



The relationship between internet addiction, family relations, and psychological well-being in adolescents

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Original Article

Abstract

BACKGROUND: Internet is one of available modern communicational media that has created a new world for users; so that this virtual world may have irrecoverable implications. Hence, this study was conducted to examine the relationship between internet addiction, family relations, and psychological well-being among the adolescents.

METHODS: In this descriptive and correlational study, statistical population consisted of all adolescents in Urmia City, Iran. The sample size obtained to 65 adolescents, who were addicted to internet; they were enrolled using convenient sampling method in some schools in Urmia. To collect the data, Internet Addiction Test (IAT), Family Assessment Device (FAD), and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) were employed. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression tests through SPSS software.

RESULTS: There was a reverse significant relationship between internet addiction and family relations (-0.878) and subjective well-being among the adolescents ($P < 0.050$ for both).

CONCLUSION: According to obtained findings, it can be stated that internet addiction may lead to reduction in family relations and subjective well-being among the adolescents.

KEYWORDS: Addiction, Internet, Family Relations, Adolescent Well Being, Adolescent

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Introduction

Subjective well-being means cognitive and emotional understanding of life and health by the person, based on two components of cognition and emotion.¹ Cognitive aspect of subjective well-being indicates general evaluation of life satisfaction, and emotional aspect expresses high experience of positive

affect and low experience of negative affect.² Bordwine and Huebner believe that people with high subjective well-being have a higher control sense experiencing more life satisfaction and success.³

Family is based on the deepest mental and social relations, so that a healthy family is the base for healthy persons and society;⁴ family plays a vital role in life of people as the most important social-emotional unit of society. In fact, it can be stated that personality of person is formed in family.^{5,6}

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Family is the base for socialization process in person; so that the role of family is underlined in learning optimal and non-optimal social behaviors, and majority of researchers do agree on this matter that aggressive and offensive behaviors are rooted in family environment.⁷

Internet addiction consists of excessive, unreasonable, and problematic use of internet.⁸ This problem was introduced by Ivan Goldberg in 1995.⁹ According to the American Psychological Association, internet addiction is an unhealthy pattern of internet use that leads to functioning disorder along with undesired inner states during a two-month period.¹⁰ Internet addiction is along with some symptoms such as anxiety, depression, irritability, restlessness, obsessive ideologies, withdrawal, emotional disturbance and disruption of social relationships, reduced social relationships in the real world, and reduced educational performance.¹¹ Considering the relationship between excessive use of internet and personal-family relations among adolescents, this study was undertaken to examine the relationship between internet addiction, family relations, and psychological well-being among the adolescents.

Materials and Methods

This was a descriptive and correlational study. Statistical population consisted of all adolescents in Urmia City, Iran, and the sample size obtained to 60 adolescents, who were addicted to internet. They were selected using convenient sampling method in some schools in Urmia; internet addiction of these members was confirmed by Internet Addiction Test (IAT). To collect the data, IAT, Family Assessment Device (FAD), and Warwick-Edinburgh psychological Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) were employed.

IAT: This test is used to assess internet addiction and consists of 20 items preparing by Kimberly Young to evaluate dependency of

persons to internet and computer.¹² Widyanto and McMurrin reported the reliability of IAT equal to 89%;¹² Asgari and Marashain reported the reliability of Persian version of this test as 97% and 97% using two methods of Cronbach's alpha and Ballad methods, respectively.¹³

FAD: This scale consists of 60 items that is designed based on the McMaster model of family functioning to evaluate 7 factors including problem solving, relationship, roles, emotional response, emotional participation, behavior control, and general function.¹⁴ The internal consistency of this test was 72%-92%, and the correlation of obtained scores of questionnaire retest 66%-76%.¹⁵ Zadehmohammadi and Malek Khosravi obtained the correlation coefficient of Persian version of this scale as 56%-80% retesting subscales, and Cronbach's alpha varied between 88% and 90% for subscales and 90% for total scale.¹⁶

WEMWBS: This scale was designed by Tennant et al.,¹⁷ and consisted of 14 items based on a 5-point Likert scale (from never = 1 to always = 5). Minimum and maximum scores of this scale can be 14 and 70, respectively, and higher score shows better mental well-being. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale was 89% and 91% for student sample and population members, respectively; reliability coefficient of retest (after one week) was 83% ($P < 0.001$).¹⁷ The correlation between total score and items of this instrument varied between 80% and 85%; simultaneous calculation of validity coefficient of WEMWBS with general health scale obtained as 43%, 74% for cognitive well-being, 73% for short form of happiness-depression questionnaire, 77% for 5-item world health questionnaire, 48% for emotional intelligence, and 53% for subscale of life satisfaction.¹⁷ Rajabi reported Cronbach's alpha of this scale as 78%, 75% for optimism, 52% for positive relationship with others, and 55% for being energetic;¹⁸ simultaneous validity

Table 1. Pearson correlation between internet addiction and family relations

Variables		Family relations	Internet addiction
Pearson correlation	Internet addiction	-0.878	1
P (2-tailed)		< 0.001	
Number		65	60
Pearson correlation	Family relations	1	-0.878
P (2-tailed)			< 0.001
Number		65	65

coefficient of this scale with 10-item general self-efficacy scale and 12-item social support scale obtained to 55% and 34%, respectively.¹⁸

The obtained data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression tests through SPSS software (version 22, IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA).

Results

Statistical sample consisted of 65 boys at age range of 15-18 year who had the same economic-social level, and 80% of them were educating in first and second grades of high school.

According to table 1, Pearson correlation coefficient was -0.878; and this correlation coefficient was significant ($P < 0.001$); hence, it can be stated that there was a reverse and significant relationship between internet addiction and family relations.

According to table 2, Pearson correlation coefficient obtained as -0.908; and this correlation coefficient was significant ($P < 0.001$); hence, it can be stated that there was a reverse and significant relationship between internet addiction and subjective well-being.

As table 3 shows, both the variables (family relations and mental well-being) had prediction ability and of these variables, subjective well-being (-1.747) had the highest prediction ability.

Discussion

The results indicated a negative significant relationship between family relations and mental well-being; in other words, more internet addiction indicates lower score of family relations and mental well-being. This finding is in line with results of Park et al. study that found parental attitudes; family relationships, family cohesion, and coping with violence are in relation with internet addiction.¹⁹

Moreover, Ling-Yan et al. concluded that people addicted to internet were at a low level in terms of the score of adaptability and cohesion in family.²⁰ Senormanci et al. found that people addicted to internet had higher scores of depression, intensive anxious attachment, and significant disorder in family functioning.²¹

Studies conducted by Weinstein and Lejoyeux²² and Bozkurt et al.²³ showed that internet addiction was related to mood disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Finally, the results of studies undertaken by Ozturk et al.²⁴ and Sharma and Sharma²⁵ indicated a significant negative relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being.

Table 2. The Pearson correlation between internet addiction and subjective well-being

Variables		Subjective well-being	Internet addiction
Pearson correlation	Internet addiction	-0.908	1
P (2-tailed)		< 0.001	
Number		65	65
Pearson correlation	Subjective well-being	1	-0.908
P (2-tailed)			< 0.001
Number		65	65

Table 3. Results of multiple linear regressions to predict internet addiction

Variable	B	Standard error	Beta	T	P
Constant	96.329	2.268		42.482	< 0.001
Family relations	0.350	0.137	0.849	2.560	0.013
Subjective well-being	-2.076	0.394	-1.747	-5.270	< 0.001

These results show that internet addiction is an impulse control disorder and maladaptive pattern of internet usage that leads to a clinical disorder or disease creating psychological, educational, and occupational problems in life of people.²⁶

Conclusion

According to the findings, it is confirmed that there is a negative and significant relationship between internet addiction, family relations, and subjective well-being; in other words, excessive usage of internet would lead to mental disorders and tension in personal and family relationship.

Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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