

Psychological Factors In The Formation Of Internet Addiction Among Adolescents: An Analysis Of Empirical Data

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Abstract: This study analyzes research on the psychological factors that contribute to the development of internet addiction in adolescents. The level of internet use among adolescents and their state of dependence were determined. The indicators between genders were compared.

Keywords: adolescence, internet addiction, addictive behavior, psychological factors, social factors, emotional instability, self-esteem, impulsivity, psychological dependence.

Internet addiction among adolescents is a complex, multifactorial psychological problem that is becoming increasingly pressing in the context of a modern, information-driven society. This condition develops in close connection with an individual's psychological characteristics, the influence of the social environment, and the specific developmental features of adolescence. In particular, adolescents' emotional instability, the active process of self-awareness, an increased need for communication, and their striving for independence manifest as factors that draw them more into the virtual environment. The vast possibilities of the internet environment—namely, the ability to obtain information quickly, interact on social networks, express oneself freely, and temporarily distract from real-life problems—create an attractive psychological space for adolescents. However, these very factors, in some cases, lead to uncontrolled and excessive use, resulting in a stable psychological dependence—internet addiction. Additionally, social factors such as a lack of parental supervision, improper parenting methods, peer influence, and a failure to organize free time meaningfully also play a significant role in the development of internet addiction. As a result, such dependence can negatively affect adolescents' emotional state, socialization, academic performance, and personal development. Overall, the development of internet addiction in adolescents is the result of the interplay of individual, social, and age-specific factors, indicating the need for a comprehensive, systematic, and scientifically grounded approach to its prevention and remediation.

We conducted research to study the psychological factors that contribute to internet addiction in adolescents. In the first phase of our study, we used the Internet Addiction Test developed by K. Young. K. Young's internet addiction test is designed to determine adolescents' level of internet use and their state of dependency.

In this study, we analyzed empirical data on the psychological factors that contribute to the development of internet addiction in adolescents.

Results of K.S. Young's Internet Addiction Severity Test in adolescent girls

Table 1.

Indicator	Number	As a percentage
High level of internet addiction	2	3.92%
Moderate level of addiction	25	49.02%
Low level of addiction	24	47.06%
Total	51	100%

According to the table results, the level of internet addiction among the 51 adolescent girls participating in the study manifested in various ways. According to the analysis of the obtained data, the majority of the participants were classified in the moderate and low levels of internet addiction groups. Specifically, two adolescent girls (3.92%) exhibited a high level of internet addiction. Although this figure is small in number, it indicates that these students are likely to use the internet excessively, become overly attached to the virtual environment, and pay less attention to real-life activities. High levels of addiction can negatively affect adolescents' emotional state, academic performance, social relationships, and psychological well-being. In such cases, it becomes difficult to control internet use, and the virtual environment takes precedence in the adolescent's life.

According to this table, 25 adolescent girls (49.02%) were found to have a moderate level of internet addiction. This is the highest figure, indicating that nearly half of the participants have certain problems with their internet use. Adolescents in this group actively use the internet as a daily necessity, but in some cases they may have difficulty controlling their time usage. Additionally, prolonged internet use may lead to disrupted sleep patterns, reduced attention in school, or an excessive inclination toward virtual communication. This finding indicates the risk of developing internet addiction and highlights the need to organize preventive psychological interventions. At the same time, low-level internet dependence was observed in 24 adolescent girls (47.06%). This indicator shows that a significant portion of adolescents use the internet primarily in a moderate way. Members of this group use the internet primarily for educational purposes, information seeking, and meeting communication needs, and they can control their usage time. They rarely experience disruptions to daily activities or psychological discomfort due to internet use. The research results showed that the proportion of adolescent girls with a high level of internet addiction was relatively low, but there was a high share of moderate-level addiction. This indicates that it is important to shape an internet-use culture, develop time-management skills, and conduct preventive and psychocorrective work with adolescents. The results confirm that modern information technologies play an important role in adolescents' lives and that it is necessary to study the psychological aspects of internet use among them in depth.

Results of the Internet Addiction Severity Test in adolescent boys by K.S. Young
Table 2.

Indicator	Number	As a percentage
High level of internet addiction	0	0%
Moderate level of addiction	26	52%
Low level of addiction	24	48%
Total	50	100%

In this table, the level of internet use among adolescent boys was examined based on K.S. Young's methodology. According to the data obtained, no cases of high-level internet addiction were recorded among the participants. In other words, none of the 50 adolescents participating in the study exhibited internet use that was severely out of control. This indicates that although they use the internet as a daily necessity, a strong psychological attachment has not formed.

According to the results, moderate internet addiction was identified in 26 adolescents, which represents 52 percent of the cases. This indicator accounted for the largest share. Such a finding indicates that adolescents use the internet actively and, in some cases, have difficulty limiting their screen time. In particular, it may be observed that a large portion of free time is spent on social networks, online games, or virtual communication. This gradually increases the importance of the Internet in daily life. In addition, 24 adolescents (48%) were found to have a low level of Internet dependence. Members of this group primarily use the internet to search for necessary information, study, or communicate, and they can control how long

they use it. They show almost no significant negative changes in academic performance or social relationships due to the internet.

Overall analysis showed that although internet use has become an important part of daily life for adolescent boys, no cases of high-level addiction were detected. At the same time, the high average score indicates the need to adhere to internet usage guidelines, monitor time allocation, and carry out preventive educational efforts.

S. Young’s Results of Comparing Gender Differences in the Internet Addiction Severity Test

Table 3

Indicator	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)	Total (%)
Internet addiction in adolescent boys	23,76	25,74	0	49,50
Internet addiction in adolescent girls	23,76	24,76	1,98	50,50
Total	47,52	50,50	1,98	100

The table below shows the distribution of internet addiction levels among adolescents by gender. The results are analyzed separately for low, medium, and high levels, allowing for the identification of overall trends. According to the table, the distribution of internet addiction levels among adolescent boys and girls appears similar. The low addiction level is the same in both groups, at 23.76%. This indicates that nearly a quarter of the respondents use the internet at a moderate level and do not exhibit strong psychological attachment. The moderate level of internet addiction was 25.74% among boys and 24.75% among girls. This result shows that the largest share in both genders falls in the moderate category.

That is, most adolescents use the internet regularly, but their use has not yet reached a level of strong addiction. At the same time, this indicator is slightly higher among boys, indicating that their inclination toward the internet is relatively stronger. High-level internet addiction was observed only in the adolescent girls group, accounting for 1.98%, while the figure was 0% for boys. This result indicates that severe internet addiction is a very rare phenomenon, primarily manifesting in a few individual respondents.

However, the presence of such a situation among girls indicates that the risk of excessive internet use may be linked to certain personal psychological factors. Focusing on the overall results, the low level accounted for 47.52%, the medium level for 50.49%, and the high level for 1.98%. This indicates that the majority of adolescents belong to the moderate level of addiction. Thus, although internet use has become an integral part of daily life for most teenagers, it has not yet reached a severe level of addiction.

According to the analysis results, internet addiction among adolescents is predominantly at a moderate level, with low-level users also constituting a significant share. The rarity of high-level addiction indicates that internet use has not yet gotten out of control. At the same time, the detection of high levels of addiction among girls indicates the need for preventive psychological interventions.

K.S. Young “Internet Addiction Level Assessment Test” student t difference Table 4

Gender	N	M	SD	t	p
Girls	51	55.24	14.37		
Boys	50	51.92	13.79	1.45	0.15

According to the calculations, the average level of internet addiction in adolescent girls ($M = 55.24$) was slightly higher than that in boys ($M = 51.92$). This indicates that the tendency related to internet use is relatively stronger among girls. At the same time, the standard deviation values (girls $SD=14.37$; boys $SD=13.79$) indicate that the distribution of results is almost identical in both groups. This implies that individual differences within the groups are of a similar magnitude.

The Student's t-test result ($t = 1.45$; $p = 0.15$) indicates that the observed difference is not statistically significant. In other words, there is no significant difference in internet addiction levels between girls and boys. Based on the obtained results, although the internet addiction index is slightly higher among girls, this difference is not statistically significant. Thus, the level of internet addiction exhibited a nearly identical trend across genders.

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