for watching videos, playing games, and consuming other digital content.

**Information and Communication:**

The internet serves as a vast source of information for students, aiding them in research, completing assignments, and staying informed about various topics. The ease of access to information contributes to increased internet usage for academic purposes.

**Communication and Connectivity:**

The internet provides students with various communication tools, such as email, instant messaging, and video calls. This connectivity is crucial for staying in touch with friends, family, and classmates, especially in an era of remote learning.

**Peer Influence and Trends:**

Peer influence and the desire to be part of online trends and communities can drive students to spend more time on the internet. Online activities often become an integral aspect of social identity for many school students.

**Mobile Applications:**

The availability of a wide range of mobile applications catering to diverse interests, from educational apps to gaming and social networking apps, has made the internet more accessible and appealing to students.

**Changing Social Dynamics:**

Evolving societal norms and changing social dynamics contribute to the increased reliance on the Internet for communication, information, and entertainment. Students often perceive online interactions as integral to their social lives. Internet usage among school kids is on the rise, which raises concerns about potential harmful effects such as internet addiction and its accompanying implications on psychological factors, even though the internet offers many benefits for education, communication, and pleasure. It is imperative to comprehend these factors to formulate well-informed initiatives aimed at encouraging responsible and healthful internet usage among Indian school pupils.

**Internet Addiction and Its Impact on Psychological Factors:**

An internet addict is someone who uses the internet excessively and obsessively, which can have many detrimental effects on their lives. It is characterized by a loss of control over internet usage, an obsession with online pursuits, and a persistent use of the internet despite its drawbacks.

Behavioural addictions such as gaming disorders and gambling addictions are frequently associated with the idea.

### **Potential Consequences on Psychological Factors:**

- 1. Depression and Anxiety:** Prolonged and uncontrolled internet use has been linked to increased levels of depression and anxiety. Excessive time spent online may contribute to social isolation, disrupted sleep patterns, and a heightened sense of stress.
- 2. Social Isolation:** Social withdrawal and isolation can result from internet addiction, which neglects real-life social interactions. This lack of face-to-face contact with peers and family can contribute to feelings of loneliness and alienation.
- 3. Poor Academic Performance:** Excessive internet use, particularly for non-academic purposes, can lead to a decline in academic performance. Procrastination, distraction, and the neglect of responsibilities can negatively impact a student's educational outcomes.
- 4. Sleep Disturbances:** The constant availability of the internet can disrupt sleep patterns. Late-night internet use, especially on social media or entertainment platforms, can contribute to irregular sleep schedules, insomnia, and fatigue, negatively affecting mental well-being.
- 5. Impaired Cognitive Function:** Internet addiction may impact cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and decision-making. Constant multitasking and information overload can lead to cognitive fatigue and decreased cognitive performance.
- 6. Risk of Internet Gaming Disorder:** For some individuals, internet addiction manifests specifically through excessive online gaming. This can lead to the development of Internet Gaming Disorder, recognized as a mental health condition characterized by impaired control over gaming activities.
- 7. Relationship Strain:** Excessive internet use can strain interpersonal relationships. Individuals may prioritize online interactions over real-life relationships, leading to conflicts with family and friends.

### **Significance of the Study:**

#### **Public Health Impact:**

The study is significant in addressing a growing public health concern, as internet addiction among school students can have far-reaching consequences on mental well-being. Understanding the extent of the issue is crucial for developing effective interventions and preventive strategies.

#### **Parental Awareness and Guidance:**

The study can contribute to increased awareness among parents about the potential risks of excessive internet use. It provides insights into the signs of internet addiction and emphasizes the importance of parental guidance in fostering healthy internet habits.

#### **Informing Intervention Strategies:**

Identifying correlations between internet addiction and behavioural issues can inform the development of targeted intervention strategies. These interventions may include educational programs, counselling services, and awareness campaigns to address the specific needs of school students.

### **Contributing to Global Understanding:**

It contributes to a better understanding of the correlation between internet addiction and psychological factors, not only in the Indian context but also in a broader international context.

### **Literature Review: Foreign Studies**

The connection between internet addiction and self-disclosure. Students were given the Self-Disclosure Scale and the Internet Addiction Scale. The findings showed that self-disclosure and internet addiction were negatively correlated. In the structural equation model, self-disclosure was negatively predicted by internet addiction. The model fits well, according to fit indices derived from the structural equation model developed to assess the degree of self-disclosure in order to clarify online addiction (Arslan & Kiper, 2018). This study included correlational and descriptive research designs. The online survey was used to get the data. The survey comprised a "Socio-Demographic Form," the "Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scales," and "Internet Addiction." A total of 412 individuals took part in the research. The association between internet addiction and psychological well-being was determined to be unfavorable, moderate, and substantial. It has been found that the characteristics that considerably promote internet addiction include under-25 years old, single, jobless, and low income. Furthermore, there is a significant improvement in psychological well-being with higher work and income levels. These results indicate that those under 25 who are unmarried, jobless, and belong to a low-income category are at risk of developing an internet addiction. Therefore, it is recommended to concentrate on those in the risk group and to create psycho-training programs aimed at raising psychological well-being levels in order to prevent internet addiction (Pervin & Emre, 2021). The pattern of relationships found between internet addiction and resilience, social support, anxiety, despair, and stress. The results of the analyses carried out verified the existence of explanatory relationships between the variables. The model states that social support, resilience, and internet addiction are all directly impacted by depression; internet addiction is directly impacted by anxiety; social support and resilience are directly impacted by stress; and internet addiction is directly impacted by social support and resilience. Furthermore, social support also directly affects resilience (TAŞ, 2019).

Adolescent internet usage problems have been documented to have increased dramatically in the last few years, a trend that has been further amplified globally by COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Our aim was to investigate the potential relationship between problematic internet use in particular nations and emotional well-being, particularly whether psychological discomfort is a predictor of this relationship. An rising body of research indicates that troublesome internet use is more common in developing nations; nevertheless, we still don't know how much other factors are impacting young people's behaviour in this regard (Fernandes et al., 2021).

### **Literature Review: Indian Studies**

Internet addiction (IA) and its link to psychological suffering may have an effect on their long-term professional objectives, academic performance, and educational advancement. Therefore, it is necessary to look at IA in students (Anand et al., 2018). Over the past ten years, the subject of internet addiction has become one of the most talked about and clinically linked topics in research. The purpose of this study was to assess the prevalence of internet addiction in

young people and how it relates to stress, anxiety and depression in Indian youth (Lodha, 2018). School students use the internet almost exclusively, so there is a tendency for internet addiction (IA) among them. This study sought to determine the prevalence of online addiction, identify risk variables, and qualitatively investigate the aspects related to internet addiction among students in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India (Rajasekhar et al., 2023). Significant advancements in Internet infrastructure over the last several years have resulted in a rise in Internet usage among people of all ages. On the other hand, there have also been certain drawbacks for certain people who have increased their Internet usage. One such unfavorable effect of individuals' excessive Internet use is "Internet addiction" (IA) (Dhir et al., 2015).

## **Methods:**

### **Participants and Procedure:**

The study was conducted using stratified random sampling strategy was used in the administration of a survey at schools in an around Chennai. Internet Addiction Scale was developed based on Kimberly Young's Internet Addiction (Young, 1998). The study sample was 100 school students of XI standard. After providing informed consent, participants completed self-report measures of problematic social media use and provided demographic information at an initial data collection stage and test was conducted with proper administration.

### **Measures:**

#### **I. Factors relating to Internet Addiction as follows:**

1. **Hidden Disruptive Behaviour:** Hiding internet problems and patterns of consumption
2. **Lack of Control:** Preoccupation with Internet Consumption
3. **Emotional Disruption & Social Exclusion:** Emotional states and relationships with others
4. **Time Management Problems:** Tackled fulfilling duties and responsibilities

#### **II. Demographic Information of the participants:**

Information regarding personal information and internet usage related information of the participants were collected as follows: Gender, Locality, School Type, Stream of Subject, Birth Order, Family Type, Medium of Instruction, Monthly Income, Father's Qualification, Mother's Qualification, Father's Occupation, Mother's Occupation, Accessibility of Gadgets, Average time spent on Internet per day, The primary purpose of using the internet, Your favourite search engine, Your favourite social websites, I have my own gadgets to use the internet, Time of internet usage, Internet effects based on your opinion, Parents' opinion towards internet, Motivation for you to use the internet, The website that you visited the most.

### **Findings & Results:**

#### **Statistical Analysis:**

The research used the software package SPSS 22.0 is used to analyze participant data in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. After transferring the data produced from the scales using the computer environment, the subsequent descriptive statistics:

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics based on demographic information collected from the participants**

S.No.	Personal Variable	N	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
1	Gender	100	1.36	.048	.482
2	Locality	100	1.74	.044	.441
3	School Type	100	1.87	.080	.800
4	Stream of Subject	100	1.16	.037	.368
5	Birth Order	100	1.53	.061	.611
6	Family Type	100	1.48	.052	.522
7	Medium of Instruction	100	1.21	.041	.409
8	Monthly Income	100	3.15	.091	.914
9	Father's Qualification	100	3.52	.202	2.022
10	Mother's Qualification	100	3.04	.206	2.064
11	Father's Occupation	100	2.31	.087	.873
12	Mother's Occupation	100	2.69	.106	1.061
13	Accessibility of Gadgets	100	1.92	.039	.394
14	Average time spent on Internet per day	100	2.66	.127	1.265
15	The primary purpose of using the internet	100	2.90	.141	1.411
16	Your favourite search engine	100	1.72	.123	1.232
17	Your favourite social websites	100	1.28	.074	.740
18	I have my own gadgets to use the internet	100	1.31	.046	.465
19	Time of internet usage	100	1.63	.049	.485
20	Internet effects based on your opinion	100	2.32	.092	.920
21	Parents' opinion towards internet	100	1.78	.060	.596
22	Motivation for you to use the internet	100	2.55	.098	.978
23	The website that you visited the most	100	2.81	.096	.961

**Reliability Analysis of Internet Addiction Scale:**

To check the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha method of analysis were carried out for the data collected from the participants. The following are the range of interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha Method:

**Table 2: Showing the Interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha of Internal Consistency**

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

**Table 3: Reliability Statistics based on demographic information collected from the participants**

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
<b>0.837</b>	<b>79</b>

Based on the reliability statistics mentioned above, the numbers show 0.837, which was in the "Good" level of internal consistency as shown in Table 2. Consequently, the items on the Internet Addiction Scale are internally consistent.

**Table 4: Statistics Showing Level of Internet Addiction with it Frequencies with scores**

Calculated Score Range of Participants	Frequency Percentage	Level of Internet Addiction
98-120	5%	Low
138-190	68%	Moderate
191-270	27%	High

From the above Table 4, we interpret that the maximum level of internet addiction score is 270 and minimum level of internet addiction is 98. Hence, the results prove that the students are more addicted to the internet either directly or indirectly. Also, it shows that 5% of the students were in low level of internet addiction, 68% of students were Moderate and 27% were High.

### Recommendations:

In light of the conclusions and outcomes of this investigation, the following suggestions might be made:

- (i) Given that 27% of the students belonged to the risk group and that 68% of them were likely to fall into the high level category in the future, high school students ought to be educated about Internet addiction.
- (ii) Using the mass media and ever-evolving technology capabilities, families and kids can learn about addiction through a variety of channels, emphasizing the significance of Internet addiction in comparison to other drug addictions.
- (iii) While schoolchildren are receptive to novel concepts and advancements, it is widely acknowledged that they lack the life experience to critically evaluate these concepts and advances. As a result, parents ought to supervise and limit their kids' Internet usage.
- (iv) Parents should be made aware of the family protection programs, and the appropriate institutions should offer the assistance required for the program to be used effectively.
- (v) Similar studies with a bigger sample size and population can be carried out in other places. This study was conducted with 100 XI standard school students in Chennai City.

### **Conclusion:**

Concern over internet addiction among Indian schoolchildren is growing, as 19.2% of teenagers suffer from it. Their general well-being, social interactions, and academic achievement are all significantly impacted by this problem. To address and prevent internet addiction among school pupils, it is imperative that parents, legislators, and educational institutions all acknowledge the issue and take aggressive steps. Schools may play a critical role in controlling and preventing internet addiction by promoting healthy online behavior and offering information and assistance. In addition, parents ought to take an active role in their relationship with their kids by supervising their internet usage and offering advice on appropriate online conduct. Furthermore, it is critical that legislators enact laws and rules that support appropriate internet usage and offer supports for individuals struggling with internet addiction. It is clear from the aforementioned sources that internet addiction and Indian students' mental health are significantly correlated. It has been discovered that this link affects a number of facets of their lives, such as social interactions, psychological health, and academic success. Thus, it is essential to create and implement preventative programs that focus on psychological issues related to schoolchildren's internet addiction. Additionally, it's critical to recognize the early warning signs and symptoms of internet addiction in order to intervene and offer the right kind of support.

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