RESEARCH PAPER

Interrelationship between Internet Addiction, Parenting Style and Mental Health among Higher Secondary Learners

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital technology has significantly influenced adolescents' behavioural patterns, resulting in growing concerns related to excessive internet use and its psychological consequences. This study examines the relationship between Internet Addiction and Parenting Style on the Mental Health of XI standard students. The research employed a descriptive survey method, with a stratified sample of 1,000 higher secondary students from schools within Thiruvallur district. Standardised tools were used for data collection, including the Internet Addiction Inventory, Parenting Style Scale and Mental Health Scale, supported by a personal data sheet to capture demographic variables. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, Pearson's correlation, Multiple Regression and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings revealed that Internet Addiction and Parenting Style significantly predict Mental Health, and their components together discriminate students across low, average and high mental health levels. Significant differences were observed in mental health and parenting style based on gender, locality, medium of instruction, school type and socio-economic status, whereas no significant differences were noted in internet addiction across most demographic categories. SEM validation confirmed strong linear relationships among the selected variables. The study concludes that supportive parenting styles contribute to better mental health, while higher internet addiction levels are associated with poorer psychological well-being. The findings recommend school-based mental health interventions, digital literacy, teacher involvement and parental awareness initiatives to enhance adolescent resilience and responsible technology use.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The internet is a powerful tool that has revolutionized education, communication and access to information. It provides students with unprecedented opportunities to learn, collaborate and explore diverse perspectives. Digital platforms facilitate interactive learning, enable access to a wealth of resources and foster global connectivity, enhancing both academic and personal growth. When used responsibly, the internet can be a catalyst for innovation, creativity and intellectual development.

However, the pervasive influence of the internet also presents significant risks, particularly for students. Internet addiction, a prevalent issue among this demographic, adversely affects academic performance, social relationships and overall well-being. The allure of instant gratification, entertainment and social validation inherent in internet use can lead to excessive engagement, disrupting academic pursuits and impeding personal development.

Internet addiction manifests in various forms, each posing unique challenges. Social media addiction undermines self-esteem and interpersonal relationships, as students obsessively check notifications, seek validation and compare themselves to peers. Gaming addiction, characterized by immersive online experiences and adrenaline-driven gameplay, hampers academic focus and contributes to health issues. Additionally, early exposure to explicit online content exacerbates the risks, leading to distorted perceptions of reality, social isolation and psychological distress.

The repercussions of internet addiction extend beyond the digital sphere, infiltrating all aspects of students' lives. Excessive internet use diminishes academic performance by reducing study time, impairing concentration and eroding learning quality. Socially, it fosters isolation, hindering the development of essential interpersonal skills and exacerbating feelings of loneliness and detachment. The constant barrage of online stimuli further heightens anxiety, depression and low self-esteem, compounding the challenges faced by adolescents.

Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach involving education, awareness and intervention. Parents play a pivotal role by monitoring online activities, setting boundaries and promoting offline activities. Open communication about online safety and responsible usage, coupled with parental modelling of healthy digital habits, can significantly influence children's behaviour.

1.1 Conceptual Background of the Present Study

A significant shift in students' internet usage patterns was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, most individuals primarily used the internet for leisure and social interactions. However, during this time, it became essential for academic purposes and for maintaining social connections, effectively blurring the lines between schoolwork and personal life. The widespread adoption of video conferencing platforms like Zoom for classes, along with virtual study groups and social media applications such as Instagram and TikTok, has become integral to student life.

While some students returned to their pre-pandemic habits, many found it challenging to reduce their screen time due to behaviours developed during remote learning. The ease of continuous access to platforms like Google Classroom and Discord, coupled with a fear of missing out on social and educational opportunities, made disconnection difficult.

Overexertion of screen time can lead to physical health issues, including headaches, eye strain and insomnia. Prolonged use of computers and smartphones may result in digital eye strain, dry eyes and blurry vision. Additionally, it can adversely affect mental health, contributing to anxiety, depression and social isolation. Excessive technology use may also hinder social skills and face-to-face communication.

1.2 Operational Definitions of Selected Variables

Operational definitions of selected variables refer to clear, precise and measurable descriptions of the variables used in a study or research. These definitions specify how each variable is observed, measured, or manipulated, ensuring consistency and replicability in data collection and analysis.

Independent variables are the factors intentionally manipulated or observed in research to understand their influence on other variables, making them the cause in a cause-and-effect relationship (Creswell and Poth 2018). In this study, these variables serve as the primary drivers of change, forming the core focus of the research. Conversely, dependent variables represent the outcomes or effects influenced by the independent variables. These are the variables measured and analysed to assess the impact of the independent factors (Fraenkel, Wallenand and Hyun 2019). Moderator variables play a crucial role by influencing the strength or direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. They do not directly cause changes in the dependent variable but interact with the independent variables to alter their effects, providing insight into the conditions under which relationships exist (Baron and Kenny 1986). This research investigates the interplay between these variables to derive meaningful insights.

1.2.1 Independent Variables

The independent variable is the one that is manipulated or changed by the researcher. The following are the independent variables used in this research:

Internet Addiction

It refers to the excessive or habitual use of the internet for inappropriate purposes, resulting in adverse outcomes across various aspects of life, including work, education, relationships and mental health. It can present in forms such as gaming addiction, social media addiction, or generalized internet overuse. In this study, internet dependency is measured using scores from the Internet Addiction Inventory, as determined by the researcher and research supervisor

Parenting Style

It is an important factor in determining the behaviour of the student, including their relationship with technology and their risk of developing internet addiction. Research has identified various parenting style, such as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved. Different parenting style may influence children's attitudes towards technology and one can self-regulate internet usage. Under the prevailing research, it implies that the scores obtained from the tool retrieved from the National Psychological Corporation in India were developed by the Psychologist (Madhu and Dimple 2017).

1.2.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the one that is measured to see if it is affected by the change in the independent variable. The following are the dependent variables used in this research:

Mental Health

A person's state of mind is an attribute of psychological well-being that helps them handle life's challenges, discover their potential, pursue their goals effectively and give back to their communities. In a nutshell, it is a concept that stimulates our ability to make decisions, develop relationships and shape the world around us. According to the current study, the phenomenon defines the scores derived from the tools retrieved from the National Psychological Corporation of India developed by the Psychologists, (Talesara and Bano 2017).

1.2.3 Personal Variables

A personal variable determines how strongly or in which direction an independent variable influences a dependent variable. Using personal variables, we can explain where independent variables affect dependent variables more or less strongly.

Gender

Gender signifies the social and cultural differences between males and females.

Locality

Locality refers to the distinction between urban and rural areas.

School Type

A school type refers to the category or classification of an educational institution based on factors like curriculum, grade levels, funding, or teaching methods which includes Government, Government aided and private.

Stream of Subject

It refers to a group of related subjects chosen by students based on their interests and career goals which includes arts and science.

Birth Order

It refers to the position of a person in their family based on the order of their birth, such as being the first, second, or third child.

Family Type

It refers to the structure or composition of a family based on the relationships among its members which includes joint family, nuclear family and single-parent family.

Medium of Instruction

It refers to the language used for teaching and learning in a school or educational institution which includes Tamil and English.

Socio-Economic Status

It refers to a person's or family's position in society based on factors like income, education and occupation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The examination of the problem was formulated through a review of the literature for the present study is "Internet Addiction and Parenting Style on the Mental Health of XI Standard Students", using descriptive research method.

1.4 Need and Importance of the Present Investigations

The internet has become a central part of daily life, influencing societal, financial, academic and recreational activities. However, excessive internet use can disrupt children's physical, mental and educational well-being, with adolescents being particularly vulnerable due to their behaviour, accessibility and openness to change. While studies on parenting and technological dependency exist, few compare parental involvement from both parents' perspectives regarding adolescents' internet addiction. Research shows that excessive internet use can lead to mental health issues, such as depression and negatively affect educational achievement. Seminars on ethical internet use can help address these concerns. Adolescents are at higher risk of online dependency and there is a noted gender difference in internet usage. Greater attention to students' psychological well-being is essential, with educational institutions prioritizing personal growth and healthy living.

The need and importance of understanding internet addiction, parenting and mental health lie in their interconnected impact on individuals and society. Internet addiction can lead to significant mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression and social isolation. Parenting plays a crucial role in mitigating these risks by fostering healthy digital habits and providing emotional support. Addressing these issues is essential to promote mental well- being, enhance family dynamics and ensure balanced development in children and adolescents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of a literature review is to examine and synthesize existing scholarly sources relevant to a particular research topic. Among the materials used to conduct this research are books, journal articles, conference papers, dissertations and other sources of academic discourse. Searching, analysing and evaluating these materials is a systematic process. Developing new research questions or hypotheses is one of the primary goals of conducting a literature review, which aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge.

In this section, we summarize the literature review according to three primary variables based on Indian &Foreign studies and its presentation of the present study is structured as follows.

- Studies related to Internet Addiction
- Studies related to Parenting Style
- Studies related to Mental Health

1.5 Indian Research Studies on Internet Addiction and the selected Variables:

Bhandari and Chaihal (2023) investigated the incidence of internet addiction among 154 participants at an Indian higher education institution utilizing the Young's Internet Addiction Test. The results indicated that the majority of subjects displayed mild addiction, a few demonstrated strong addiction and none showed extreme addiction.

Rajasekhar et al. (2023) examined internet addiction in a cohort of 2,035 college students in Jodhpur, India, utilizing the Internet Addiction Test (IAT). A chi-square test was performed to evaluate the results, revealing a predominantly high incidence of internet addiction, with instances varying from mild to severe. The research moreover examined catalysts for internet usage and methodologies to combat addiction.

Rao et al. (2023) investigated the frequency of internet addiction and nomophobia among 367 medical undergraduates in Patna. Researchers gathered data via the Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT). The determinants of its effects and nomophobia were identified by performing a multivariable binomial logistic regression analysis. Researchers found that high screen time, academic performance changes and internet addiction were all independent predictors of moderate-to-severe nomophobia.

Bala and Randhawa (2022) assessed the frequency of internet gaming addiction in 100 students of Montessori Cambridge School in Pathankot, Punjab. As part of the examination, Pontes & Griffiths' Internet Gaming Disorder Scale was used, which was developed in 2015. To determine whether internet gaming addiction is correlated with a particular demographic profile, a chi-square test was applied. It was discovered that several students at high secondary schools developed an addiction to online gaming, highlighting a substantial concern.

Jagdish and Jhabarmal (2022) carried out a study to examine the effects of dependency on the internet on 60 adolescent students in Karnataka, India. Data were gathered via the Young's Internet Addiction Test. Reliability was evaluated through the split-half method. Results indicated that most participants exhibited moderate addiction levels, with a few minimally affected and others severely addicted.

1.6 Indian Research on Parenting Style and the selected Variables

Rajamani and Nirupalini (2024) sought to determine how different parenting styles affect secondary school pupils' emotional intelligence. A random sample of 40 parents and 40 children, aged 15–19, was selected from special schools. Parenting Style Inventory (PSI) was used to gather data. Statistical methods, including Pearson correlation and multiple regressions, were employed to analyse the results. Findings revealed that both father and mother authoritative parenting styles significantly influenced emotional intelligence. However, only the mother's authoritative style had a significant impact on senior school children's emotional intelligence.

Gomati et al. (2023) evaluated young individuals' favoured parenting techniques. A questionnaire on preference parenting style, developed using the Buri (1991) questionnaire, was administered to a cohort of 195 Indian students aged 18 to 25. Data were analysed using a descriptive analysis. Results indicated a preference for the permissive parenting style, with no significant gender differences observed. The study contributes to the existing literature on parental style preferences within the Indian community.

Samritha (2023) investigated parental mistreatment, analysing data from 200 samples collected via simple sampling and a self-designed questionnaire. A Chi-Square test revealed a significant association between child maltreatment and adverse impacts on student well- being, including cognitive, educational and psychological development, ultimately influencing academic performance.

Mahesh Kumar Gajurel (2022) conducted a study in Rajasthan with a sample of 100 adolescents, assessed perceptions of parenting styles using Gerlsma's Perceived Parental Rearing Style (PPRSQ) and three specific tools. Findings indicated that boys experienced higher paternal non-acceptance, while girls reported greater emotional warmth. The research highlights the impact of parental upbringing on adolescent personality development and holds educational value for parents, underscoring the importance of addressing parenting methods.

1.7 Indian Studies Related to Mental Health:

Chawla and Saha (2024) attempted to discover psychology students' perceptions, needs and preferences regarding mental health apps aimed at enhancing resilience. The cultural significance of developing mental health apps was examined among 30 psychology students in Delhi, with data collected through focus group discussions. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was employed, revealing various topic domains related to the study's focus. The research explores resilience, perceptions, facilitators and barriers in the use of mental health applications.

Ray, Goswami and Kumar (2024) carried out a descriptive cross-sectional study during the COVID-19 pandemic to assess stress levels in children and youth aged 9 to 18 years. The Short Self-Rating Questionnaire (SSRQ), developed by Brown et al. (1999), was employed. Data were collected via an online survey involving 369 school children, with analysis performed using a T-test. Results revealed a significant difference in stress levels between males and females.

Kavya Vijaykumar, Usha Hirevenkanagoudar and Sanjey Chetty (2024) measured the presence of mental health disorders among 330 students in Raichur, Karnataka. Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was employed for the mental health assessment. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis were done. The findings indicated that 14.2% of adolescents had low mental health ratings, with a notably higher prevalence among girls compared to boys.

Deep Kaur Gulati and Bakliwal (2023) The study investigated the anxiety and dependency on internet among a sample of 600 high school students in Bhopal. Data collection was conducted using the General Anxiety Scale, developed by Dr. Anil Kumar in 2003. The analysis was performed using the One-way ANOVA method. The findings revealed that the majority of participants exhibited a mild level of internet addiction, while a smaller proportion displayed moderate and severe levels. Additionally, female students exhibited significantly higher anxiety levels compared to their male counterparts.

Lathabhavan (2023) measured the correlation between COVID-19 dread and the well-being and life satisfaction of 768 and 884 college students in India during the first and second waves of the pandemic, respectively. Psychological distress levels were assessed to achieve this. The data was analysed using structural equation modelling, implemented with AMOS

24.0. Depression Anxiety Stress Scale was used as research instrument. The research identified strong relationships between COVID-19 fear and psychological discomfort and a negative correlation with well-being and life satisfaction, with these effects being more pronounced during the second wave.

1.8 Foreign Studies Related to Internet Addiction:

Yang (2024) explored the association between family factors and dependency on internet among 141 adolescents. Young's Internet Addiction Questionnaire was used as a tool. Correlation Analysis was performed on data. Findings revealed that strained parent-child interactions, inadequate parental companionship, imbalanced communication, unsuitable educational techniques employed by parents and familial dysfunction substantially heightened the likelihood of Internet addiction in teenagers.

Hidayatullah, Naz and Niazi (2023) examined the effects of digital addiction and its association with mental health problems among 600 students. Internet Addiction Test was used as a tool. Correlation analysis was performed on a data. The study found that, in addition to internet addiction, gender and family structure (particularly a nuclear family system) were significant predictors of these issues.

Manal M Anwar et al. (2022) conducted research

involving data on internet usage among 1,537 students in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Researchers utilized the Internet Addiction Test to collect the data. Anova was calculated for the collected data. The findings revealed mild to moderate degrees of online addiction among Egyptian and Saudi students, with Egyptian students demonstrating a greater frequency of internet searches than their Saudi peers.

Deniz Gunaydın (2021) focussed on the correlations between personality traits and demographic characteristics of 409 Turkish high school students. The study was analysed using Young Internet Addiction Test created by Young (1998). Data analysis, conducted using regression analysis, revealed significant associations between Internet usage frequency and personality qualities such as neuroticism, conscientiousness and agreeableness in relation to Internet addiction among the teenagers.

1.9 Foreign Research on Parenting Style and the selected Variables

Hua and Xu (2024) investigated the complex correlation between different approaches to parenting and their influence on the scholastic achievements of 600 primary school pupils attending Huzhu Road Primary School in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province. The Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-A), established by Ryan and Connell in 1989, is utilised as a data gathering instrument. The data underwent factor analysis, regression analysis and cluster analysis. The findings underscore the enduring influence of parenting style on academic motivation, learning adjustment, social aptitude, smartphone reliance and subjective happiness. Furthermore, differences in gender and urban-rural categorisations within high schools demonstrate subtle disparities in parental affection, comprehension and intervention.

Agus Timan et al. (2024) addressed the impact of community and student parents on fostering entrepreneurial careers among 12 vocational school students in Malang, Indonesia. The study was carried out utilising qualitative methodologies, namely employing interviews, observation and discussion. The results of this study suggest that the community's involvement in schools goes beyond supplying physical resources. It primarily involves offering assistance to students through methods like mentoring and training, which significantly contribute to students' understanding and practical knowledge of entrepreneurship.

Yahaya et al. (2023) examined the correlation between parental approaches, self-control and peer impact on student misbehaviour. Information was gathered from a sample of 250 participants who are secondary school students chosen from two schools in Malaysia. The parenting style was devised by Paulson (1994) and the self-control measure was modified by Tennessee was utilised as a data collection method. Additionally, the effect of peer scale was modified from the Teenage Personality Questionnaire. The obtained results were evaluated using Pearson correlation. The findings demonstrated a substantial correlation between peer influence and student misconduct. Regression studies identified parenting approaches, self- control, peer impact and gender as factors that can predict student misbehaviour.

Sarıalioğlu, Atay and Arıkan (2022) explored the correlation between the levels of loneliness experienced by adolescents during the pandemic and their corresponding levels of internet addiction. The sample consisted of 482 adolescents residing in Erzurum, Turkey. The UCLA Loneliness Scale was initially formulated by Hays and DiMatteo in 1987, while the Internet Addiction Scale for Adolescents (IASA) was produced by Tas in 2019. These scales were employed to gather data. The findings from numerous regression analyses indicate a positive correlation between teenagers' online addiction and levels of loneliness, meaning that as loneliness levels increase, so does internet addiction among adolescents. Adolescents who expressed a mild sense of loneliness exhibited a diminished propensity for internet addiction.

1.10 Foreign Studies Related to Mental Health

Blal Idrees et al. (2024) investigated the correlations between excessive technological usage, stress levels and self-worth among 4,748 adolescents living in Ontario, Canada. Problem Internet Use Test (SPIUT) and Life Stress were used as a research tool. Interpretation was done using Pearson Correlation Test. The research reveals a substantial relationship between excessive technology use and heightened life stress, as well as diminished self-esteem in adolescents. Moreover, it underscores the necessity of devising and implementing effective strategies.

Maryam Latifian et al. (2024) examined the impact of dependency towards internet and academic resilience in relation with mental health of 758 high school students in Tehran, Iran. Young's Internet Addiction Test Academic Resilience Inventory and Mental Health Questionnaire were used as research instruments. Multiple Regression Analysis was used for interpretation the results. Research indicates a significant unfavourable association between online addiction and mental wellness in pupils., with higher levels of internet addiction leading to lower mental health. In contrast, elevated levels of academic resilience correlate with improved mental health.

Ardiani and Mardiyah (2023) evaluated the impact of electronic modules on the comprehension of mental health among adolescents. The study employed a quantitative methodology. The intervention was administered to a single group consisting of 51 students. The researchers employed a questionnaire to assess mental health comprehension among adolescents. Data analysis was performed using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The results indicate that e-modules had an impact on the social connections related to the mental well- being of adolescents.

Erfan Badawi et al. (2023) focused on finding characteristics which enhance participant involvement with universal school-based initiatives in Digital Mental Health Intervention (DMHI) programs.

Interview method was adopted to collect the data from the participants.

The data was analysed using McQuivey's model of four fundamental human needs (2013). The findings indicate that using a topical examination of the user interviews they identified elements that could enhance the involvement of teenagers in school-based digital mental health intervention programs.

There are huge number of research studies related to internet addiction, parenting style and mental health among which the relevant ones have been mentioned in this chapter.

The investigator felt that *Parenting Style* and *Mental Health* are very important for students to get rid of any addiction in particular internet addiction and she had been curious to find out whether they are related to *Internet Addiction* as an undesirable behaviour which needs to be identified and sorted out. It was found that there were very limited studies relating to these three aspects and hence it could be a worthwhile study.

2. DESIGN OF THE STUDY AND VARIABLES USED

The selection of a study design is a pivotal step in the research process, requiring meticulous evaluation and choice of methods that best address the research problem. A research design functions as a comprehensive framework, detailing the structure and approach for answering research questions with validity, objectivity, accuracy and efficiency. Research design is a structured framework that guides researchers in collecting, analysing and interpreting data. Polit and Beck (2012) emphasize that research design is the blueprint for a study, ensuring that the research question is answered effectively and efficiently. Creswell (2014) highlights that a good research design aligns with the research problem, providing a logical structure to address it. Yin (2018) focuses on the importance of research design in ensuring validity and reliability, particularly in qualitative and mixed-method studies. These opinions collectively underscore the critical role of research design in ensuring the credibility and relevance of a study.

2.1 Main Objectives of the Study

There are huge number of research studies related to internet addiction, parenting style and mental health among which the relevant ones have been mentioned in this chapter. Studies on *Internet Addiction* along with personal well-being, personality development, academic stress, negative thoughts and other aspects have been done. There are studies found in *Parenting style* with subject social communication and parenting style patterns its impact on student's behaviours. There are innumerable studies on *Mental Health* regarding motivation, anxiety,
depression, self-esteem and decision-making.

- To investigate the relationship between the variables namely, Mental Health, Internet Addiction and Parenting Style
- To examine the relationship between Internet Addiction and Mental Health
- To examine the relationship between Parenting Style and Mental Health
- To predict the linear combination of the components of Internet Addiction is significantly related to Mental Health
- To predict Mental Health in terms of a linear combination of components of Parenting Style
- To predict Mental Health in terms of linear combination of a) Internet Addiction and
b) Parenting Style
- To explore which of the components of Internet Addiction and Parenting Style effectively discriminate between both low and high levels of Mental Health among XI standard students
- To explore whether XI standard students differ in a) Mental Health, b) Internet Addiction and c) Parenting Style owing to variations in personal factors namely: gender, locality, school management type, stream of subject, birth order, family type, medium of instruction, socio economic status, father's qualification, mother's qualification, father's occupation, mother's occupation and accessibility of gadgets
- To construct and validate a Structural Equation Model (SEM) of linear relationship among the variables of Mental Health, Internet Addiction and Parenting Style along with a few selected personal variables

2.2 Hypothesis of the Study

- Hyp 1: A linear combination of selected variables, namely internet addiction and parenting style significantly predicts mental health
- Hyp 1a: A significant linear relationship of internet addiction exists with mental health
- Hyp 1b: A significant linear relationship of parenting style exists with mental health
- Hyp 1c: A linear combination of the components of internet addiction is significantly related to mental health
- Hyp 1d: A linear combination of the components of parenting style is significantly related to mental health
- Hyp 1e: A linear combination of the components of internet addiction and parenting style is significantly related to mental health
- Hyp 2: The components of Independent variables namely Internet Addiction and Parenting Style together discriminate the pupils of various levels of Mental Health (High, Average and Low on Mental Health)
- Hyp 3: Mental Health, Internet Addiction and Parenting Style do not significantly differ due to the differences in the selected variables - gender, region, type of school, stream of subject, birth order, family type, medium of instruction and SES

- Hyp 4: A Path Model relating mental health to internet addiction and parenting style along with a few chosen personal variables, is hypothesized for validation

2.3 Research Method and Design Adopted

Researchers should first clearly define their research questions and objectives before deciding on a methodology. The next phase is to determine the requisite data kind, either qualitative or quantitative. To select the most appropriate method, a researcher must also consider the available resources and limitations. The current study followed a survey method. In the field of education, survey research falls under descriptive research, which is the most commonly used method for collecting descriptive and evaluative information. A descriptive study involves hypotheses and tests based on logical-inductive and deductive reasoning methods. Here you will find an accurate and comprehensive description of the variables and procedure.

The impact of "Internet Addiction and Parenting Style on the Mental Health of XI Standard Students" is examined in this study. Data was gathered via the survey method and statistical methods were used to analyse and draw conclusions. The tools and variables that were chosen are displayed below.

2.4 Research Variables

Internet Addiction, Parenting Style and Mental Health are the research variables chosen for the present study.

- Independent Variables: Mental Health
- Dependent Variable: Internet Addiction and Parenting Style
- Personal Variables/Demographic Variables: Gender, Locality, School Type, Stream of Subject, Birth Order, Family Type, Medium of Instruction and Socio-economic Status

2.5 Description of the Tools

In order to conduct a current study, we require the following tools:

- An Internet Addiction Inventory was developed by the investigator and supervisor
- Parenting Style Scale (PSS-GMMD) was developed by Madhu and Dimple (2017)
- The Mental Health Scale (MHS–TSBA) was developed by Talesara and Bano (2017), Modified the tool by the research supervisor and the researcher (2024)
- Student personal data sheet developed by the investigator and supervisor

2.6 Reliability and Validity of the Tool

The Table 3.1, provided lists three variables, their number of items, validity and reliability of the tool.

Table 3.1 Reliability & Validity of the Selected Variables

Variables	Reliability	Validity	Total No. of Statements Retained
Internet Addiction Inventory	0.895	0.880	25
Parenting Style	0.928	0.886	44
Mental Health Scale	0.943	0.870	23

2.7 Selection of the Sample for the Main Study

The researcher used Stratified Sampling Method to divide the population in sub-groups based on the specific characteristics. The number of participants denotes a subset of a population selected purposefully for the research topic of study. The survey method included 1,000 students from different types of schools in Thiruvallur district. Several demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds were represented in the study.

2.8 Distribution of the Sample Based on Demographic Variables

In this section, the samples for the study and its distribution based on the personal variables are discussed in detailed as follows:

Table 3.2 Distribution of the Sample Based on Demographic Variables

Variables		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	*Male*	487	48.7
	Female	513	51.3
Locality	*Rural*	453	45.3
	Urban	547	54.7
School Type	*Govt.*	397	39.7
	Aided	302	30.2
	Private	301	30.1
Stream of Subject	*Arts*	497	49.7
	Science	503	50.3
Birth Order	*First*	439	43.9
	Second	477	47.7
	Third	84	8.4
Family Type	*Nuclear*	609	60.9
	Joint	341	34.1
	Single Parent	50	5.0

Medium of Instruction	*English*	512	51.2
	Tamil	488	48.8
Socio-Economic Status	*Lower*	85	9
	Lower Middle	353	35
	Upper Middle	269	27
	Higher	293	29

2.9 Statistical Analysis

In analysing and interpreting the data, Internet Addiction, Parenting Style and Mental Health are key functional variables, along with demographic variables such as Gender, Locality, School Type, Stream of Subject, Birth Order, Family Type, Medium of Instruction and Socio-economic Status. Following are the statistical methods used to analyse the data.

- Descriptive Analysis using Mean and Standard Deviation
- Differential Analysis using ANOVA and 't' tests
- Correlation Analysis using Pearson's correlation co-efficient(r)
- Multivariate Regression Analysis using Multiple Regression Analysis,
- Conceptualized SEM Model Analysis using AMOS

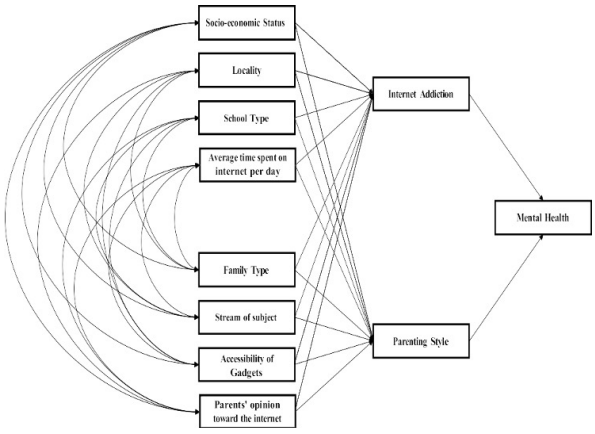

Fig. 3.1 Conceptualized SEM Model

(With eight personal variables in Internet Addiction, Parenting Style and Mental Health) Mental Health*=Mental Health

Socio-eco Status**=Socio-Economic Status

3. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Analysing data is essential for understanding trends and patterns among phenomena in research. By identifying relationships between variables and drawing conclusions about results, it helps to identify relationships between variables. In addition to identifying potential problems, data analysis can also point out areas of improvement. Informed decisions are made based on evidence rather than assumptions when researchers have insight into the data. The results of this process can help guide strategic planning and policy development by highlighting which strategies are working and which ones need to be adjusted. Furthermore, it can be used to prioritize the allocation of resources to areas that will have the greatest impact.

3.1 Analysis of data

The study investigated Mental Health, Parenting Style and Internet Addiction in relation to demographic factors such as Gender, Locality, School Type, Stream of Subject, Birth Order, Family Type, Medium of Instruction and Socio-economic Status (SES). Comparative tests, including t-tests and ANOVA, are utilized to assess mean differences across groups. To explore predictive relationships, multiple linear and logistic regression analyses identify significant predictors of outcomes. Additionally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is employed to assess complex causal relationships and latent variables.

3.2 Discussion Based on Descriptive Analysis

The sample data, representing a balanced demographic distribution, reveals key insights into the participants' characteristics. Gender distribution is nearly even, with males constituting 48.7% and females 51.3%, ensuring equitable gender representation. Locality-wise, 54.7% of the respondents are from urban areas, while 45.3% reside in rural regions. This balance provides a comprehensive view of diverse living environments. School type distribution shows a notable variation, with government school students comprising 39.7%, followed closely by aided (30.2%) and private (30.1%) schools, highlighting diversity in educational settings.

The stream of study is nearly equally split between Arts (49.7%) and Science (50.3%), reflecting an inclusive representation of academic interests. Birth order analysis reveals that firstborns and second-born make up the majority (43.9% and 47.7%, respectively), while third-born account for only 8.4%. Family structure analysis indicates that nuclear families dominate at 60.9%, with joint families (34.1%) and single-parent families (5%) contributing to the data's breadth. Regarding the medium of instruction, English is slightly more common (51.2%) compared to Tamil (48.8%), ensuring cultural and linguistic inclusivity.

The descriptive statistics for SES categories show that higher SES groups generally report slightly higher scores across all variables. For IAI, the means range from 59.56 (Lower) to

65.56 (Upper). For PSS, they range from 85.37 (Lower) to 108.80 (Upper) and for MHS, from 48.31 (Lower) to 58.22 (Upper). Notably, PSS and MHS show more pronounced increases with higher SES.

These distributions underline a well-rounded and representative sample, offering a robust foundation for

analysing relationships between variables in the study.

3.3 Discussion Based on Differential Analysis

This section briefly discusses about interpretation of the differential analysis conducted on the personal variables of this research study such as gender, locality, school type, stream of subject, birth order, family type, medium of instruction, socio-economic status.

3.3.1 Gender

There exists in internet addiction scores between male and female participants. There is no significant difference was found between boys and girls with parenting style which is in agreement with several studies have examined the correlation between parental style and internet addiction in the adolescents, finding no significant gender differences. There is no significant difference was found between boys and girls with mental health.

3.3.2 Locality

There is a significant difference in parenting style perception (PSS) and Mental Health Scores (MHS), but not in Internet addiction (IAI) based on the locality.

3.3.3 School Type

There is a significant difference in parenting style perception (PSS) and mental health scores (MHS) across school types but no significant difference in internet addiction (IAI).

3.3.4 Stream of Subject

There are no major differences exist in internet addiction, parenting style, or mental health based on the stream of study.

3.3.5 Birth Order

There is a no significant difference between birth order in internet addiction and mental health but there is a significance difference in parenting style. There is definite trend in the mean scores of selected variables with birth order (First, Second, Third) is found. It indicates third-born scoring highest on all factors, possibly reflecting increased parental involvement or sibling dynamics.

3.3.6 Family Type

There exists a notable disparity in internet addiction (IAI) scores and marginal difference in Mental health scores (MHS) but no significant difference in parenting style.

3.3.7 Medium of Instruction

There is a significant difference in parenting style perception (PSS) and mental health scores (MHS) based on the medium of instruction but not in Internet Addiction (IAI).

3.3.8 Socio-Economic Status

There exists significant difference among the three socio-economic status groups concerning all variables (Mental Health, Parenting Style and Internet Addiction). The pupils from higher socio-economic status are significantly higher in internet addiction and moderate in mental health and parenting style whereas the lower socio-economic status is lower in internet addiction but higher in mental health as well as parenting style than the pupils from Lower, Lower Middle, Upper Middle SES groups.

3.4 Discussion Based on Correlation Analysis

The analysis of internet addiction and its components reveals a strong correlation between excessive internet use and the neglect of work and social life. Additionally, lack of self- control is significantly associated with both factors, indicating that poor self-regulation can lead to negative outcomes. Although salience is less correlated with behavioural neglect, it still has a significant influence.

When examining parenting styles, moderate correlations were found among democratic, autocratic and permissive styles, suggesting that these classifications may not be as rigid as previously thought. Notably, permissive parenting is strongly correlated with uninvolved parenting, while autocratic parenting also shows a strong correlation with uninvolved parenting. In terms of mental health and its components, the environments of school, home and peers demonstrate strong positive correlations, highlighting their interconnected influence on development, behaviour and social well-being.

3.5 Discussion Based on Regression Analysis

The present study explored the influence of parenting styles and internet addiction components on mental health among adolescents. The analysis shows that parenting style significantly influences mental health. A more effective parenting approach is associated with better mental health outcomes. This highlights the positive role of supportive and balanced parenting in promoting emotional well-being. Even without considering parenting style, individuals show a meaningful baseline mental health.

Mental health predicts internet addiction. As mental health improves, internet addiction decreases. This indicates that individuals with better psychological well-being are less likely to overuse the internet. Although the effect is statistically significant, the strength of this relationship is small.

This suggests that while mental health plays a role, other factors also contribute to internet addiction. Together, these findings suggest a meaningful pathway: better parenting leads to better mental health, which in turn is linked to reduced internet addiction.

3.6 Discussion on SEM Analysis

The image is a graphical representation of a Conceptualized SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) showing various factors influencing Mental Health.

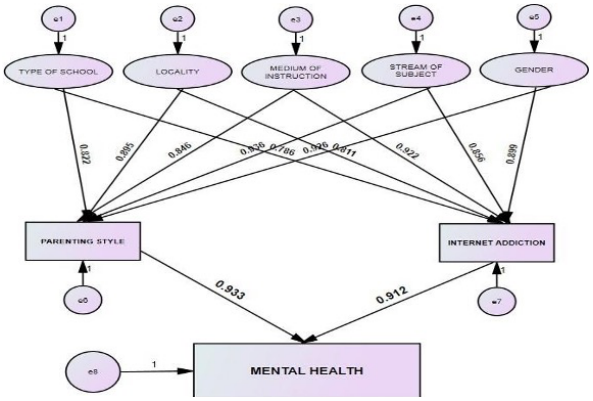

Fig. 4.1 Validated SEM Model for Mental Health

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) conceptualizes the relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables that influence Mental Health. Exogenous variables include factors such as the Type of School (e1), Locality (e2), Medium of Instruction (e3), Stream of Subject (e4) and Gender (e5). These variables serve as independent influences that can impact the dependent variables of Parenting Style (e6), Internet Addiction (e7) and ultimately Mental Health (e8). The SEM also includes path coefficients which quantify the strength and direction of these relationships:

- The path coefficient of 0.822 indicates a moderate positive relationship between the Type of School and Parenting Style, suggesting that the type of school attended influences parenting style perceptions
- 0.846 between Locality and Parenting Style suggests that the local environment can affect how parenting styles are perceived
- The coefficient of 0.786 between Medium of Instruction and Parenting Style indicates that the medium through which instruction is delivered has an impact on parenting style
- 0.611 represents the relationship between Stream of Subject and Parenting Style, indicating that the academic stream (Arts or Science) also influences parenting style
- The path coefficient of 0.839 between Gender and Parenting Style signifies that gender differences play a role in shaping parenting style perceptions

Parenting Style (e6) directly impacts Mental Health (e8) with a strong path coefficient of 0.933, highlighting its crucial role in determining mental health outcomes. Internet Addiction (e7) also influences Mental Health, with a path coefficient of 0.912, suggesting that higher levels of internet addiction are associated with poorer mental health. This SEM model is instrumental in understanding the intricate interactions between these factors, providing insights into the direct and indirect effects that shape Mental Health. It aids in identifying key levers for interventions aimed at improving mental health outcomes.

4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on analyses and interpretations in which summarises the entire research. It has concentrated on the primary findings, educational implications and recommendations for further research.

4.1 The Problem and its Significance

In today's digital age, adolescents are constantly connected to the internet, it is beneficial to some extent but it can lead to internet addiction when usage becomes excessive and unregulated. This addiction is linked to anxiety, depression and poor emotional control (Young 1998; Kuss and Lopez-Fernandez 2016 & Wang et al. 2019).

It may also result in social isolation and emotional distress (Caplan 2007). At the same time, parenting styles play a key role in shaping adolescents' mental health. Authoritative parenting is linked with positive outcomes, while authoritarian and uninvolved styles are associated with greater mental health risks (Baumrind 1991; Steinberg 2001& Pinquart 2017). Permissive parenting may offer emotional support but lacks needed structure (Maccoby and Martin 1983).

Research shows that poor parenting can increase vulnerability to internet addiction, while supportive parenting helps manage it better (Lam 2015). Given rising mental health issues among youth (WHO 2021), studying the combined impact of internet addiction and parenting style is crucial for developing effective interventions.

4.2 Major Findings of The Study

- The components of internet addiction and parenting style are strongly associated with mental health, with a correlation coefficient of 0.60
- All the ten-dimensional variables of both internet addiction and parenting are significant in discriminating the three groups of pupils, below, below average, moderate and high in mental health. The dimension of Autocratic and involved seems to be having highest weightage in the discrimination
- Statistically significant variations have been observed with gender, locality, medium of instruction, school type and socio-economic status in perceptions of parenting style and mental health scores; however, no differences were found in internet addiction
- No significant variations exist in over the internet addiction, parenting style, or mental health scores based on the subject stream; similarly, there are no notable differences in internet addiction or mental health scores among the groups. However, a significant difference exists among the perception of parenting styles predicated upon birth order

A significant difference exists between internet addiction scores among the groups, despite no significant difference is observed in the perception scores of parenting styles. Mental health scores indicate a marginally significant difference depending upon family type

- The suggested SEM model validates significant correlations among Mental Health, Parenting Style and Internet Addiction, with further impact from specific individual factors
- Statistical validation by Structural Equation Modelling revealed that only birth order, family type, medium of instruction and socioeconomic status were not substantially associated with the experimental variables. The validated improved SEM model demonstrates the association among personal characteristics, including gender, locality, type of school and topic stream of XI standard pupils

4.3 Suggestions and Further Research

- Extend the study to include students from Tamil Nadu State Board and CBSE schools across different states
- Investigate additional factors influencing mental health such as personality, prosocial behaviour, academic achievement and emotional intelligence
- Conduct qualitative research to explore cultural and socio-economic influences on internet addiction and parenting styles
- Perform experimental studies to examine the direct effects of internet addiction on mental health
- Replicate the study with older students or a wider age range for broader insights
- Use shorter, validated questionnaires to reduce response burden and improve data quality
- Integrate digital literacy programs into school curricula and co-curricular activities for gradual skill development. Provide teachers with ongoing training in digital pedagogy, mental health literacy and classroom technology management
- Organize parental workshops on cyberbullying, privacy and balanced screen-time, encouraging family media plans Implement school-based mental health interventions such as CBT, SEL programs, peer support groups and family therapy to promote emotional well-being

4.4 Conclusion

The study highlights the interplay between mental health, internet addiction and parenting styles, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach. Democratic parenting fosters structured guidance, accountability and responsible internet use, while permissive styles increase vulnerability to addiction's adverse effects. A collaborative effort among parents, teachers and counsellors is crucial. Teachers can identify early signs of addiction, while schools promote digital literacy. Parental involvement and awareness campaigns are essential for guiding children's digital habits. A holistic approach integrating academic, social and emotional support can help students build resilience and maintain a healthy relationship with technology, enhancing overall well-being.

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