

The Mediating Role of Psychological Factors in the Relationships Between Youth Problematic Internet and Subjective Well-Being

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Abstract : The rapid increase in the massive use of the internet in recent years has led to an increase in the prevalence of a phenomenon called 'Problematic Internet use' (PIU), an emerging, growing health problem, especially during adolescents, that poses a challenge for mental health research and practitioners. Problematic Internet use (PIU) is defined as an excessive overuse of the internet, including an inability to control time spent on the internet, cognitive preoccupation with the Internet, and continued use in spite of the adverse consequences, which may lead to psychological, social, and academic difficulties in one's life and daily functioning. However, little is known about the nature of the nexus between PIU and subjective well-being among adolescents. The main purpose of the current study was to explore in depth the network of connections between PIU, sense of well-being, and four personal-emotional factors (resilience, self-control, depressive mood, and loneliness) that may mediate these relationships. A total sample of 433 adolescents, 214 (49.4%) girls and 219 (50.6%) boys between the ages of 12-17 (mean = 14.9, SD = 2.16), completed self-report questionnaires relating to the study variables. In line with the hypothesis, analysis of a Structural Equation modeling (SEM) revealed the main following results: high levels of PIU predicted low levels of well-being among adolescents. In addition, low levels of resilience and high levels of depressive mood (together), as well as low levels of self control and high levels of depressive mood (together), as well as low levels of resilience and high levels of loneliness, mediated the relationships between PIU and well-being. In general, girls were found to be higher in PIU and in resilience than boys. The study results revealed specific implications for developing intervention programs for adolescents in the context of PIU; aiming at more balanced adjusted use of the Internet along with preventing the decrease in well being.

Keywords : problematic internet Use, well-being, adolescents, SEM model

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