

THE SELF-IMAGE OF ADOLESCENTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO INTERNET ADDICTION

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Introduction: Self-image is developed by the way in which adolescents think, feel and behave and it arises from the person's body image during preadolescence. A considerable amount of literature published so far on Internet addiction reveals that it is a worldwide phenomenon.

Objectives: Internet use involves an individual's inability to control his or her use of the Internet, negative consequences (e.g., failing in school, decreased productivity), and marked distress and/or functional impairment. Until now, no studies were performed to investigate the relationship between Internet addiction and self-image.

Aims: The aim of this study was to evaluate Internet addiction among adolescents and to examine the correlation between problematic Internet use and self-image.

Methods: We assessed 1912 high school students, aged between 14 and 18 years. Internet Addiction Test (IAT), Offer Self-Image Questionnaire (OSIQ), and a sociodemographic query form were used in the collection of data.

Results: According to the IAT, 201 students (10.5%) were found to be a 'problematic Internet user' or an 'Internet addict'. The students with Internet addiction scored lower on all subscales of OSIQ (impulse control, emotional tone, body image, social Relations, vocational and educational goals, family relations, mastery of the external world, emotional health and superior adjustment), except sexual attitudes. A significant negative correlation between daily OSIQ subscales and IAT and weekly Internet use was found.

Conclusions: The results of this study showed that Internet addiction was related to the development of the self-image, which is a crucial psychological structure gained in adolescence.