

## Does Internet Addiction Predict Happiness for The Students of Sports High School?

*Research Article*

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the predictive effects of internet addiction on happiness for the adolescents who study in sports high school. The study was conducted with 135 high school students, 68 females and 67 males. For the data collection tool in the study, Young's Internet Addiction Test-Short Form, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire-Short Form and the personal information form prepared by the researcher were adopted. The data analyses were conducted using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Simple Linear Regression analyses. As a result of the analyses, statistically significant and negative relationships were found between the internet addiction and the happiness levels of students of sports high school. As a result of the regression analysis, it was revealed that the internet addiction of the students of sports high school significantly predicted happiness in a negative way. According to the results of the study, it could be stated that internet addiction could affect happiness negatively. It is believed that the results obtained are of significance in terms of detecting the effects of internet use on adolescents who study in sports high school and in offering an insight for future studies. The results were discussed within the framework of the literature and various suggestions were offered.

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### Keywords:

Sports High School, Adolescent, Internet Addiction, Happiness

### Introduction

Even though it has not been half a century since the internet was invented, it has become widespread in the world and it has been used actively by a majority of the world's population (Kutlu, Savcı, Demir, & Aysan, 2016). It is believed that reasons such as quick access to information, following current events, watching videos and communicating with other individuals, are effective in such a widespread use of the internet. All these opportunities provided by internet cause individuals to use it intensely. In fact, it is observed in studies that the time spent using the internet on a daily basis using any device reached serious lengths. Within this context, in a current study conducted by Kemp (2018), it was reported that the daily internet use of individuals

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in Thailand and Brazil were above 9 hours while the average time of internet use in developed countries, such as Japan and Germany, was about 4 hours (Wearesocial, 2018). In the same study, it was reported that the time was above 7 hours in Turkey. This time is longer than an active high school student's time for going to school or more than the time an adult spends sleeping. This is a crucial problem, and researchers have been investigating the potential effects of such an intense use. While there are advantages of using the internet, it has many disadvantages that should not be ignored. Hence, researchers emphasize that the increase in the time spent using the internet also brings along a series of problems such as internet addiction (Batıgün & Kılıç, 2011; Demir, 2017).

Internet addiction is defined as the state of being unable to refrain from the wish to use the internet, excessive internet use and being excessively angry and aggressive when deprived of internet use (Arısoy, 2009). Internet addicts experience symptoms similar to those of substance abusers. Within this scope, Griffiths (2005) emphasized that internet addict individuals developed tolerances regarding internet use, and this state shares characteristics with those of substance abuse. In other words, Griffiths (2005) stated that internet addicts use the internet at an increasing rate just as substance abusers use substances at an increasing rate. Because internet affects almost all parts of society, the matter of internet addiction became a topic of study for many studies conducted in Turkey even before it has not been twenty years since it became widespread. Researchers emphasized that internet addict individuals had longer times of internet use, and these individuals used the internet to interact with other individuals (Durak-Batıgün & Hasta, 2010). Indeed, studies conducted on a global scale also reported similar results. Within this framework, in the study conducted by Kemp (2018), it was determined that the individuals spent approximately 3 hours using social media in Turkey. This period indicates that almost half of the time spent using internet occurs in social media. In another study, it was reported that individuals used the internet for fun in addition to the need for establishing social relationships (Ceyhan, 2010).

In studies, it was reported that internet addiction is had a positive relationship with depression (Ryu, Choi, Seo, & Nam, 2004; Young & Rogers, 1998), suicidality (Ryu, Choi, Seo, & Nam, 2004), stress (Lam, Peng, Mai, & Jing, 2009), impulsivity (Cao, Su, Liu, & Gao, 2007), shyness (Chak, & Leung, 2004), domestic problems (Yen, Yen, Chen, Chen, & Ko, 2007) while having a negative relationship with well-being (Kim, LaRose, & Peng, 2009) and happiness (Akın, 2012). Within this scope, researchers emphasized that internet addiction affected individuals' academic performances negatively (Demir, 2017), and damaged interpersonal relationships (Zainudin, Din, & Othman, 2013). Considering all these studies, it could be stated that internet addiction is a disorder that has multidimensional negative effects.

When the history of psychology is investigated, it is observed that psychology was interested in pathology for a long time. However, with the effects of positive psychology in recent years, it is observed that concepts such as optimism, hope, compassion, satisfaction with life and happiness are often studied (Diener, Seligman, Choi, & Oishi, 2018; Seligman, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Adolescents are the primary group among intensive internet users (Kutlu et al., 2016). When studies about the internet addiction of adolescents are examined (Kayri & Günüş, 2016; Lam et al., 2009; Şimşek, Akça, & Şimşek, 2015), it is observed that the adolescents who study in high schools were often sampled. However, no study was observed regarding this topic conducted with students who study in ability-based schools such as sports high schools. Sports high schools are designed as schools where adolescents study in various fields of sports. It is also believed that it is of significance to study the effects of internet addiction on the happiness levels of adolescents who especially do sports. Within this framework, the question "Does internet addiction of students who study in sports high schools affect their happiness levels?" will be attempted to be answered in this study.

## Method

### Research Model

This study, in which the predictive effect of internet addiction on the happiness levels of sports high school students, is a descriptive study.

### Study Group

This study was conducted with 135 sports high school students, 68 (50.4%) female and 67 (49.6%) males. The students were 14-17 years old. 53 (39.3%) of the students were 9<sup>th</sup> graders while 57 (42.2%) of them were 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 11 (8.1%) of them were 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

### Data Collection Tools

In this study, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire-Short Form (OHQ-SF), Young's Internet Addiction Test-Short Form (YIAT-SF) and the personal information form were used as data collection tools.

**Young's Internet Addiction Test-Short Form (YIAT-SF):** The Young's Internet Addiction Test-Short Form (YIAT-SF), which was developed by Young (1998) and transformed into a short form by Pawlikowski, Altstötter-Gleich and Brand (2013), is a 5-point Likert type of scale with 12 matters. YIAT-SF's adaptation into Turkish was conducted by Kutlu, Savcı, Demir and Aysan (2016) in a study conducted both with adolescents and university students. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis (AFA), it was observed that the scale consisted of a single factor in both the adolescents and the university students. The single factor of the scale was tested with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). It was determined that the fit index values regarding DFA had good fit indices for both the university students ( $\chi^2 = 144.930$ ,  $sd = 52$ ,  $RMSEA = .072$ ,  $RMR = .70$ ,  $GFI = .93$ ,  $AGFI = .90$ ,  $CFI = .95$  and  $IFI = .91$ ) and the adolescents ( $\chi^2 = 141.934$ ,  $sd = 51$ ,  $RMSEA = .080$ ,  $GFI = .90$ ,  $CFI = .90$  and  $IFI = .90$ ). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was determined to be .91 for university students and .86 for adolescents. The test-retest reliability coefficient of YIAT-SF was determined to be .93 for university students and .86 for adolescents. The high scores obtained from the scale indicate internet addiction. There is no matter to be reverse scored in the scale.

**Oxford Happiness Questionnaire-Short Form (OHQ-SF):** The scale, which was developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) in order to measure individuals' happiness levels and adapted into Turkish by Doğan and Çötök (2016), consists of 7 matters. The high scores obtained from the scale indicate high levels of happiness. It was determined that the scale, which consists of a single subscale, had an internal consistency coefficient of 0.74, and the test-retest reliability coefficient was determined to be 0.85.

### Data Analysis

The data collected in the study were analyzed by using AMOS and SPSS package software. Before starting the analysis, the data were examined in terms of multicollinearity, normality, outliers and extreme values. As a result of the analyses, it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values of the data were between the values accepted in social sciences, correlation values did not create a multicollinearity problem and VIF and tolerance values did not create multicollinearity problem, too. Thus, the research data was analyzed by using parametric statistical methods.

## Findings

### Correlation Analysis

The correlation values between internet addiction and happiness levels of sports high school students were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Results of the Correlation Analysis

	1	2
1- Internet Addiction	1	
2- Happiness	-.43**	1

\*\*p<.01

As it can be observed in Table 1, a statistically significant relationship in a negative way was detected between internet addiction and happiness ( $r = -.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding indicated that with increasing internet addiction of students of sports high school, happiness levels decreased.

### Regression Analysis

The regression analysis regarding the predictive effects of internet addiction on happiness level in sports high school students was conducted and the results were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of the Regression Analysis Regarding the predictive effects of Internet Addiction on Happiness Level

Predicted Variable	Predictor Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	p
Happiness	Constant	24.347	1.092		22.287	.000
	Internet Addiction	-.191	.035	-.431	-5.509	.000
Multiple R= .431 R <sup>2</sup> =.186						
Adj R <sup>2</sup> = .180, F (1, 133) = 30.345, p< .001						

As it can be observed in Table 2, it was determined that internet addiction significantly and negatively predicted happiness ( $R = -.43$ ,  $R^2 = .19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Internet addiction explains 19% of the total variance of happiness. According to this finding, it could be stated that internet addiction negatively affects happiness.

## Results, Discussion and Suggestions

In this study, the predictive effects of internet addiction on happiness levels in adolescents who study in sports high schools were investigated. As a result of the study, it was determined that there was a statistically significant, negative and moderate level relationship between the internet addiction and happiness in adolescents. Additionally, as a result of the regression analysis conducted, it was detected that internet addiction of adolescents who study in sports high schools predicted happiness in a negative way. This result indicated that an increase in internet addiction caused happiness levels to decrease.

The condition an individual is addicted to is not the internet alone. What makes people addicted is a series of advantages provided by the internet. Internet attracts individuals by many elements such as easy access to information, online games and videos that help individuals spend a pleasant time, social media

websites that enable easy communication with other individuals and news websites that provides quick access to news (Igbo, Egbe-Okpenge, & Awopetu, 2013; Satici & Uysal, 2015). This attraction affects even children who are in the preschool period. In fact, in a qualitative study conducted with 23 children, who were 5-6 years old, reported that the children wanted to use the internet just like they saw from their parents, and they wished to own devices to access the internet such as tablets and cell phones, and when they did, they would spend a major part of their time doing so (Erişti & Avcı, 2018). This state could be interpreted that the internet is such a dangerous tool that do not only affect adults but also children who are not even in their school period. Thus, internet, which is believed to contribute to the well-being of individuals, causes addiction due to ever-increasing use and individuals' inability to control this state. This state caused studies aimed at negative effects of internet addiction on individuals to intensify.

In the evaluation of other studies, negative relationships were observed between internet addiction happiness just as in this study. In the literature review, studies that support this finding of the study were also observed. In the study conducted by Muusses, Finkenauer, Kerkhof and Billedo (2014), the long-term effects of excessive internet use on individuals' well-being were investigated. As a result of the study, it was reported that excessive internet use increased depression, loneliness and stress levels in time, and it continuously decreased happiness levels in the meantime. In the same study, it was observed that the increase in the happiness levels of individuals was effective in the decrease in time spent using the internet. In the study conducted by Longstreet and Brooks (2017), it was reported that there was a negative relationship at a moderate level between internet addiction and happiness. In a study conducted with high school students in China, it was observed that problematic internet use had a negative effect on the well-being of adolescents (Mei, Yau, Chai, Guo, & Potenza, 2016). In a meta-analysis study, the relationships between Facebook use and psychological stress and well-being were investigated, and it was reported that there was a moderate relationship between Facebook use and psychological stress in a positive way while there was a moderate relationship between Facebook use and well-being in a negative way (Marino, Gini, Vieno, & Spada, 2017). In a study conducted by Satici and Uysal (2015), it was reported that there were negative relationships between problematic Facebook use and subjective happiness and satisfaction with life. In another study, the relationship between social media use and happiness was investigated, and it was determined that there was a negative relationship between them (Longstreet & Brooks, 2017). On the other hand, studies that do not coincide with this finding of the study also exist. In a study conducted by Doğan (2016) with adolescents who study in high schools, it was reported that the use of social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter positively and significantly predicted adolescents' happiness. However, the element to consider here is that the study investigated the predictive effect of using social media, not social media addiction. Indeed, it could be stated that similarly, internet use has a set of benefits when used carefully in a similar way. The unwanted state is the reach of internet use to the extent of addiction.

One of the most important factors for individuals to achieve happiness is the healthy relationships they established with other people (Batıgün & Hasta, 2010). Internet addiction causes people to spend a high amount of their time away from people and connected to a screen. When considered from this point of view, it could be stated that the amount of time allocated for communication with other individuals is less for internet addict individuals. As a consequence, it could be stated that addiction is a significant factor in the decrease in happiness level.

Researchers have emphasized the difference between internet use and internet addiction, and they have highlighted the effects of addiction on the formation of unwanted negative emotions in individuals. While limited and sufficient amounts of internet use could contribute to the well-being of individuals, it was noted that when this use reaches to an extent of addiction, it could cause unhappiness (Derin & Bilge, 2016). When internet addiction is viewed as a concept, ever-increasing desire to use the internet and excessive internet use

caused by that could cause individuals to spend a major part of their time in online environments. In this case, the individual cannot allocate sufficient time for healthy relationships with other people. It could be predicted that the happiness levels of individuals who cannot establish satisfactory interpersonal relationships will be affected negatively. As a result, it is possible to predict that the internet addiction of students who study in sports high school will have negative effects on their happiness. The quality of life and responsibilities of daily life for individuals, who do not perceive themselves happy, could also be affected negatively. When considered within this framework, it is believed that precautions should be taken in order to decrease internet addiction. The following suggestions could be offered as a result of the study:

- The effects of internet addiction on other psychosocial variables in students who study in sports high schools could be investigated.
- The effects of internet addiction on sports achievement could be investigated.
- This study was conducted only within the paradigms of quantitative research. With qualitative studies, the effects of internet addiction on adolescents could be investigated in a multifaceted way.

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