Overuse of the Internet from Adolescents: Parent-Adolescent Proximity

Vlora Sylaj¹ and Jehona Rrustemi²

Abstract
This study addresses the link between Internet use by adolescents and the adolescent-parent relationship. We consider that adolescents' perception of this relationship plays an important role to the Internet addiction. In addition to descriptive analyzes and the relationship between variables, the level of variance in a criterion variable was also analyzed, which can be explained by predictive variables. The study is ex post facto, which means that the variables were not under our control as researchers, but the data were collected after the fact occurred, ie after we identified the level of Internet use in adolescents and the relationship they have with parents. The results of our study showed that adolescents’ internet addiction is "average" and there is no age limit and it does not depend on gender either. The results showed that the adolescent parent relationship was negatively associated with Internet addiction in adolescents.

Keywords: Internet, Teen, Relationship, Addiction.

INTRODUCTION
Positive parent-child relationships are essential to healthy growth and development for all children (Maholmes, 2014). Adolescents are more vulnerable to internet addiction (IA) as they have less ability to control their enthusiasm for internet activities (Kayastha, 2018). As a notion, by the Internet we mean the vast network of computers around the world which provide easy access to a large amount of information, which enables people to find and use that informations, as well as to communicate with each other. In fact, in terms of internet abuse we do not yet have a standardized definition, but different names are used, such as: compulsive computer use (Rooij et al, 2012), internet addiction (Young, 1999), pathological internet use (Davis et al., 2018), internet dependency (Scherer, 1997), internet use disorder (Brand et al., 2016), problematic internet use (Caplan, 2002), Internet abuse (Forston, et al., 2007).

Everywhere teenagers of today move, at home, at school, they are surrounded by digital technologies such as computers, the Internet, electronic games, cell phones, and other devices (Roberts & Foehr, 2008). As Prensky (2001) states, children are being born and raised in digital culture. Therefore, parents, despite these concerns, are willing to buy home computers and online subscriptions (Buckingham, Scanlon, Sefton-Green, 2001; Livinston, 2003) because, among other things, it is in function and for completing homework (Borzekowski & Robinson, 2005; Jackson, et al., 2006).

We realize that, moderate use of the internet can be beneficial, can bring a variety of convenience in our lives, help us learn and play better, make more friends and so on (Shek & Yu, 2012). The benefits of using the Internet we definitely have, and how it can help students to improve communication skills (Draus, Goreva, Leone, Caputo, 2014), but, what if dependence on it is created, especially in adolescence which marks a period of physical, psychological and social change (Moshman, 1998). This is a period of development in which families need to arrange and adapt their relationships to accommodate new issues of adolescent autonomy (Steinberg, 1998). Some families perceive this transitional process of negotiation and disengagement as an opportunity for their adolescent children to foster emotional autonomy, facilitate individualism, and improve social reasoning (Steinberg, 1998).

Based on the literature we see that the parent-adolescent relationship affects the psychosocial well-being of adolescents. Numerous studies lead us to understand that close parent-child relationships are associated with positive outcomes in psychosocial adjustment of children, adolescents, and adults. Parent-child conflict is

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expected to increase during this period (Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991) and can the internet be influential also? This is exactly the purpose of our study, to better understand the adolescent-parent relationships affected or not by Internet addiction. As variables we have proximity. Researchers Collins and Repinski, 1994 consider companionship, interdependence, affection, intimacy, cohesion, trust as indicators of closeness (Collins & Repinski, 1994).

The question of the current study is: Our study aims to identify the level of excessive internet use by adolescents and the adolescent parent relationship. Based on such objectives, then we raise these research questions: What is the level of internet addiction in adolescents ?; What is the relationship between age and internet addiction in adolescents ?; What is the relationship between gender and internet addiction in adolescents? What is mother adolescent closeness ?; What is father adolescent closeness ?; Does the internet help in proximity or not adolescent - parent? Does the internet help in proximity or not in adolescent-parent relationship?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most recent studies show that Internet addiction or its excessive use, has negative effects in some spheres on the student, from physical aspect, emotional, family life, time management, academic achievement, social functioning negatively affects physical health, symptoms of excessive internet use (Chen, Weng, Su, Wu, & Yang, 2003). The impact of the internet of the Internet is also found in the socialization of adolescents. We have two opposing approaches to the impact of the internet on adolescent socialization. The theory of stimulation which claims that the internet positively influences in this direction and the theory of displacement which argues the opposite Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2011).

That means, a significant relationship has been found between family conflict and the psychological side (Rivera, Guarnaccia, Mulvaney-Day, Lin, Torres, & Alegria, 2008). There are two theories: Displacement Theory and Stimulation Theory which are discussing the effects of the internet in adolescence.

Stimulation theory states that the Internet supports socialization, on the contrary, displacement theory provides arguments that the Internet negatively affects adolescent socialization P. M., & Peter, J. (2011). Every stage, but especially adolescence as a stage, must have social support. The Internet and messaging enable young people to stay in constant contact with their friends. Such conflicts are likely to involve parents’ efforts to protect their authority over their children, as adolescents try to establish their autonomy over the use of their time (Falk, et.al., 2011).

Hillaker., Brophy-Herb, Villarruel, & Haas (2008) find the effect of this connection on the child's social competencies. Or the study of Boulte, Eisenberg, Gregory, and Neumark-Sztainer (2009) ascertains the effect of this connection on the less depressive symptoms of adolescents but also on their higher self-confidence. Day & Padilla-Walker (2009) find that adolescent well-being is affected by the very quality of their parent-child relationship. They are also found se that when one parent’s involvement was low (for whatever reason), the other parent’s involvement made a significant and important contribution to the child’s well-being, particularly in the area of internalizing behaviors. Researchers Goede, et.al., (2005) they carried out a study, who their study where a total of 575 early adolescents (54.1% boys) and 337 middle adolescents (43.3% boys) participated.showed bidirectional associations between adolescents’ perceptions of parent–adolescent relationships and friendships with a predominantly stronger influence from parent–adolescent relationships to friendships than vice versa in early to middle adolescence and an equal mutual influence in middle to late adolescence.

Meanwhile, Eisenberg, Olson, Neumark-Sztainer, Story, & Bearinger (2004) find that eating meals together improves adolescent parent-child relationships and adolescent well-being.

In the study of Boutelle et al., (2009: 304) the findings of their study show that "parent–child connectedness was associated with increased body satisfaction for females, increased self-esteem for males, and decreased depressive symptoms for both males and females. The reciprocal relationship results showed that, among females, self-esteem was associated with increased parent–child connectedness while depressive symptoms predicted decreased parent–child connectedness. In males, body satisfaction was associated with increased parent–child connectedness. Conclusions: Parent–child connectedness and youth emotional functioning
reciprocally influenced each other over the 5-year period of this study. Interventions aimed at strengthening the parent–child relationship throughout adolescence may protect emotional health and prevent longer-term emotional consequences in young adults”.

There are many studies on the benefits in various areas in adolescents as a result, among other things, of their relationship with parents. Adolescents who do not have open communication about their use of the Internet are more likely to engage in risky Internet behaviors (Liau, Khoo, & Ang, 2005). Whereas, Adams and Laursen (2007) in their study participants were 469 11- to 18-year-old youths from a culturally diverse community. Negative qualities of parent-adolescent and friend relationships were linked to adjustment problems (aggression, anxiety and depression, delinquency, and withdrawal). Positive qualities of parent-adolescent relationships were linked to school grades and adjustment problems. Also found positive relationships between delinquency, adolescent attraction, and their parents.

The study carried out by Erbad, et.al., (2022) identified the typical interactions between teenagers' addiction to the Internet and factors of the family environment, where 165 parents were included in the study. The study identified three groups. The first group (assertive interaction) involved non-addicted authoritative parents with adolescents at risk of addiction. This group of parents had frequent arguments with the adolescents. The second group (aggressive interaction) included authoritarian parents with Internet addicted adolescents. The third group (lenient interaction) comprised non-addicted permissive parents with highly addicted adolescents. These parents who had constant arguments with adolescents. Meanwhile, the study carried out by nga Nguyen (2022) the characteristics of the relationship between children and their parents since using the Internet were divided into three levels: deterioration (7.0%), stability (78.2%), and improvement (14.8%). Two-way interactive activities, such as supporting parents to use the Internet, have a positive impact on the parent–child relationship.

Lei & Wu (2007) designed the study to address the impacts of father-adolescent attachment on adolescents' Internet use. Seven hundred twelve adolescent participants completed questionnaires to assess the associations among their paternal attachment, intensity of Internet use, and Internet services preference. The result revealed that alienation positively predicted pathological Internet use (PIU) directly and also indirectly mediated by leisure services preference. Trust predicted PIU negatively. Adolescents' safety and trust in their relationship with their fathers is negatively associated with negative outcomes of Internet use. This leads us to believe that adolescents' insecurity and distrust of their fathers are influential factors in their improper use of the Internet.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The study is designed to examine the correlation between Internet addiction and parent-child relationships. The study incorporates a combination of designs, starting with the exploratory and descriptive, moving to the correlational. In addition to descriptive analysis and the relationship between variables, we also analyzed the level of variance in a criterion variable, which was explained by the predictor variables. The study is ex post facto, which means that the variables were not under our control as researchers, but we collected the data after the fact occurred, i.e. after we identified the dependence on students.

Research Questions

Our study aims to identify the level of excessive internet use by adolescents and the adolescent parent relationship. Based on such objectives, then we raise these research questions:

What is the level of internet addiction in adolescents?; What is the relationship between age and internet addiction in adolescents?; What is the relationship between gender and internet addiction in adolescents? What is mother adolescent closeness?; What is father adolescent closeness?; Does the internet help in proximity or not adolescent-parent?

Participants

The population of our research consists of all public educational institutions in our country, respectively of all lower secondary schools. From this large number of these public institutions, as a champion of our research
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we have selected the probability sample which shows that it is representative of all adolescents of lower secondary schools in the municipality of Pristina. This sample has been selected for reasons of more representative coverage. From this sample was then selected the research sample which consisted of 4 schools in the municipality of Pristina, where in each of these schools were selected from 62 adolescents and the same number of their parents. The study was conducted with adolescents aged 14/17 in order to identify the problem of excessive use of the Internet and relationship with parents. The survey was anonymous which was self-administered in May-June 2019. A total of 248 adolescents and 496 parents were included in the study. Initially, written approval was obtained from the school as well as informed consent from the parents.

**Questionnaire Description**

There are several reasons why we used the questionnaire to gather information for this study.

The questionnaire is an efficient approach to data collection and enables us to collect data in a short time and can cover a wide population. The questionnaire also enables participants to deal with questions without manipulating answers (Creswell, 2003). Given its disadvantages as well, during using the questionnaire they do not give participants the opportunity to be flexible and offer their opinions and interpretations (Creswell, 2003).

The survey was thought intended to be conducted not only in public schools but also in private schools with an extension in the district of Pristina, due to the larger number of students in this district but also the greater distribution of Internet centers compared to other areas.

To identify at what level is internet addiction among teenagers, we used the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) questionnaire by Dr. Kimberly Young. The questionnaire is preceded by an ethical statement which has taken into account all ethical issues of the research, ie the consent of each participant to be part of the research has been obtained and to have the opportunity to leave the research at any time when he or she sees as reasonable. At the beginning of the questionnaire is also written the purpose of the research which shows the reason for what we are collecting data.

The first part of the questionnaire contains general demographic information about the respondent such as gender, age, place of residence and the type of school in which they study, public or private. The second part gives us information about the level of adolescent dependence on the Internet, where we were based on 20 questions to identify students who are easily, moderately and severely addicted to the Internet.

The instrument in itself includes the Liqueur Scale with 5 alternatives, from strongly agree,… to I do not agree at all. The points in the questionnaire range from 20-100.

The result from < 49 is considered normal, 50-79 is considered problematic, and 80-100 is considered significantly problematic (very problematic).

The assertions in the Internet Addiction Test as a method for data collection are of the type as:

How often do you neglect household chores to spend more time online ?; How often do you happen to stay online longer than you thought you would stay? ..

Whereas, in order to get acquainted with the perceptions of adolescents about their relationship with parents, we used the Child Parental Acceptance-Rejection / Control Questionnaire (PARQ / Control; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). Included here are the main issues of this research, which assess the Warmth / Affection adolescent parent with a total of 20 self-report articles. The Warmth / Affection score could range from a low of 20, indicating low levels of perceived maternal / paternal warmth, to a high of 80, indicating high levels of perceived maternal / paternal warmth. Participants' questions were assessed through the Liqueur scale (Almost Always True = 4, Sometimes True = 3, Rarely True = 2 and Almost Never True = 1), assessing the quality of the adolescent parent relationship, such as: 1) Makes it easy for me to tell her / him things that are important; 5) Makes me feel proud when I do well; 6) Praises me to others…. Reliability in the current sample for parental warmth scale was z = .79, which means the research tool is highly reliable.

The questionnaire was distributed and administered by the researcher of this paper, it was held in the school premises, respectively in one of the classrooms of the selective schools where the leaders of these schools were
not present. The time for completing the questionnaire was 29-30 minutes, which according to the participants was enough time. Before starting the data collection through the questionnaire, first the questionnaire was piloted in a certain school and then some necessary changes and additions were made to the questionnaire. After that, the distribution of questionnaires to other selection schools continued.

Statistical Analysis

Quantitative processing was enabled by the numerical administration of the data obtained from the instrument, their transfer to the computer, from where various statistical techniques were applied (including Excel programs, SPSS 22) for data analysis. Data analysis was performed through descriptive analysis, cross tabs, Chi-Square independence tests, hypothesis construction and testing, factor analysis, etc. Not just a descriptive analysis but also an analytical analysis. We used descriptive analysis to describe the demographic characteristics and use of the Internet by adolescents and adolescents' perceptions / approaches to relationship with parents. Whereas, for inferential statistics we use the Chi Square Test ($\chi^2$) and the relationship between excessive internet use and adolescents' relationship with family has been examined with Pearson correlation.

Limitations of the Study

The questionnaire was anonymous with proper confidentiality but there may have been biased reporting, meaning our reliance on reported teen data may be a limitation in our study. Then, there were may have opportunities that the perception of the parent-adolescent relationship was not a real reflection of this relationship.

Importance of the Study

The Internet today is very widespread in the lives of young people in the world and among our young people in Kosovo. Undoubtedly, computer technology and the Internet in general, bring positive changes in the quality of life of society in general. But studies in the last decade have shown that we have a drastic increase in the use of the Internet and technology in general, alluding to the shortcomings of this use such as dependence on it and its impact on the adolescent parent relationship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first objective of the study was to ascertain the level of internet dependence in adolescents. Based on the results of our research, it turns out that adolescents were not addicted to the Internet at the "severe" level. As can be seen, the average level of internet dependence dominates with 79.4% among girls and 83.3% among teenage boys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Internet Addiction</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very low (0-1)</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (2-10)</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (11-49)</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (50-79)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high (80-100)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationships Between Gender and Internet Addiction

To see the internet dependence on gender we refer to the Pearson Chi Square coefficient analysis where we noted that the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) $p = 0.139 > p = 0.05$ which is also the critical value up to which the relationship between these two variables makes sense. So seeing that this value is greater we say that, the fact that pupils think about the internet does not depend on gender.
Relationships Between Age and Internet Addiction

Regarding the objective if the use of the Internet depends on the age of the children, we refer to the findings which through the Chi-Square Test show that these variables are independent, \( p = 0.582 > p = 0.05 \) which means that the use of the Internet is comprehensive for adolescent age and there is no age restriction. So, any of the children of this age (14-17 years old) consumes the internet.

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix – Mother Adolescent Closeness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mother Reports</th>
<th>Adolescent Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1.</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2.</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3.</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4.</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5.</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6.</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 7.</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 8.</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 9.</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 10.</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix – father adolescent closeness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Father Reports</th>
<th>Adolescent Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1.</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2.</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3.</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4.</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5.</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6.</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 7.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 8.</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 9.</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 10.</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other objective of the study was to examine the correlation between mother-adolescent closer and the level of internet use by adolescents. Through correlation analysis the correlation between variables is understood. Data on Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in the following table \( r (809) = -0.321, \) \( f < .001 \)

Table 4: Correlation Among Mother-Adolescent Closeness and the Level of Internet Use by Adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phi Cramer's V</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother-Adolescent closer and the level of internet use by adolescents.</td>
<td>-.809</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the correlation analysis, the correlation between the variables between father-adolescent closer and the level of internet use by adolescents is understood. Data on Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in the following table \( r (809) = -0.321, \) \( f < .001 \)

Table 3: Correlation Among Father-Adolescent Closeness and the Level of Internet Use by Adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phi Cramer's V</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother-Adolescent closer and the level of internet use by adolescents.</td>
<td>-.764</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between Internet addiction in adolescents and their relationship with parents. The first objective of this study was to examine the level of Internet dependence on adolescents. The findings show a non-"severe" level of dependence in adolescents. These results are also found in Rebisz and Siroka (2016). Also at researchers Kayastha, Gurung, Chawal (2018).

Another aim of the current study was to find out if there is a connection between the use of the Internet with the age of adolescents. It has been found that internet use does not depend on the age of the adolescents. We refer to the findings which through the Chi-Square Test show that these variables are independent, (p = 0.549 > p = 0.05) which means that the use of the Internet is comprehensive for adolescents and there is no age limit. So, any of the children of this age (14-15 years old) consumes the internet. These findings are in line with the findings of Kayastha, Gurung, Chawal (2018) who found that there is no significant association was found with gender.

In our study as a variable for the parent-adolescent relationship we received only warmth. Thus the focus of this study was to study the relationship between Mother-Adolescent closer and the level of internet use by adolescents. Parent-adolescent relationship as a variable. To identify possible relationships between these variables.

This variable we find addressed by researchers who have dealt with adolescence and their relationship with parents (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2002; Fletcher et al., 2004). And, the most important findings from the current study are those which show that excessive internet use has a significant negative relationship with mother-Adolescent closer and father-Adolescent closer. r (58) = -0.763, p = 0.846 (two-tailed).

A negative link between the Internet and the adolescent parent relationship is also found in Kim (2011), then in Huang et al. (2019) which they find results indicated that parent-children relationship was positively related to self-concept and was negatively related to internet addiction.

Youniss (1987) found that adolescents perceived relationships with fathers differently and with mothers differently.

Videon (2005) found that adolescents have more volatile relationships with their fathers than with their mothers. In the study of the authors Liu & Kuo, 2007, a negative relationship was found between the level of internet dependence among students and the relationship with parents.

Another study by Stattin & Klackenberg (1992) shows that more than 75% of young people in each period of adolescence describe "good" relationships with mothers and fathers, while less than 10% reported a "bad" one. So, previous researchs shows different connections between the teenager and the mother / father. We find this fact in the current study. The findings of our study show a small difference, where a higher warmth in the mother is investigated, based on the perceptions of the respondents.

Also in Mesch (2006) we find that the adolescent parent relationship is related to the time and frequency of Internet use by adolescents. This researcher found that the presence of the Internet at home did not affect the closeness between adolescents and parents in the family (Mesch, 2003). Our study consists of the findings of Moawad (2016) who “concluded that there was a highly statistical correlation between adolescents' technology usage and social interaction with their parents”

CONCLUSION

The current study tried to identify the level of adolescents' dependence on the Internet and the relationship of this exploitation in the relationship with parents. The results of this study highlight the relationship between adolescent parent closeness and Internet addiction.

The findings show a non-"severe" level of dependence in adolescents. It has been found that internet use does not depend on the age of the adolescents.
Also, the findings of our study show a small difference, where a higher warmth in the mother is investigated, based on the perceptions of the respondents.

And, the most important findings from the current study are those which show that excessive internet use has a significant negative relationship with mother-adolescent closer and father-adolescent closer.

REFERENCES


