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# Psychological relationship between Internet addiction and individual social behavior

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**Introduction**. Today, the rapid development of digital technologies and the widespread use of the Internet have a significant impact on almost all spheres of human life. The Internet has become an important tool for education, information search, professional activities, communication and meaningful organization of leisure. At the same time, the increase in the possibilities of using the Internet also leads to an increase in the frequency and duration of its use. As a result, the issue of psychological problems associated with excessive and uncontrolled use of the Internet, in particular, the issue of Internet addiction, is becoming one of the most pressing areas of research.

Internet addiction is characterized by the fact that an individual has difficulty controlling the process of using the Internet, devotes excessive time to virtual activities, and the need to use the Internet takes precedence over other activities of daily life. This condition can affect not only the individual-psychological characteristics of the individual, but also his social relationships and behavior. In particular, the decrease in real social communication, the need for virtual communication, changes in social activity, and the occurrence of certain difficulties in interpersonal relationships require the study of the socio-psychological aspects of Internet addiction.

An individual's social behavior is manifested in his relationships in society, the process of communication, his attitude to social norms, his behavior in a group, and his interactions with other people. As a result of the expansion of the digital environment, there are also some changes in the manifestation of these behavioral patterns. In particular, the widespread use of social networks and virtual communication tools is influencing the ways in which an individual expresses himself/herself, establishes relationships with others, and reacts to social situations.

The relationship between internet addiction and social behavior should not be regarded as a one-sided process. On the one hand, excessive use of the internet can limit an individual's real social contacts and affect their social activity, while on the other hand, factors such as loneliness, difficulties in social adaptation, inadequate interpersonal relationships can also increase the tendency to excessive use of the internet. In this regard, it is important to study internet addiction as a complex psychological phenomenon that is interrelated with the social behavior of an individual.

The urgency of this problem is determined primarily by the increasing relationship between the virtual and real social environment of a person in modern society. The expansion of the use of the Internet and social networks, especially among young people, requires a deeper study of the factors influencing their communication culture, social activity, interpersonal relationships and behavior. Therefore, determining the psychological characteristics of Internet addiction and its relationship with the social behavior of the individual is one of the important issues of modern psychology.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**: The issue of Internet addiction and its effect on the social behavior of the individual is one of the problems that has been widely studied in recent years within the framework of psychology, social psychology and other disciplines. In the scientific explanation of this phenomenon, it is emphasized that along with the duration of the use of the Internet, the purpose of its use, the psychological needs of the individual, social relations and behavior in the virtual environment should also be taken into account.

K. Young's research plays an important role in the introduction of the concept of Internet addiction into scientific treatment. The researcher studied excessive use of the Internet as a problem that can adversely affect an individual's daily functioning, social relationships, and psychological state. The Internet Addiction Test developed by K. Young was widely used in later studies to determine the level of problematic internet use. In his views, the weakening of control over internet use, excessive time for virtual activities, and difficulty in stopping internet use are cited as important signs.

The concept of "behavioral addiction" by M. Griffiths is also of particular importance in studies aimed at explaining the psychological essence of Internet addiction. The author notes that some behavioral forms can also be formed on the basis of psychological mechanisms similar to substance dependence. According to this approach, the use of the Internet can take an overdominant position in an individual's life, become a mood change tool, increase tolerance, difficulty in limiting use, and continue despite negative consequences. This view allows us to study the psychological processes underlying Internet addiction rather than limiting it to excessive use of the Internet.

**Main Body**: Researchers who have studied the link between internet use and social relationships note that the effects of the internet on an individual's social life are not the same. Some studies have shown that the use of the internet and social networks can increase communication opportunities, increase social support, and help maintain ties with different social groups. Other studies have found that problematic internet use is associated with reduced real social contacts, increased feelings of loneliness, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Hence, it is not enough to assess the effects of the internet on social behavior in a positive or negative way alone.

A social-compensatory approach also plays an important role in explaining this issue. According to this approach, individuals who have difficulty establishing or maintaining social relationships in real life may be more inclined to use the virtual environment as a means of satisfying their social needs. As a result, there is a possibility that the internet not only provides temporary psychological comfort, but also leads to a decrease in real social activity. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully interpret the cause-and-effect relationship when studying the relationship between internet addiction and social behavior.

On the other hand, psychological studies on the issue of social behavior of the individual note the importance of the social environment, interpersonal relationships, social experience, communicative needs, and group influence in its formation. The digital environment is changing the forms of manifestation of these factors, creating a new social experience space for the individual. Virtual groups, social networks, online communities, and various communicative platforms are influencing the process of an individual's relationship with others and self-manifestation.

**1-table**

**A Conceptual Model of the Psychological Link Between Internet Addiction and Personality Social Behaviors**

| Key Concept | Structural Components | Psychological Manifestation | Potential Impact on Social Behavior |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Internet** | Excessive internet | Strong urge to | Decrease in real |

| Key Concept | Structural Components | Psychological Manifestation | Potential Impact on Social Behavior |
|---|---|---|---|
| **addiction** | use | use the internet, inability to manage time | social activity |
| **Internet use duration and intensity** | Duration and frequency of use | Spending long hours online, prioritizing virtual activity | Reduction in time dedicated to social relationships |
| **Need for virtual communication** | Online communication, social media usage | Prioritizing virtual connections over real relationships | Decline in real interpersonal communication |
| **Social adaptation** | Adaptation to society and group | Difficulties in self-conduct/behavior in social situations | Weakening or alteration of group relationships |
| **Communicative activity** | Initiating communication and establishing relationships | Shift in communication needs, avoiding face-to-face contact | Decrease in communicative activity |
| **Interpersonal relationships** | Relationships with family, friends, and peers | Reduced interest in real relationships or dominance of virtual connections | Narrowing of social connections |
| **Social activity** | Participation in community and social activities | Decreased participation in social events | Increase in passive social behavior |
| **Psychological factors** | Loneliness, social need, self-esteem, emotional state | Using the virtual environment as a tool to fulfill psychological needs | Changes in social behavior strategies |
| **Social behavior** | Communication, cooperation, adaptation, social activity | Manifestation of various behaviors in real and virtual environments | Transformation in personal social relationships and |

**2- table**

**The relationship between Internet addiction and measures of an individual's social behaviour**

| No | Indicators | N | M | SD | r | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Internet addiction | 120 | 52.43 | 8.76 | 1.000 | — |
| **2** | Social adaptation | 120 | 38.27 | 6.41 | -0.462** | 0.001 |
| **3** | Communicative activity | 120 | 35.84 | 5.97 | -0.391** | 0.001 |
| **4** | Interpersonal relationships | 120 | 41.16 | 7.02 | -0.428** | 0.001 |
| **5** | Social activity | 120 | 34.72 | 6.15 | -0.347** | 0.001 |
| **6** | Cooperative behavior | 120 | 36.53 | 5.82 | -0.286** | 0.002 |
| **7** | Communicative behavior | 120 | 37.21 | 6.34 | -0.374** | 0.001 |
| **8** | Social support | 120 | 40.38 | 6.73 | -0.315** | 0.001 |

According to the results of the study, statistically significant negative correlations were found between Internet addiction and indicators characterizing an individual's social behavior. In particular, the correlation coefficient between Internet addiction and social adaptation was r=-0.462 ($p<0.01$), indicating that there is a moderately negative relationship between these indicators. This case suggests that the increase in the level of Internet addiction may be associated with a decrease in an individual's ability to adapt to the social environment.

A statistically significant negative correlation was also observed between Internet addiction and communicative activity (r=-0.391; $p<0.01$). This result suggests that individuals with high levels of excessive internet use may have relatively low rates of engaging in face-to-face communication and active participation in real social interactions. A negative correlation of r=-0.428 ($p<0.01$) was also found between internet addiction and interpersonal relationships. This result suggests that excessive internet connectivity may have some effect on an individual's real relationships with family, friends, and peers.

The correlation of Internet addiction with social activity also had a negative character, with the correlation coefficient being r=-0.347 ($p<0.01$). This suggests that as Internet addiction increases, the level of participation in various social activities of an individual tends to decrease.

The results obtained indicate that there is a correlation between internet addiction and an individual's social behavior. In particular, the negative correlations identified with social adaptation, interpersonal relationships, and communicative activity suggest that uncontrolled use of the internet can affect an individual's activity and attitudes in the real social environment.

**DISCUSSION**: The results of the study of the psychological relationship between Internet addiction and individual social behavior within the framework of the study indicate that this phenomenon has a multifactorial character. The results obtained show that negative correlations between the degree of Internet addiction and indicators of social adaptation, communicative activity, interpersonal relationships, and social activity indicate the socio-psychological importance of this issue. First of all, the negative relationship between Internet addiction and social adaptation means that an individual's excessive orientation to the virtual environment can affect his relationship with the real social environment.

**CONCLUSIONS**: Although the use of the internet expands the opportunities for an individual to receive information and communicate, unsupervised use of it may lead to a reduction in the time allocated to real-life social activities. As a result, there is a possibility that the individual's opportunities to actively participate in different social situations, form new relationships, and support existing social connections are reduced. The negative association identified in the study between internet addiction and communicative activity is also of particular note. The fact that an individual meets his communication needs through more and more virtual means can lead to a decrease in face-to-face communication. At the same time, virtual communication itself is not regarded as a negative phenomenon. It is important that virtual communication should not completely replace real communication and remain dominant in the communicative activity of the individual. Otherwise, opportunities related to the content, emotional aspect and direct social experience of communication may be limited. The link between Internet addiction and interpersonal relationships is also explained in this context. An individual's relationships with family members, friends and peers play an important role in his social development. As a result of excessive use of the Internet, the time that an individual devotes to real social relationships is reduced, part of his need for communication can be satisfied through a virtual environment. However, this situation cannot be applied to all Internet users in the same way. The purpose, content, form of use of the Internet and the individual-psychological characteristics of the individual are important factors in the manifestation of these relationships.

It is also important that the results of the study revealed a negative correlation between internet addiction and social activity. Social activity expresses the degree to which an individual participates in team activities, different groups, and social relationships. In the case of excessive internet dependence, an individual's redirecting of his leisure time mainly to virtual activities can lead to a decrease in interest in real social activities. Therefore, the balance between internet use and real social activities is important in shaping an individual's social behavior.

It would not be correct to conclude these results that Internet addiction has only a negative impact on social life. The Internet creates new social opportunities for the modern individual. In particular, distance communication, education, development of professional ties, joining various social groups and opportunities for social support constitute the positive aspects of the digital environment. Therefore, the problem is not in the availability of the Internet, but in the norm, expediency and balance of its use with other areas of an individual's life.

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