

Teenagers' Internet Use in Albania

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Abstract: Albania, like most countries in the world, is experiencing a new wind today, the wind of the Internet. (Ahmet Adalier, Ece Emre Muezzin, 2012). Considering the reality that we are experiencing in the last years, when most of the countries experienced a total or partial isolation due to the covid 19 pandemic, the use of the Internet has increased significantly by all categories and ages of people. In particular, teenagers, pupils, students, by necessarily switching to online learning, have significantly increased the use of the Internet during this period. This has certainly affected their studies, their social development, their education as well as their psychological development. Many studies suggest that during the years that adolescents develop intensively, the presence of the virtual world outlines new forms of behavior (Cenameri, 2013). The main purpose of this study is to determine the main factors that influence the use of the Internet by adolescent children aged 12-15 years, this study also aims to study the rate of Internet use in this age group as well as the impact on their learning performance. To carry out this study, a questionnaire was used, which was addressed to the age group 12-15 years old students in Tirana, in some of the main schools with the highest indicators of student performance in the last ten years in Albania.

Key Words: Teenager, Internet use, study performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Various expert works describe internet addiction as the epidemic of the 21st century (Agaj, 2016). The genesis of studies of the phenomenon of Internet addiction dates back to the mid-1990s, when Young first used the term. (Kimberly S. Young, Robert C. Rodgers, 1998) linked Internet addiction to poor impulse control. Later, Young and Rogers used an alternative term, such as "pathological Internet use", to emphasize the extent of addiction in the psychiatric aspect, in which problematic Internet use was associated with significant social, psychological and functional impairments. Building a bridge between the general definition of the term "addiction", similar to (Chao-Tsung Hsiao, Georges L. Chahine, Han-Lieh Liu, 2000), in this study, Internet addiction is considered as "the inability of an individual to control the use of the Internet, i.e. the time spent on Internet or the problematic use of the Internet by adolescents (Orhan Iyitoğlu, Nadir Çeliköz, 2017). This phenomenon has been addressed by several multifaceted studies that have outlined and concretized its theoretical side (Agaj, 2016). *Keeping working time:* This function is carried out by controlling the working time of the personnel at the different operational levels by determining the accounts where the personnel expenditure and the typology of the expenditure will be included.

The Internet is one of the contemporary innovations in the world of information technology. Researchers and academics have debated the increased use of the Internet, positively and

negatively affecting the academic performance of students. According to some researchers, the Internet plays a very important role in the field of education (Dorji, 2015). In her paper, Desara Agaj, referring to Ozcan's study, writes that recently the time spent on the Internet, which causes addiction, is spreading at a very fast rate and it is now a fact that this phenomenon negatively affects such areas of the individual's life, such as in the interpersonal, academic, professional (Agaj, 2016). (Shelley E. Taylor, Rena L. Repetti, Teresa Seeman, 1997) considered a virtual classroom as the next step in the development of educational technology (MM Awais, MA Aamir, A Aamir, 2001).

2. Research Literature

In their study (Kausar Suhail, Zobia Bargees, 2006) reported that the use of the Internet positively affects education by increasing student-student and student-teacher communication, increasing access to libraries, improving study hours and study habits. Despite the positive impact of the Internet on academic work, research findings have shown that excessive Internet use negatively affects physical health, family life, and academic performance. Problems related to academic performance include falling behind in studying, drastically dropping grades, and poor integration into extracurricular activities (Dorji, 2015). Of course, born under the spirit of a world where everything is a click away, teenagers are the target group most sensitive to this phenomenon. The current scenario shows that the

number of teenagers accessing the Internet multiplies every year (Dorji, 2015). Social networks are quite useful as long as you command them and put them to use when needed. If it is the opposite, many years of life go by without personal activity. The fact that teenagers spend a lot of time "surfing" on the Internet is worrying. If a teenager spends hours on the Internet and fails to be productive in his studies, he is not productive in society, that is, in social relations, and this isolates him. So, this technology is changing the way individuals socialize, study, work, spend their free time. (Maysam Musai, Mohammad Darkesh, 2014) conducted research on the effect of the Internet on the academic performance of students in Tehran. The result showed that students with better academic grades spent more time online than others. Also, more than half of the respondents in the research considered the Internet the most important source of information for knowledge, wisdom and broad entertainment (Young, 1998). In 2008, the study of the World Internet Project (WIP), a global international study carried out in 13 countries of the world, on the impact of the Internet on individuals and society, presented the level of Internet use among teenagers in the age group of 12-14 years. The results proved that these percentages were much higher than expected. Compared to the rest of society, teenagers are the early adopters of the virtual world, they do not need instructions or manuals, for explanations on how to use a mobile phone, a digital camera, so they cannot understand their life without the Internet (Cenameri, 2013). Definitions for Internet addiction have been given by various researchers and psychologists since the moment when studies on this phenomenon began to be carried out in the United States of America, in the years 1998 (Agaj, 2016). Studies on Internet addiction have grown widely over the past few years because the Internet has become a part of everyday life. Internet addiction can affect people of all ages, genders and social economic status (S. A. Wolf 2001). Internet addiction has been identified as a legitimate psychological disorder with significant implications for an individual's cognitive, emotional and social development. Referring to the study of (Bahadir Bozoglan, Veysel Demirer, Ismail Sain, 2013) it is found that although there are different views on the meaning of "Internet addiction" or "pathological use of the Internet" the terms refer to the concept that a person cannot control his use online, leading to severe distress and functional impairment (Young, 1998). Building a bridge between the general definition of the term "addiction", similar to (Chao-Tsung Hsiao, Georges L. Chahine, Han-Lieh Liu, 2000), Internet addiction is considered in this study as "the inability of an

individual to control the use of the Internet, which ultimately causes psychological difficulties, social and academic (Ilyitoğlu, Orhan, and Nadir Çeliköz, 2017). Among a number of definitions of Internet addiction, Young's work is of particular importance. He defined Internet addiction as an impulse control disorder. To facilitate Internet addiction research, Young developed the Internet Addiction Test [IAT] in youth, which has been widely used in reported research studies (Young, 2011). Based on the study of Albano Zhapaj, who referred to the study of Lee, it is reported that Young (1998), emphasized that the Internet itself is not problematic, it does not cause addiction, but it is the social networks embedded in various forms on the Internet that attract the attention of users and push them to use them, even to an excessive use. Limited and controlled Internet use can be beneficial, but uncontrolled Internet use can cause a variety of problems, such as academic failure, social isolation, increased depression, loneliness, increased anxiety, and psychiatric disorders. The literature suggests that there are several components of Internet addiction (Md. Sahab Uddin, Abdullah Al Mamun, Mohammed Ashraful Iqbal, Md. Nasrullah, Md. Asaduzzaman, Md. Shahid Sarwar, Md. Shah Amran, 2016). (Block, 2008) argues that Internet addiction has four components: (1) excessive Internet use, often associated with neglect; (2) withdrawal, including feelings of anger, tension, or depression (3) tolerance, including the need for better computer hardware, more software, or more hours of use; and (4) negative consequences including, lying, poor academic achievement, social isolation and fatigue (Şahin, 2011). Internet addiction has emerged as a potential problem for children and adolescents in recent years. Internet addiction is a psychological disorder, manifested as an obsessive desire to spend time on the Internet. Common's study showed that children aged 8-18 spend about 8 hours a day online. However, as a conclusion, studies say that definitions for Internet addiction differ in research studies and there is no unified meaning of the term or a unified method of examining Internet addiction (Mishra, 2014).

3. Material and Methods

The purpose of the study is to determine the factors that have brought about the increase in the use of the Internet in the age group of 12-15 years and to examine the relationship between the addiction to the Internet and the educational performance of the teenagers in Tirana. Hypothesis of this study are:

Null hypothesis (H01): Internet addiction does not affect the academic performance of adolescents or positively affects the academic performance of adolescents.

Research hypothesis (HA2): The level of family income affects the rate of Internet use of teenagers.

Null hypothesis (H01): The level of family income does not affect the rate of internet use of teenagers.

Dependent variable: Internet addiction.

Independent variables: Demographic variables (gender, place of residence), parents' employment, parents' education, academic performance.

The participants selected for the sample (representative group) to carry out the study are the students of the 12-15-year-old age group of the main Schools in Tirana for the three months of March-May 2023. The study was conducted in three schools due to the possibility of gathering of data. The total number of respondents is 268 students. For the selection of the sample, the probabilistic method was used, which means simple random sampling, a technique where every student has an equal chance to be selected in the sample. Simple random sampling was chosen because this sample has the advantage of eliminating the possibility of distortion that may come from favoring some personal characteristic. To ensure the list of subjects, the register with the names of each student served. The sample unit is all the students in the age group of 12-15 years, that is, the fifth-seventh grade students who study in this school.

4. Result and Discussion:

To measure the level of Internet Addiction, the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) questionnaire by Dr. Kimberly Young (1998). The Internet Addiction Instrument (IAT) consists of 20 statements, where for each statement, the respondent circled one of the scales, never, rarely, sometimes, often, very often, always. The questions are categorized according to the Likert scale, ranging from 0 = least extreme behavior to 5 = most extreme behavior, and the more points the respondent received, the higher the level of Internet addiction (Akhter, 2013). The total score of the Internet Addiction Scale (IAT) is the sum of the ratings given by the examiner to the 20 questionnaire responses. Each element is evaluated on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 5. The maximum score is 100 points (Akhter, 2013).

The degree of Internet addiction is scored in accordance with the scoring guide on four main levels, where from 0 to 30 points reflects a normal level or no addiction, from 31 to 49 points indicates

the presence of a mild level of Internet addiction, 50 up to 79 points represents the presence of a moderate level of addiction and 80 to 100 points indicates a high level of Internet addiction (Noreen, 2013). The data analysis was carried out with the quantitative method, by means of the statistical program. The processing consisted in the calculation of central tendency measurements (means and standard deviations), frequencies and percentage values of demographic variables which are among the descriptive statistical methods used for data evaluation. The Pearson correlation (r) was used, which serves to measure the strength and direction between two variables, specifically the study variables (academic performance, employment and parental education) and Internet addiction. To determine whether there were statistically significant differences between two groups, t-tests for independent groups were calculated. The t-test analysis in this study was used to test gender and place of residence differences in levels of Internet Addiction among adolescents. To see the strength of the relationship between the study variables, the Pearson correlation was used, which serves to measure the strength and direction between two variables. The coefficient takes values from -1 to 1. When it is close to +1 it indicates that the correlation is positive (strong positive relationship between the two variables), 0 there is no relationship (no relationship between the two variables), -1 negative correlation (relationship of strong negative between variables). By calculating the correlation coefficient between Internet Addiction (IAT) and the employment of parents of teenagers, the analysis found that there is a strong positive correlation ($r=0.669^{**}$; $p<0.01$). This means that the higher the level of parental employment, the higher the level of Internet Addiction and the lower the level of parental employment, the lower it will be. the level of Internet Addiction among teenagers. The level of income affects the level of Internet use by students, the relationship is found to be significant and fair, which means that if the level of income increases, the rate of Internet use also increases.

The equation of the model is of the form:
 $Y=1.7285+0.000017*X1 - 0.0044*X2$

Attitude = $1.7285 + 0.000017*Income - 0.0044*Age$

The significance coefficient of the model results $F=9.66001922776276E-12$, less than 0.05, also the level of income greatly affects the time spent on the Internet, and this is confirmed by the P-value ($P\text{-value} = 1.334E-12$), which is smaller than 0.05. so, this variable is significant for the model. The other variable, age, is not significant for the model as the

P value is greater than 0.05. This is also reflected in the determinant coefficient R², which results in a value of 17.42%, which shows that the connection of the variables is not very strong. The model as a whole turns out to be significant.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Statistical data of the model:

<i>Multiple R</i>	<i>0.417388954</i>
<i>R 2</i>	<i>0.174213539</i>
<i>R2 Adjusted</i>	<i>0.167981188</i>
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>0.803836368</i>
<i>Observations</i>	<i>268</i>

This study aimed to determine the level of Internet addiction and to examine the relationship between Internet addiction and the academic performance of adolescents aged 12-15 years at the schools in Tirana, as well as to show the relationship between the level of income and the rate of internet use by this age group. Data were collected using this instrument: the Internet Addiction Scale (IAT). The IAT is a self-report instrument used to measure levels of Internet Addiction. The results obtained from the Internet Addiction Scale (IAT) showed that the majority of teenagers have increased their level of Internet use during the pandemic period. They showed high level of addiction because about 40% of them spend more than 4 hours of their active time during a day on the Internet. The degree of their Internet addiction is significantly related to the level of their family income, which means that as the level of income increases, the number of hours they spend on the Internet increases. Children indicated that they experienced negative causes of increased Internet use, such as insomnia, lack of concentration, headaches, virtual harassment and bullying. Also, students reported that they use most of their time on the Internet for entertainment (games, movies, music, videos) and only a moderate amount of time for assignments and projects. From all online platforms and networks, YouTube and TikTok are the most clicked, 34% and 21% respectively, followed by Instagram, Snapchat and Google. It seems that the use of Facebook in this age group has suffered a significant decrease, only 1% of them. The results of the study showed that the time spent on the Internet increased significantly during the pandemic period. From the data analysis, no statistically significant differences were found between the levels of the Internet Addiction scale according to the place of residence, village or city. The results of the study showed that there is a negative correlational relationship between

Internet Addiction and the learning performance of the teenagers involved in the study, thus proving the hypothesis of the study. This means that the higher the internet addiction, the lower the academic performance of teenagers and vice versa. Data analysis found that there is a positive correlation between the level of income in the family and the time spent on the Internet. This means that as the level of income in the family increases, the time spent on the Internet increases. The association of age with time spent online was not statistically significant.

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