

Brief Article

Predictive Role of Parental Acceptance, Rejection and Control in the Internet Addiction of the female students

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Abstract

Introduction: The consequences of the increasing use of the Internet for young people have become of interest for researchers in the field of sociology and psychology. The purpose of this study was to determine the role of parental acceptance, rejection, and control in Internet addiction of female students.

Methods: The study population consisted of all female students of Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran. In which 262 individuals were selected in multi-stage cluster sampling. The method of study was descriptive and correlative type and questionnaires of "Internet Addiction Test of Young (IAT) (1998)" and "scale of Parental Acceptance, Rejection and Control Questionnaire (PARCQ) (2005)" were used to collect data. Data analysis was performed using Pearson's correlation and regression analysis.

Results: showed that the components of rejection, anger and ignorance of parents have a significant relationship with Internet addiction and there is an inverse significant relationship between the components of the acceptance and Internet addiction. However, no significant relationship was found between parental control and Internet addiction.

Conclusion: The regression analysis showed that the variable of paternal acceptance and ignorance has the most predictive role in girls' Internet addiction and paternal and maternal control component has no explanatory role in this model. The results showed that parenting style and parent-child interaction play an important roles in addictive tendencies of girls to the internet and we can use this component in prevention and intervention programs in this area.

Keywords: Parental Acceptance, Rejection, Control, Internet Addiction, Students.

Introduction

In the past fifty years, extensive developments in the field of computing and communications have brought about major changes in different areas of human life. With the emergence of the Internet in 1960, anticipating this phenomenon which could, over five decades, sets such a transformation in the life of people would make impossible (Danaie Moghadam, 2011). In the last century, IT has been considered as the main axis of the achievements related to the development of the world as it has been increasingly associated with life of people (Mohseni et al, 2006). Sueur in 1999 claimed that 149 million people use the internet and this value doubles every 8 months (Keramati Moghadam, 2010). But now, the

average penetration rate of 24% in the world has reached 7 189 216 969 people (United Nations, 2013). Also, the penetration rate has been, in 35 Asian countries, 18.5 percent and Internet penetration in Iran reached from 21.8% in 2008 to 61.06 percent by early 2013. Thus, the average Internet penetration in Iran is higher than Asia and the world average (United Nations, 2013; Statistical Center of Iran, 2012; Matma, 2013). Due to the growing use of the Internet in recent years In Iran, the increasing prevalence of Internet addiction is more likely to appear (6).

Internet Addiction is believed to be one of the newest and the most common disorders related to technology in young people and the consequences

and damages caused by this addiction, as the most capable media in recent decades, has affected many aspects of everyday human life. (3).

Internet addiction develops academic, social, familial, psychological and physical problems causing mood and emotional change substantially (Farshbaf Khoshnazar, 2011). Study of Wang, Luo & Bai (2013) on 10 988 adolescents showed that there was a significant correlation between Internet addiction and health, and the rise of Internet addiction is associated with lower life satisfaction and increase depression. According to Lam et al (2014), Internet addiction disorder has an impact on youths' mental health. They also focused on the family role and parents' function in preventing and protecting children from Internet addiction.(7,8).

Young (1996) believes that the term addiction is used for the Internet, because the signs of Internet addiction or alcohol addiction are the same. Recent studies in the field of addiction focus on three categories of factors: individual factors, psycho-social factors, and factors related to the Internet. Individual factors such as low self-reliance (9), introspection characteristics, instinctive behavior and momentary tendencies (10), and impaired communication skills (11); Psychosocial factors such as poor family support and poor communication between family members; Internet-related factors such as prolonged use of the Internet, easy Internet access and a high proficiency in its use (12-13). Ahmadi et al (2010) in their study showed that the rate of Internet use is associated with the quality and type of family relationships (14). Hung Ku et al (2014) in their study found that due to improper functioning of families in prevention, Internet addiction disorder is very important, especially in girls. They considered family-based interventions to prevent the incidence of Internet addiction. (15)

Family relationships, especially the relationship of parents with children is very important in the formation of personality. Children learn relationships with the older and younger, community relations, dealing with problems, respect, acceptance, violence and aggression in the family environment (16). Internet is one component that can replace the social relationships with parents and families, and this contributes to the social gap between them (17). In virtual communities, in Rhine Gold's words, people are doing everything just

like real life. People are often thought that have lost their body and migrated to virtual communities (18). Most people suffering from Internet addiction, describe their father's cold and Non-intimate. In fact, it seems that Internet addicts, compared with independent users, consider their parents insincere. Descriptions of people with internet addiction on the relationship with their parents represent a weakness or lack of real affection (19). Although on the researches done on the Internet, the status of the family is very pale but according to a study conducted by the Ahmadi and colleagues (14), at the misuse of the Internet, there is a significant relationship between the amount of family ties with the chat, the use of dating sites and covert use of Internet. Family is the place of growth and identity of children and of the role of social practice. In his research, it was observed that among family variables, family relationship is more pivotal other variables, and has high correlation with the misuse of the Internet by children. This means that the greater the family relationships, the lower misuse of the Internet. In Shayesteh Fard's study (2014), it was also observed that there was a significant inverse relationship between parent-child relationship and addiction to cyber space among high school girls, so that the increase of addiction to cyberspace reduces parent-child relationship.(17)

One of the most important theories of the parent-child relations is the Parental Acceptance – Rejection Theory (Rohner, 1960). This theory is based on evidence about socialization and social change throughout life. Its purpose is to predict and explain the causes, consequences and major correlates of acceptance- rejection in interpersonal relationship in the entire world. This theory, as a personality sub-theory, predicts that parental rejection in childhood causes the children to be attracted to a set of personal characteristics with the high level of psychological mal adaptations in the adulthood. The main focus of this theory is on concerns of the consequences of parental acceptance and rejection on the behavioral, cognitive and emotional development of children and adults' action. Rogers' theory (1978) is based on the fact that the acceptance and unconditional positive attention is the basis of mental health, and rejection is the base of psychological damage. Rohner (1960) found that parental rejection has negative effects on the evolution of children and

adults of all races, cultures and different ethnicities (Rohner, 1986). Over the last fifty years, a lot of researches have been done all around the world on the antecedents and consequences associated with parental acceptance and rejection. Parental acceptance - rejection theory (20) also tries to predict the main psychological, environmental, and maintaining emergent systems of acceptance or rejection to predict personality, social cognitive and emotional damages. One of the predictions of this theory is that the rejection by significant others, apart from differences in culture, language, race and sex, can have negative effects on psychological adjustment, behavioral activation and cognitive processing in children and adults (21).

According to the researches, and regarding the fact that Internet use is growing in various areas, one of damages that can arise in the context of parental rejection is the more and more attraction of children to the Internet and therefore the phenomenon of Internet addiction. Because of the novelty of the phenomenon, the result of using this communicative tool has recently drawn attention the researchers in the field of psychology and sociology. But in several studies carried out, the role of parents' behavior in Internet addiction has not been paid attention to. Thus, this study aimed to determine the role of parental acceptance, rejection and control in prediction of Internet addiction in female students. So, based the purpose of this study, the question arises whether the parental acceptance, rejection, and control is associated with Internet addiction. And among the components of parental rejection, control and acceptance, which one is the most powerful predictor for internet addiction.

Methods

Method of this study was descriptive and correlative type and the data analysis was performed using Pearson's correlation and regression analysis. The study sample included all Shahid Beheshti University dormitory female students who were enrolled in the academic year 93-94 in Iran. The method was multi-stage cluster random sampling in which 6 of 10 student blocks, were selected and at proportion of people living in each block, rooms were randomly selected as cluster and a total of 262 female students were selected as samples. Subjects' age

ranged from 18 to 30, with a mean age of 24 years.

Research tools:

to collect data in this study, we used two questionnaires:

1- Internet addiction questionnaire (IAT), which was created by Kimberly Young in 1998 and is the most authoritative surveys of Internet addiction. The questionnaire includes 20 components and measures the overall amount and intensity of addiction to the Internet. The questionnaire has a range of interval scale with the scores between zero and 100. Higher scores are the signs of addiction to the internet. Validity of test was confirmed by the experts, and Internet Addiction questionnaire of Davis¹ (2001) was referred to (Nademi and Saeedi Rezvani, 2006). Its reliability after a run on 200 selected randomly, using Cronbach's alpha was 0.80 which indicates the stability of the test (Keramati Moghadam, 2005). In the study by Young et al (1998), internal validity was higher than 92% and retest validity was also significant. In the research of Alavi et al (2011) for the Persian version of the questionnaire, two content and differentiation validity ($R=0.5$) and three types of retest reliability ($R=0.79$), internal consistency ($\alpha=0.88$) and bisection ($R=0.79$) were assessed. In the present study, cronbach's alpha was 93%.

2- Questionnaire of parental acceptance, rejection and control (Adult PARQ / CON) (adult form for parents; Rohner and Khaleque, 2005): This is a self-report questionnaire to assess individual memories of behavioral dimensions of parental acceptance, rejection and control in childhood. In this scale, variable of rejection consists of three components rejection, failure and anger of parents, and in general, all the sub-scales are: 1. Acceptance or intimacy of parent 2. Parental aggressiveness 3. Ignorance and negligence of parents 4. Behavioral control and 5. Non-discriminative rejection. The 72- questions are based on a four-point Likert scale from one (almost never) to four (almost always). Rohner's surveys (2008) have shown that this questionnaire is reliable and valid. In the most recent research of Rohner and Khaleque (2008), the internal consistency of the questionnaire for mothers and

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fathers was 0.76 and 0.74. In the research of Seyed Mousavi et al (2012), the Cronbach's alpha for the scale of acceptance of parents was 0.95, 0.94, and scale of fathers and mothers' rejection was 0.97 and 0.96 and the scale of parental control was 0.87 and 0.88, respectively. The test-retest reliability within the three months was equal to 0.86, And the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (GFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.50) of this questionnaire has confirmed its construct validity. In this study, Cronbach's Alpha for variables of rejection, acceptance, anger, ignorance and parental controls was, respectively, 0.82, 0.84, 0.70, 0.86 and .82.

Results

The results of descriptive analysis of the variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive indexes of the variable of parental behavior and Internet Addiction

Variable			Mean	Std Deviation
Measure				
Paternal behavior	Rejection	Rejection	8.30	5.31
		Aggressiveness	9.91	8.08
		Negligence	11.83	8.18
	Acceptance		42.37	11.83
	Control		19.18	7.16
Maternal behavior	Rejection	Rejection	8.85	5.76
		Aggressiveness	11.69	8.94
		Negligence	9.56	7.93
	Acceptance		44.77	11.57
	Control		31.21	7.30
Internet addiction			18.42	1.15

Results of Table 1 show the mean scores on the variables of rejection, acceptance, anger and control in mothers were more than those in fathers. Conversely, the average of variable of negligence and disregard for fathers was greater than that for mothers. Also, according to the results shown in Table 1, the mean scores of Internet addiction in the sample was 18.42 at the average level Table 1.

The results of the correlation of paternity and maternity behavior subscales with Internet addiction are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. results of the Pearson correlation coefficient of Internet addiction with components of parental behavior

Correlation		Internet Addiction	
		R.	P
Maternal behavior	Rejection	0.25**	0.000
	Acceptance	0.19**	0.002
	Negligence	0.23**	0.000
	Aggressiveness	0.27**	0.000
	Control	0.69	0.271
Paternal behavior	Rejection	0.23**	0.000
	Acceptance	0.25**	0.000
	Negligence	0.27**	0.000
	Aggressiveness	0.22**	0.000
	Control	0.03	0.565

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the results of Table 2, it was found out there were significant positive relationship between the variables of parental rejection, failure and anger with Internet addiction ($P < 0.01$). Paternal and maternal acceptance and Internet addiction have an inverse significant relationship. So, with the increase of acceptance and intimacy of parents, Internet addiction is reduced.

According to results in Table 2, among the components of paternal acceptance and rejection, maternal violence, and paternal negligence showed the strongest correlation with Internet addiction. But there was no significant relationship between parental control and Internet addiction.

To determine the predictive role of parental components on Internet addiction, regression analysis was used. As noted earlier, component of parental rejection includes three sub-scales of parental rejection, failure or neglect and violence. The results of the regression analysis of these variables on Internet addiction are presented in Table 3.

Descriptive findings related to variables including mean and standard deviation.

Table 3. Results of regression analysis of variables of parental rejection on Internet addiction

Model			Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	P
Maternal Rejection	Rejection	Regression	5546.042	1	5546.042	17.39	0.000
		Residual	80688.060	253	318.925		
		Total	86234.102	254			
	Negligence	Regression	4618.863	1	4618.863	14.318	0.000
		Residual	81615.238	253	322.590		
		Total	86234.102	254			
	Aggressiveness	Regression	6563.358	1	6563.358	20.842	0.000
		Residual	79670.743	253	314.904		
		Total	86234.102	254			
Paternal Rejection	Rejection	Regression	4664.656	1	4664.656	14.468	0.000
		Residual	81569.445	253	322.409		
		Total	8234.102	254			
	Negligence	Regression	6472.346	1	6472.346	20.530	0.000
		Residual	79761.756	253	315.264		
		Total	86234.102	254			
	Aggressiveness	Regression	4114.630	1	4114.630	12.677	0.000
		Residual	82119.472	253	324.583		
		Total	86234.102	254			

As can be seen in Table 3, F-value at level ($P < 0.01$) is significant. So, we can conclude, at least one of the predictor variables (components of parental rejection, neglect and violence) could predict criterion variable (Internet addiction).

Table 4. results of the regression coefficients of components of parental rejection on Internet addiction

The dependent variable	Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	P
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Internet addiction	Maternal Rejection	0.80	0.194	0.254	4.17	0.000
	Maternal Aggressiveness	0.56	0.124	0.270	4.56	0.000
	Maternal Negligence	0.53	0.144	0.231	3.78	0.000
	Paternal Rejection	0.80	0.211	0.233	3.80	0.000
	Paternal Aggressiveness	0.49	0.095	0.220	3.56	0.000
	Paternal Negligence	0.61	0.136	0.274	4.53	0.000

The value of Beta indicates the amount of variance explanation of predictor variables on the criterion variable. According to the standard beta coefficients, the predicting role of behavior of parental rejection can be seen on Internet addiction. According to the results

reported in Table 4, it was observed among the subscales of parental rejection, the maternal rejection is the component of predicting Internet addiction so that with any unit change in the variance of maternal rejection there is

directly a change of 0.25 and with any unit change in the variance of paternal rejection there is a change of 0.23, in the variance of Internet addiction score. Also it was observed with each unit change in the variance in maternal aggressiveness directly as 0.27 and in the variable of paternal aggressiveness as 0.22,

the variance Internet addiction changes. And Furthermore, it was found in the parental neglect variable, With any unit change in the variance of maternal neglect there is directly a change of 0.23 and in the variable of paternal neglect there is a change of 0.27 in the variance of Internet addiction score.

Table 5. results of the regression analysis of component of parental acceptance on Internet addiction

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P
Maternal Acceptance	Regression	3182.66	1	3182.66	9.70	0.002
	Residual	83051.43	253	327/267		
	Total	86234.10	254			
Paternal Acceptance	Regression	5337.878	1	5337.878	16.69	0.000
	Residual	80896.22	253	319/748		
	Total	86234.10	254			

The results of the regression analysis in Table 5 show that Internet addiction regression of the components of parental acceptance is statistically

significant, and this could explain the components of Internet addiction and the regression coefficients were significant.

Table 6. results of the regression coefficients of components of parental acceptance on Internet addiction

The dependent Variable	Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	P
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Internet addiction	Maternal acceptance	-0.305	0.098	0.192-	3.114-	0.002
	Paternal acceptance	0.386-	0.095	0.250-	4.086-	0.000

According to the standard beta coefficients, predictive behavior of warm behavior and parental acceptance can be seen on Internet addiction; So that with each unit change in the variance in maternal acceptance inversely as 0.192 and with each unit change in the variance of paternal acceptance inversely as 0.250, the variance Internet addiction changes Table 6.

As a result, according to the results of the regression analysis, among the components of parental behavior, it can be observed that the variable of paternal neglect has the greatest predicting role variable on Internet addiction of girls. And parental control variables do not have predictor role in this model.

This study investigates the role of parental acceptance, rejection and control on Internet addiction in female students. The findings showed that the components of rejection, including parental rejection, ignorance and anger have a significant positive relation with internet addiction ($P < 0.01$). Paternal and maternal acceptance and Internet addiction have an inverse significant relationship. So, with the increasing acceptance and intimacy of parents, Internet addiction is reduced. But there was no significant relationship between parental control and Internet addiction. According to the results of the regression analysis of the components of parental behavior, it was also observed that paternal neglect and acceptance have the most predictive role of Internet addiction in girls.

Conclusion

Researches that directly focused on the relationship between parental rejection, acceptance and control in relation with Internet addiction were not found. But the results of this research are relatively consistent with findings of Hang Ku et al (2014), Jafari Nadoushan (2011), Sanders (2000), Ahmadi et al (2010), Shayesteh Fard (2013), Javadi et al (2009), Farshbaf Khush Nazar (2011), Zive kynet al (2010) and Lan et al (2014).

For Example, Ahmadi and colleagues (2010) showed that there is a significant relationship between the familial interactions and the conversation, using dating sites and covert use of the Internet. Farshbaf Khoshnazar's survey results conducted in 2011 showed significant positive relationship between the problematic use of the Internet and components of alienation with parents and a negative relationship with the parental relationship. The variables of alienation with father and trust to father, in a combination table, was able to explain 7.5% variance of problematic Internet use. These results indicate the importance of the role parents can play in social interactions (6). Sanders et al (2000) also reported the individuals with better relationships with their mothers and friends had used the Internet less than others. The results show a weak maternal interpersonal link with extreme turning to the Internet for communication (28). Jafari Nadoushan (2011), in his study, found that those who received less emotional relationship with their mother use Internet more (27).

Hong ku et al. (2014), in their study found that attention to improper functioning of families is very important in preventing Internet addiction disorder, especially in girls. They considered family-based interventions to prevent the phenomenon of Internet addiction. If the relationship between children and parents is defective, mental anomalies occur. On the contrary, if they feel good to parents, they will have a greater sense of psychological security (31). If the need to support, security and a sense of belonging is not met by parents for children, they will inevitably seek to satisfy the needs outside the family environment. Internet meets many different needs and users utilize it in different expressions. Man has a series of

physiological and non-physiological needs. Non-physiological needs are those such as the need for love, friendship, help and attention, and the like. Improper meeting the needs causes the psychological pressure and some individuals turn to the wrong way to raise them. The continuation of this type of raising pressure leads to severe addiction and dependency (3). David Greenfield (1999) has conducted one of the largest studies on the vulnerability of the Internet overuse. His findings are that 5.7% of the sample is consistent with the criteria for Internet addiction. In this study, about one-third of Internet addicts said that they used the Internet as a way to escape from real life and change their mental mood (32). While most parents use home computers and the Internet as a tool to keep children quiet (33).

The results of this study showed that other than the parental control components, there is a significant relationship among other components of parental behavior including parental rejection, neglect, anger and acceptance and Internet addiction. According to Grolink (1987), control is a tool to help parents protect their children automatically and monitor their actions. In this study, there was no significant relationship between this component and Internet addiction. It should be noted that Parents' behavioral control in childhood is different from parental control and supervision on Internet use by children. And in fact control component within its meaning refers to the parental regulation, the children's commitment to take responsibility and preset programs and structured education methods (eg, control of children commuting). This component is one among the components of parental behavior that refers to parental supervision and its emotional dimension. Furthermore, the results of this study indicate the importance of emotional and affective factors (eg, rejection, anger, intimacy and neglect) in the occurrence of the Internet addiction. Emotional-affective factors are one of the main causes of Internet addiction in youth. In internet, one can share the strongest and deepest feelings, and ideas with others without being afraid of rejection. Reingold (1993) also argues that users of virtual communities easily share their emotions together and support each

other emotionally (Aouragh, 2005). Although the interactions on the Internet are primarily written, the exchange of words creates a strong psychological dependence, so that cordial relations between users take place rapidly. Each user in his first meeting with another user can define all his life to the other side making an intimate relationship (Kubey et al, 2001: quoted by Ghasemzadeh et al, 2006). Therefore, According to results obtained, emotional-affective components of parental behavior have been associated with the phenomenon of Internet addiction. Because, according to research cited, using the Internet due to interactive and emotional relationships on Internet has turned into addictive dependence and behavior. The parental control variable which is less emotional - affective does not have any effect on the development of Internet addiction.

The results of recent research indicating the importance of the early years of childhood on subsequent development, cause beyond the usual focus on early experiences, particularly the parent-child relationship. These studies have shown initial support of the parent-child relations can pave the way for future developments, particularly in the field of children's social skills and mental health (Berlin et al. 2005; quoted by Seyed Mousavi et al, 2013). The main focus of the theory of parental acceptance, rejection and control is on concerns about the implications of parental acceptance and rejection on behavior, cognition and emotion change in children and adults as well as adults' action. Many studies have shown the role of parental behavior and parental acceptance and rejection in childhood have more effects on mental health, and more compromise among female children (Rohner, 1986). Meanwhile, other researches suggest a strong correlation between mental health and addiction to Internet. For example, Ziquin et al (2010) in their study found that increasing Internet addiction in youth is associated with a decline in their mental health. Also, it was found in their study that the influence of family performance and parental style are important factors in the growth of Internet addiction. Factors such as lack of intimacy and warmth between parents and children, rejection, punishment (only in the

component of mother) and excessive parental attention and relaxation are factors that predict Internet addiction. Lam et al (2014) also emphasize the role of parents' function in preventing and protecting children of the potential risk of Internet addiction.

According to our results, among the components of paternal behavior, paternal acceptance and neglect were dedicated the most predictive role. This refers to the importance of paternal behavior on the incidence Internet addiction among children leading to the replacement of paternal support and interaction with the Internet. According to King (1996), this is the social feature of online interactions and interpersonal exchange with others that is reinforcing and rewarding. So that it makes some people not give it up (PoorShahriari, 2006). Because Internet is a safe environment for engaging in social relations and provides a common fear of social interaction eliminated. The Internet satisfies individual's need for social protection (Young, 1996). Parents have more supportive role for children. But if it does not meet the children's needs properly, the individual receives the need to support and protection from internet interactive environments without fear. One of the main predictions of the parental rejection-acceptance theory is that rejection by the other is significant and can have negative effects on psychological adjustment, the behavioral activity and children and adults' cognitive processing. (Rohner, 2000: quoted by Seyed Mousavi et al, 2013). Results of Young's research (1996) showed that one of the major reasons for the creation of Internet addiction in the low public-relation people is to gain social support (Sadeghi, 2010). Thus, people become more dependent on the Internet and status and authority of parents with children are lost while internet replace them. In this space, there is not an obligation and responsibility for the mistakes and instead of violence and rejection, the support is offered for the individuals (madanipoor, 2005; quoted by Bahraminan, 2012; Shayesteh Fard, 2014). Findings of Javadi et al (2009) in this area showed that reduction of parent-child relationship increases the number of hours of online games. Based on the results of this research, increase of communication and paternal intimacy scale reduces the number of

hours of computer games. In accordance with the results of Shayesteh Fard (2014), there is a significant inverse relationship between the parent-child relationship and Internet addiction among high school girls, so that with the increase of the relationship of father-son, Internet addiction is reduced. Based on the findings of this study, among the components of the parent-child relationship, component of fatherly devotion and relationship showed predictive role in Internet addiction.

In total the results of this study showed that parent-child interaction is connected with girls' problematic turning to internet. Thus, we can conclude the study and teaching of parents' interactions with children and increasing intimacy between them can be used to prevent Internet addiction and its harmful consequences. Since the sample in this study was limited to female students, the question remains whether the parental rejection, acceptance and controls are similar in boys and girls or whether the impact of these factors is different in boys. For this reason, it is suggested in future researches, the model of this research is evaluated in different areas and on male students so that cultural, racial and gender differences may also be studied. Also, given that only components of parental acceptance, rejection and control on Internet addiction were studied, further studies could also influence other family factors on Internet addiction.

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