Relationship between Internet Addiction and Life Satisfaction Among Students: Case of Albania

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Abstract

Nowadays, human life has become very intensive. Since we live in the age of technology and we are part of a global world, the Internet has become an indispensable part of everyday life, bringing many benefits to people. However, its excessive use can often leave to negative consequences that affect the psychological well-being of the individual as well as the evaluation and general perception that the individual has of his life. This article comes as a result of studies in the wake of further research in the field of Internet addiction among teenagers and students in our country. The purpose of this article is to study the relationship between internet addiction among students aged 18-21 in Albania and their level of life satisfaction, as well as specifically the impact that life satisfaction has on internet addiction. In this study participated 268 students from three universities in Albania. Data were collected through online completion of Young's (1998) Internet Addiction Questionnaire, and Diener's (1985) Life Satisfaction Questionnaire. The study highlighted the fact that there is a negative, statistically significant relationship between Internet addiction and the level of life satisfaction in the target group included in the study.

Keywords: Internet addiction, life satisfaction, students.

Internet addiction

Internet addiction has been studied for several decades worldwide and various researchers have contributed to a better understanding of this phenomenon. (Lachman et. al., 2017). In Albania studies about internet addiction have begun in the last decade, but there is still a lot of work to be done in this direction, especially to get to know the reality of Internet addiction in different age groups.

Kuss et. al., (2014) as cited by Agaj (2016) expressed that to describe internet addiction have been used various terms, including compulsive internet use, internet addiction, pathological internet use, problematic internet use, virtual addiction,

internet addiction disorder, etc. Thus, according to Shek & Yu (2012) as cited by Bozoglan, et.al. (2013) although there are different views on Internet addiction and pathological Internet use, the term refers to the fact that a person cannot control his Internet use, thus leading according to Young (1999) to functional impairment. Moreover, Shapira et. al., (2003) point out that Internet addiction can result from a lack of control, anxiety, and social, professional, and financial problems. (Agaj, 2016).

According to Lin & Tsai (2002), individuals with Internet Addiction have the desire to spend more time online and experience feelings of exaltation while using the Internet. They use the Internet in an excessive way and show withdrawal symptoms and admit that the use of the Internet negatively affects such areas of their lives as school, health, and relationships with parents (Bozoglan, et.al., 2013).

Griffiths et., al. (2014) define addictive behavior as any type of behavior with several typical features, among which salience, mood swings, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, conflict, and relapse are worth mentioning. According to them, any behavior that contains these 6 elements meets the criteria for being an addictive behavior (Agaj, 2016).

Christakis describes Internet addiction as the epidemic of the 21st century (Kuss, Griffiths & Binder, 2013). Pontes and Macur (2021) point out that according to recent statistics, about 4.66 billion individuals worldwide use the Internet actively. Thus, the Internet has changed people's lifestyles more than any other medium, and its overuse often brings negative consequences. When its use interferes with interpersonal relationships, at work or at school, it can be classified as an addiction (5 Types Of Internet Addiction - Get Help Today - Addiction Center). According to Young, (2011) despite the fact that Internet addiction does not cause the same physical problems as substance addiction, it is attracting the attention of many experts in the field of mental health due to the similarity in social consequences. (Agaj, 2016, 2022).

Life satisfaction

The term life satisfaction is often very similar to the term happiness in life, but they are fundamentally different. Various researchers over the years have tried to explain the notion of satisfaction in life. As cited by Shahnaz & Karim (2014), life satisfaction is one of the indicators of good mental health. It refers to a judgmental and cognitive process. It is not a personal fact but a cognitive product that includes a comparative process between the current life situation of the individual and the internal standards thus allowing the interviewees to use the information that they subjectively deem appropriate when valuing their lives. Thus, life satisfaction refers to how an individual perceives how his/her life has been and how he/she feels it will be in the future.

Meanwhile, Diener (2002) defines life satisfaction as a cognitive and affective evaluation of an individual's life. Ellison & et. al., (1989) define life satisfaction as a cognitive evaluation of a state that is thought to be relatively stable and influenced by social factors. On the other hand, Ruut Veenhoven (1996) has emphasized that life

satisfaction refers to the degree to which a person positively evaluates the quality of his/her life as a whole. Also, Butell (2016) has defined life satisfaction as a general assessment of feelings and attitudes about life at a particular moment in time, ranking from negative to positive.

Çapan (2010) stated that satisfaction in life is a concept that includes both the cognitive and the emotional evaluation that the individual has for his life. On the other hand, County in 2019 points out that life satisfaction is related to how much the individual likes the life he/she leads. (Alqahtani and his colleagues, 2020). Thus, according to Zatrow et al. (2015), as cited in Kocak et., al. (2021), life satisfaction is a concept that refers to the joy an individual derives from his life and his psychological well-being. Regardless of the definitions, basically, life satisfaction refers to the general feeling that the individual has about his/her life. Life Satisfaction Theory & 4 Contributing Factors (+ Scale) (positivepsychology.com).

Relationship between internet addiction and life satisfaction

Studies on Internet addiction and life satisfaction in some cases appear contradictory in terms of their results. According to Blanchio (2019), the relationship between Internet addiction and life satisfaction depends on culture. Meanwhile, according to Senol-Durak and Durak (2011), Internet addiction has an impact on life satisfaction. According to Lachman and colleagues (2016), life satisfaction has a significant relationship with Internet addiction (Alqahtani et., al. 2020), According to Shanaz & Karim (2014) individuals with Internet addiction have a lower level of life satisfaction. According to Sahin (2017), there is a negative relationship between social media addiction and life satisfaction. Addiction to social media is an important variable that affects life satisfaction. Bozoglan et., al (2013) evidence a negative relationship between life satisfaction and Internet addiction. Noroozi and his colleagues (2021) highlighted the fact that individuals who had high levels of Internet addiction presented low levels of quality of life.

However, according to Cao et., al. (2011), as cited in Alqahtani et., al. (2020), other studies highlight the fact that Internet addiction has a positive relationship with life satisfaction. According to Turan et., al. (2020), the Internet is an inseparable part of life nowadays, which makes human life easier, thus increasing the level of life satisfaction (Alqahtani et., al. 2020).

Aim of the study

The aim of this article was to study the relationship between internet addiction among students aged 18-21 in Albania and their level of life satisfaction, specifically the impact of life satisfaction on internet addiction.

The hypothesis of the study

Internet addiction is negatively related to life satisfaction.

Objectives and research questions

Objective 1: To study the relationship between Internet addiction and life satisfaction.

Research question 1.1: What is the relationship between Internet addiction and life satisfaction?

Objective 2: To study the differences in life satisfaction between students aged 18-21 with and without Internet addiction.

Research question 2.1: Are there differences in life satisfaction levels between individuals with and without Internet addiction?

Methodology

Champion: Part of this study are students in the age group of 18-21 years, randomly selected in the contacts of secretaries in 3 universities in our country. The number of the sample taken in the study is 268, of which 178 are girls and 90 are boys. The quantitative analysis carried out with SPSS is intended to identify the relationship between life satisfaction and Internet addiction.

Instruments: The Internet Addiction Scale (IAS) of Kimberly Young (1998), which consisted of 20 statements, was used to measure the level of Internet addiction. The reliability coefficient was Alpha Cronbach = 0.904 (Agaj, 2016). To measure the level of life satisfaction, the Life Satisfaction Scale of Diener (1985) was used, which consisted of 5 statements, the answers of which were realized with the Likert scale. The Life Satisfaction Scale was translated and adapted into the Albanian language by some professionals in the field and good English speakers. The reliability coefficient was Alpha Cronbach = 0.884.

Data analyses: Data analysis was performed with SPSS and Excel. The distribution was examined after data cleaning. In the following, the reliability coefficient of the instruments was calculated, as well as a series of analyses related to binary logistic regression, t-test, etc.

Data analyses

As seen in the graph below, 89 students or 33% of the sample have resulted with Internet addiction. From these only 11 students or 4% of the sample have resulted in pathological use of the Internet. Meanwhile, more than half of the students included in the study use the Internet, but manage to control its use, thus not creating an addiction to it.

Graph no. 1: *Distribution of the sample according to Internet addiction*
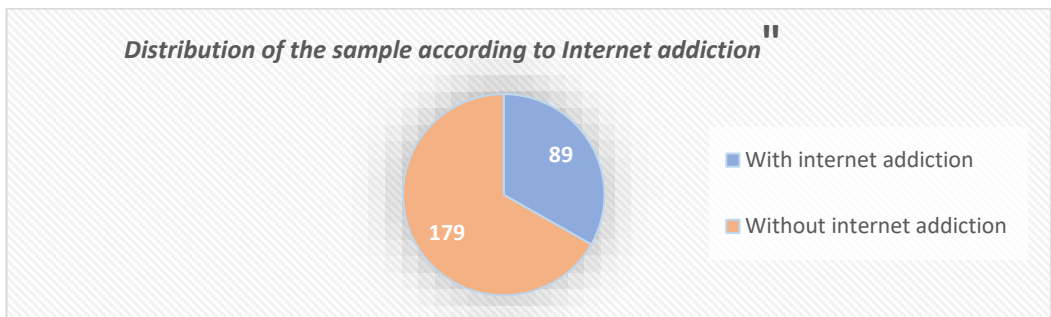
On the other hand, about 38% of the target group included in the study resulted in high levels of life satisfaction, while the majority, about 62%, resulted in low levels of life satisfaction.

Graph no. 2: *Distribution of the sample according to life satisfaction*
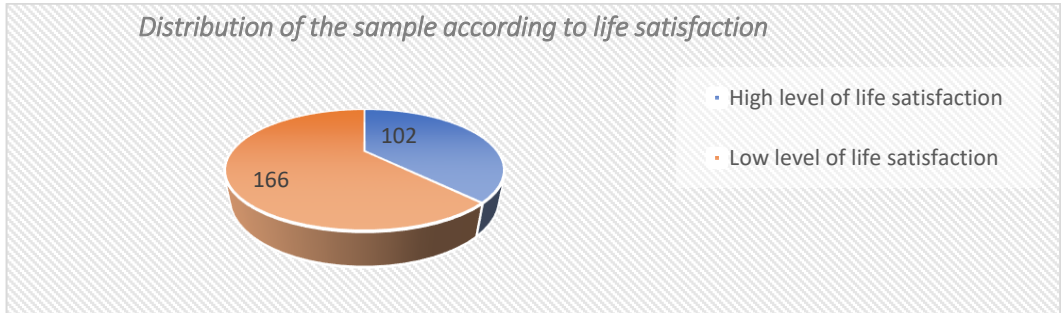
From the statistical analysis, through the Kendal correlation coefficient was found a negative, statistically significant relationship between Internet addiction and life satisfaction (r =

-0.104, p=0.001, n=268).

Table no. 1: Relationshpip between internet addiction and life satisfaction

Relationship between internet addiction and life satisfaction			
Variable	**r***	**No.**	**p**
Life satisfaction	-0.104	268	<0.001
* Kendal correlation coefficient			

For every increase of 1 point in life satisfaction, the likelihood of Internet addiction decreases by 3%. (OR=0.84; CI=95%, 0.82-0.85; P< 0.001). So, high levels of life satisfaction serve as a protective and inhibitory factor for the development of Internet addiction.

Table no. 2: Regresioni logjistik binar ndërmjet varësisë nga interneti dhe kënaqësisë në jetë

	Internet addiction				
Life satisfaction	with symptoms (n=89)	Without symptoms (n=179)	OR	CI 95%	p
Average points	17.54±7.20	26.12±6.81	**0.84**	**0.82-0.85**	**<0.001**

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From t-test analysis resulted that there are differences between students addicted to the Internet and those not addicted to the Internet in relation to life satisfaction. The value that resulted from Levin's test is 0.46>0.05. So the groups can be compared. (t=3.481, df=928 Sig (2-tailed) = 0.00<0.05. Students without internet addiction present higher levels of life satisfaction (m= 26.12. sd=5.13) compared to students with internet addiction (m=17.54, sd=6.84).

Table no.3: Data on the evaluation of life satisfaction in relation to internet addiction

Internet addiction		Nummer	Mean	Standard deviation
Life satisfaction	With symptoms	132	26.12	5.13
	Without symptoms	68	17.54	6.84

Conclusions and discussions

The study aimed to investigate and highlight the relationship that exists between Internet addiction and life satisfaction among students aged 18-21 in Albania, as well as the impact that the variable of life satisfaction has on Internet addiction. From the analysis, resulted that there is a negative, statistically significant relationship between Internet addiction and life satisfaction, thus proving the hypothesis raised in this study. This means that as life satisfaction increases, the likelihood of students developing Internet addiction decreases, and conversely, as life satisfaction decreases, the likelihood of students developing Internet addiction increases. Such a result is also supported by several studies carried out in the world (Blanchio, 2019., Bozolgan, 2013., Lachmann, 2016., Noorozi et., al, 2021., Sahin, 2017., Senol-Durak & Durak, 2011., Shanaz & Kerim, 2014). Even the analysis of the t-test highlighted the fact that there are differences between students with Internet addiction and students without Internet addiction regarding the levels of life satisfaction. Also, this study pointed out that high levels of life satisfaction among students aged 18-21 in Albania act as a protective factor against Internet addiction, which means that students who have a positive evaluation of their own life, know very well what they want from life and what would they do in the future. So, they have clear objectives and present control in the use of the Internet, as a necessary medium in everyday life, avoiding addiction to it. If we refer to Blanchio (2019), who links internet addiction and life satisfaction with culture, it is worth emphasizing the fact that students with high levels of internet addiction and low levels of life satisfaction are also

influenced by the situation Albania is going through. The post-pandemic crisis, impacted people and especially young people to leave Albania in search of better living conditions and opportunities for a better life both personally and professionally in developed countries. This has its own impact on the evaluation of the level of satisfaction that the individual receives from life.

In conclusion, we can say

There is a negative, statistically significant relationship between Internet addiction and life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction is a significant predictor of Internet addiction.

There are differences in the levels of life satisfaction between students with and without Internet addiction.

Further studies should be done in the future.

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