

Chapter 17

Internet Addiction as a Behavioral Addiction: The Effect of Computer Games on Children and Cyber Violence

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ABSTRACT

Taking into consideration the gradually widespread use of the internet, children are thought to be an important group both in terms of the time they spend on the internet and the dangers they will be exposed to in the virtual world. Internet addiction is essentially a type of behavioral addiction, characterized by a certain behavioral pattern, which is confronted with both physical, psychological, and social consequences. The research aims to establish a correlation between children's addiction to computer games with the cyber violence that they may be exposed to base on this addiction. For this reason, this study is a systematic review that aims to examine the effects of computer addiction as a subtype of internet addiction, which is a type of behavioral addiction, on children and its relationship with cyber violence. The research significantly contributes to the literature by revealing the effects of COVID-19 on children's addiction to computer games and the correlation of children's addiction to computer games with cyber violence.

INTRODUCTION

Addiction can be characterized as being highly attached to a person, substance or activity; to become highly accustomed to a behavior that may become problematic over time in a way to cause both psycho-

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logical and physiological consequences, is hard to quit or that may have positive or negative consequences (Lesieur and Blume, 1993: 90). Behavioral addiction, unlike alcohol and substance addiction, focuses rather on acts that people cannot prevent themselves from doing and have difficulty in stopping. The increasing prevalence of behavioral addiction is considered to be closely related to the rapid development of technology in the scientific world. There are a number of behavioral addictions ranging from gambling addiction to internet addiction, from shopping addiction to food addiction, from exercise addiction to computer games addiction (Lortie and Guitton, 2013: 1208; Meule, 2015: 296). The controversial aspect of behavioral addictions is that all these behaviors are perceived by individuals as a part of the daily rituals of individuals beyond a disease that needs to be diagnosed and treated (Karim and Chaudhri, 2012: 5). Behavioral addictions, particularly internet addiction, have become prominent especially since the 2000s (Lortie and Guitton, 2013: 1210). However, there is no consensus on the use of the concept of internet addiction yet. Internet addiction, as a behavioral disorder, is tried to be expressed with concepts such as “Internet Addiction Disorder”, “Pathological Internet Use”, “Excessive Internet Use” and “Obsessive Internet Use” (Widyanto, Griffiths and Brunnsden, 2011: 142). This study focuses on the internet addiction as a behavioral addiction and addictive behavior. The consolidation of internet addiction with the obligation for distance education caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic has augmented the levels of internet addiction. With the spread of internet addiction; the prevalence of computer addiction, which is a sub-type of internet addiction, and accompanying computer games addiction have increased, particularly in children. The research conducts a systematic review within the scope of the literature on the relationship between computer games addiction and cyber violence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a systematic review that aims to examine the effects of internet and computer games addiction, which are two types of behavioral addictions, on children as well as the relationship of COVID-19 pandemic with these addictions in addition to the effects of cyber violence. EconLit, Google Scholar and EBSCO databases were reviewed for the purpose of the study. Different publications on the subject were accessed by reviewing the bibliographies of the publications with the snowball method. The significance of systematic reviews is increasing because it is a research method that produces the strongest evidence based on evidence-based practices. A systematic review aims to answer a clinical question or to provide a solution to a problem following a comprehensive review covering all the former works published in that field; uses various inclusion and exclusion criteria and evaluates the quality of the studies in order to determine the works to be included in the review and finally synthesizes the research findings that are included in the review. The research significantly contributes to the literature by revealing the effects of COVID-19 and cyber violence on children’s computer addiction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Concept of Internet Addiction as a Behavioral Addiction

Addiction is a phenomenon where persons lose control over the object or behavior they are addicted to and eventually they cannot live without it. Addiction is a disease that develops gradually over a period

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