

The Role of Parental Acceptance/Rejection in the Development of Internet Addiction among Adolescence

Shahana Mumtaz^{1*} Fozia Aamir Siddiqui^{2*} and Muniza Malik³

Abstract

Present study was aimed at investigation of parent's acceptance or rejection in the development of internet addiction among young adolescence. It was a co-relational study; survey method was used for data collection. There were two hypotheses in the study. 1. Maternal and paternal rejection would be significant predictors of internet addiction among young adolescence. 2. Male and female students would significantly differ on internet addiction. Sample of the study comprised of 844 young adolescence including 389 male students, and 455 female students. Participants of the study was collected from three universities of Jamshoro District. The age range of participants was between 16 to 28 years. For the measurement of variables Parental Rejection and Internet Addiction three valid and reliable tools were administered on the sample of the study: 1. Parental acceptance / Rejection questionnaire. First, Internet addiction tests; second, Adult PARQ and control: Mother and Father, Personality Assessment Questionnaire; and third Questionnaire about the demographical variables of the respondents. Results of Hierarchical multiple regression analysis indicate that both maternal and paternal rejection are strong predictors of internet addiction $F(1, 842) = 32.62, p = < .001$, and paternal rejection predicts internet addiction more strongly than maternal rejection. $t(1,841.90) = 4.72, p = < .001$, with a small effect size of $r = .16$. Over all the study indicates a string role of parental rejection in the development of internet addiction among young adolescence.

Keywords: Parental Rejection; Parental Control; Internet Addiction; Young Adolescence.

1. Introduction

Parents and their parenting styles have a significant impact on the personality development of a child. Several behavioral problems among adolescence are associated with parental rejection; one of them is internet addiction. Internet a technological tool which has many advantages and disadvantages, nowadays has become the integral part of every individual's life. The optimum use for knowledge and academic help to prepare assignments or projects is beneficial but excessive use of internet, especially for gaming is harmful. Being a parent, is a mercy of nature as well a difficult task. Parents are the first and closest relations of a child. It is the early bondage (whether good or bad) between

¹ Department of Psychology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan.

² Department of Psychology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan.

³ Department of Psychology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan.

*)Corresponding Author.

Email: foziahabib2004@yahoo.com

child and parents which shapes the personality of a child (Pervaiz & Khadim, 2020).

Among other difficulties of parenting, internet addiction has become the most challenging task for parents. The term internet addiction emerged from a purpose to conduct a study for the diagnostic criteria of pathological gambling addiction in Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorder DSM IV. Young (1996) was the first researcher who tried to formulate the diagnostic criteria of internet addiction. View of Young was that the symptoms of internet addiction are similar of drug addiction. So, the term addiction can be used for internet. The role of parents and family is crucial in the use of internet as addictive behaviors among young adolescence (Spadda, 2014). Parental rejection is a strong predictor of internet addiction and depression among young adolescence (Sutana & Kamaluddin, 2019). The perceived parental acceptance /rejection refers to the children and adult's perception that they developed about their parents/ caregivers. (Rohner, Khalique & Cournoyer 2012). According to Rohner (1990) as cited in Zulifqar, (2022) the role of parents in the personality development of a child and adolescence is extremely important. In PAR theory Rohner, (2005) explained that parental acceptance /rejection is based on warmth dimension of parenting; at one pole of the dimension is parental physical and psychological acceptance on its extreme pole is parental physical and psychological rejection.

Warmth dimension describes parental love, care, and support which are the positive signs of parental acceptance, and the lack or absence of love, support and care refer to parental rejection. The expression of warmth from parents to their children can be physical including; hugging, kissing, smiling, caressing, verbal expression of love from parents towards their children range from saying praising words, tell them stories, to singing songs for their children. In case, when children felt themselves as unloved or there is lack of parental warmth, they built negative world view in their minds, feel insecure, aggressive, and inadequate (Kanyas, 2008). Parental rejection is the root cause of many behavioral problems in adolescence; they become target of depression, negativity in thoughts, substance abuse, and many other antisocial behaviors (Salahur, 2010; Çakıcı, 2012). The weaker parent/child relationship, and especially father's detachment and cold behavior are the strong indicators of internet addiction among adolescence. The aim of the present study is to understand the negative effect of parental rejection in internet addiction among adolescence. There were two hypotheses of the study: 1. Maternal and paternal rejection would be significant predictors of internet addiction among young adolescence. 2. Male and female students would significantly differ on internet addiction. The outcome of the study would be helpful for parents in making a strategic plan to keep safe their adolescence off springs from the problematic use of internet. Results of the study have implications for parents, teachers, and mental health experts.

1.2. Significance of the study

The phase of adolescence brings various physical, social and psychological changes and challenges which becomes worsen with deficient coping skills to manage and understand their behavior self- regulation. The prolong use of internet is more common among adolescence, which are the hope of nation (Arisoy, 2009). They spend more time on internet which results in the failure of their future goals (Topkaya, Şahin & Meydan, 2017). The transition from childhood to adolescence brings many changes, including being influenced from inside and outside factors of social environment. Externally, they get peer pressure in decision making and internally requirements developmental changes, largely influenced by their parents and teachers (Avedissian & Alayan, 2021). The socioecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests, that there are various ecological structures, present in the surroundings of the adolescences and their behaviors get influenced from them. There are different levels of ecological structures I.e. Immediate and direct environment of communication refers to microsystems and interaction between all these connections were mesosystems, and their social background. According to socioecological model, during the continuous interactions with these ecological structures, the behavior of individual has also evolved. Further, Bronfenbrenner (1979) the model suggests components of these structures. Among these components for adolescent, family environment is the most stressful and unpleasant environment.

Addictive use of internet is also harmful for mental well- being of adolescences. Family environment plays a vital role in the excessive use of internet among adolescence (Chemnad et al., 2023). Adolescence never realizes that they are excessively using internet. They believe that they are spending right amount of time (Vogels et al., 2022). Maladaptive behaviors including antisocial behavior and conduct disorders among adolescence are rooted in their relationship with their parents, optimistic relations with parents' nurtures positive and socially competent personalities (Laursen, Coy & Collins (2017). Parental acceptance / rejection is a key factor of psychological problems among children and adolescence (Rohner, 2002). When children failed to receive physical and verbal love from their parents, they try to hide their feelings of being rejected in other mental engagements including excessive use of internet (Fard, Mousavi & Pooravari, 2015). Adolescence, the age of storm determines how much love and affection adolescence had received from their parents, since childhood? The decreased parental acceptance drives adolescence towards increased use of internet (Laible & Raffaelli, 2000). Due to parent's continuous criticism, adolescences feel discomfort in the physical environment. They feel accepted and comfortable in virtual environment where no one criticizes them. Child /Parents relationship is weak in those families where parents are busy and having less time for their children. Adolescence tries to fill the gap and get emotional support for their psychological insecurities in the virtual environment of internet which results in internet addiction. (Tilki & Epli, 2022).

Fard, Mousavi, and Pooravari (2015) revealed in the results of their study, "Predictive role of parental acceptance, rejection and control in the internet addiction of the female students" parental rejection and hostility as strong predictor of adolescence uncontrollable use of internet. The success and development of the nation depends on the mental and physical fitness of the youngsters of that nation there is a need to explore physical and psychological problems related with the wellbeing of their new generation.

1.3. Hypotheses

For present study following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Maternal and paternal rejection would be significant predictors of internet addiction among young adolescence.
2. Male and female students would significantly differ on internet addiction.

2. Methodology

Present research is based on correlation research design; purpose of the research was to examine the involvement of parental acceptance or rejection in the addictive use of internet among University students. For the purpose of data collection, Simple random technique was used.

2.2. Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 844 University undergraduates, including 389, male students and 455 female students. Data was collected from three Universities located in Jamshoro district. Data was collected from the Undergraduate students with age of between 16 to 28 years.

2.3. Measures

Three valid and reliable research tools were used for the measurement of the research variables.

2.4. Personal Information Questionnaire

Demographic variables of the participants were gathered through personal information in the form of questionnaire to collect demographic information of the participants. The information includes, parent's level of education, economic status, age, sex, mother tongue of the participants.

2.5. Internet Addiction Test

For the measurement of internet addiction, the participant's internet addiction test developed by Kimberly Young (1996) was administered on participants. The test has 20 items to measure time duration, presence of the symptoms of internet addiction was used in present study. The range of item responses in test is from not applicable to always. There are three categories of internet addiction; Mild, Moderate and Severe Internet Addiction. The response of the participants can be measured on five point Likert scale, strongly agree to

strongly disagree. Score ranges from 20 to 100, 50 to 79 scores show addictive use of internet. The range of 80 to 100 scores denotes severe internet addiction, 49 score is considered as normal. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of the test is 0.91.

2.6. Adult PARQ and Control: Mother and Father

For the measurement of parental acceptance/rejection Adult PARQ and Control developed by Rohner (1995). There are 73 items in each scale (I.e. mother and father), and are nearly same as to the behavioral control portion of the IPAR/CQ and acceptance and rejection. Participants of the study return back on to their childhood experience of parental acceptance –rejection and behavioral control. The four scales measure the level of maternal warmth affection through respondents' perceptions (e.g. my mother and father said nice things about me), hostility or aggression (e.g. my mother nagged or scolded me when I was bad), indifference or neglect (my mother and father paid no attention to me), and undifferentiated rejection (my mother and father did not really love me). In addition to these, four scale measures perceived maternal or paternal behavioral control (permissiveness-strictness). The acceptance/ rejection for both mother and father part of the measure has .95 coefficients.

3. Results

Hypothesis 1 stated that parental acceptance/rejection would significantly predict internet addiction. To test the hypothesis, Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was carried out. Maternal rejection was entered as a predictor in the first step and it explained 3.7% of variance in the internet addiction, $F(1, 842) = 32.62$, $p < .001$, with a standardized beta coefficient of $\beta = .19$, $p < .001$. Paternal rejection was entered as a predictor in the second step and it explained further .09% variance in internet addiction, $F(1, 841) = 7.54$, $p < .01$, with a standardized beta coefficient of $\beta = .17$, $p < .01$. In the second step, the beta coefficient of maternal rejection reduced to $\beta = .06$, $p > .05$. The overall model explained 4.4% of variance in internet addiction.

Results of the study explained both parent's rejection (maternal, and paternal) as a strong indicators of internet addiction among adolescence. However, father's rejection was stronger predictor of internet addiction as compared to mother's rejection (See Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
Maternal Acceptance/Rejection	2.30	0.48	-0.73	-0.46
Paternal Acceptance/Rejection	2.31	0.49	-0.76	-0.22

Internet Addiction	2.16	0.59	0.15	-0.36
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Note: $N = 844$

Table 2

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Internet Addiction from Maternal & Paternal Rejection (N=844)

Predictors	Model 1		Model 2		95% CI for B	
	B	β	B	β	LL	UL
Step 1: Maternal Rejection	.24**	.19	.067	.06	-.08	.21
Step 2: Paternal Rejection			.20*	.17	.06	.34
R^2	.04**		.05**			
F	32.62		20.20			
ΔR^2			.009			
ΔF			7.54			

Note. ΔR^2 = R square change, B = unstandardized beta, β = standardized beta, CI = confidence interval, LL = lower limit, UL = upper limit, ** $p < .001$, * $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 2 stated that males and females would significantly differ on internet addiction. Results of Independent Samples t-test in Table 2 indicate that on average, males have greater ($M = 2.26$, $SD = .53$) internet addiction than females ($M = 2.07$, $SD = .63$) which is statistically significant, $t(1,841.90) = 4.72$, $p < .001$, with a small effect size of $r = .16$.

Table 3

Independent-Samples t-test Predicting Internet Addiction from Gender

Variable	Males		Females		t	r
	M	SD	M	SD		
Internet Addiction	2.26	.53	2.07	.63	4.72*	.16

Note. males = 389, females = 455, * = $p < .001$.

Table 4

Simple Linear Regression Analysis: Predicting Internet Addiction from Gender

Predictor	R	B	SE	t	p
Gender	.16	-.19	.04	-4.66	<.001
R-Squared	.025				
Adjusted R-Squared	.024				

<i>F</i>	21.71
<i>df</i>	1,842

Note: *Gender: Male = 0, Female = 1, B = Unstandardized Beta, df = Degrees of Freedom, DV = Internet Addiction*

4. Discussion

The present study was aimed to investigate the role of parental acceptance/rejection in the development of internet addiction among adolescence. There were two hypotheses of the study. 1. Parental acceptance/rejection would significantly predict internet addiction. 2. Male and female students significantly differ on internet addiction. Data was collected from three universities; Sindh University, Liaquat University of Medical Science, and Mehran Engineering University situated in Jamshoro. 844 students were included in sample of the study including n=389 male and 455 female students age range between 16 to 28 years. Results of the study revealed both maternal and paternal are involved in the development of internet addiction among adolescence; further the results indicate paternal rejection was more strongly predicting internet addiction than maternal rejection.

Internet addiction has become serious problem, especially young adolescents are more prone to it (Chemnad et al., 2023). These results are not surprising or exceptional, parents are the most important relations in the life of a child. They are the source of love, support and care. The lack of parent-child communication has direct link with internet addiction. It is the stronger predictor of internet addiction among those children who are feeling rejected by their parents (Li, Zhen & Zhang, 2021). Results of the present study is in the line of the studies conducted in the same area of research. Previous studies conducted by Ahmadi, Abdolmaleki, Afsardir, and Esmaili, (2010) also finds significant positive relationship between parental rejection and internet addiction among adolescence. Zhu, Xie, Chen, and Zhang (2019) finds parental rejection was associated with problematic cell phone use in 365 Chinese University students, (17-19 years old) which was mediated with discrimination and lower academic activities.

The kind of relationship between child with their parent will determine the behavioral and emotional problems when they become adolescence (Pinquart, 2017).

Results of the study also indicate paternal rejection (rejection from father) as a strong indicator of internet addiction among adolescence. Several past research studies indicate positive outcome of father's involvement in child's education, social relations, and psychological well-being. (Amato, 1994; Furstenberg & Marmer, 1993). In the personality development of a child, father plays an important role. Lack of father's warmth or father's rejection can cause many psychological and behavioral problems in

adolescence. In Pakistan Bhutto (2004), explored association between adolescences adjustment & psychological problems with lack of paternal warmth and affection. In Pakistani research literature, there is a lack of studies on this important issue. Positive bonding between adolescent and father can diminish the negative impact of paternal psychological control (Zhu, Deng & Bai, 2023).

The second hypothesis of the study states that male and female students significantly differ on internet addiction. Results of the study declared that on average, male students have greater internet addiction than female students. Gender is a significant variable in the study of internet addiction (Ponce-Rajo et al., 2013). Several past research studies confirmed that male students are more prone to internet addiction as compared to female students. Rigelsky, et al. (2021) In their study, which was aimed to investigate the differences in internet addiction between male and female university students. Sample of the study was taken from Slovak Republic University students. Results showed higher rate of internet addiction among male students than female students. Many other studies in the same line of research also confirmed that male students received significantly higher score on internet addiction scales as compared to female students. (Durkee et al., 2012; Chaudhari et al., 2015; Sayyah & Khanafereh, 2019).

In Pakistan Azeez et al., (2014) in their study “Internet as Need or Addiction Amongst Pakistani Youth” explored the use of internet at university level students. Data was collected from 1000 students 625 males and 375 randomly selected from various universities of Pakistan. Results of their study revealed that male university students were more addicted to internet than female university students.

In all addictive behavioral problems the gender differences exist. The data for present study was taken from Sindh, Pakistan. Pakistan is an Asian country which believes in collectivist culture. During the socialization process, girl child is taught to perform many roles at home. Being busy in their responsibilities, besides getting education, girls in Pakistan in general and in Sindh province in particular can't get much time to use internet.

5. Limitations

The study has some limitations. Data of the present study was only collected from three Universities. Data is collected from only undergraduate University students. Demographic variables are collected but not described the nature and distribution of the sample used with inferential statistics.

6. Conclusion

Present study contributes in existing literature by giving awareness about the relationship between internet addiction and parental rejection. The study suggests how parental rejection in general and father's rejection in particular involves in the internet addiction among adolescence. Internet become an inevitable part of modern life. Besides benefits of internet use, its excessive use results in addiction. Parental rejection or absence of parental warmth and

affection leads an adolescence towards internet addiction, when they feel depressed or lonely they try to seek help from internet use. Parental rejection is significantly connected with psychological issues among adolescence. The adolescence's excessive use of internet associated with parental rejection should be taken as a serious issue. The excessive use of internet with lack of parental warmth and affection can cause many behavioral, social, emotional and psychological problems among adolescence. Internet addiction is equally harmful as gambling, alcohol and drug addiction. Gender difference in problematic use of internet is frequently reporting male were overindulging in the internet addiction than females. Because female adolescents received better supervision from family members as compared to male participants. The results of the studies have significance in the development of prevention strategies and programs to control internet addiction among adolescence.

6. Suggestions/ Recommendations

Results of the present study indicate the strong parental rejection role in the development of internet addiction among adolescence. Internet is the most target of attention among adolescence they spend nearly whole day on internet usage. The problem of internet addiction becomes worse in the case of parental rejection. Parents role in the personality development of a child is crucial. The significant figures in the life of a growing children are their parents, development of habits and transfer of habits into addiction could be control with the help of parental warmth and affection. Parents should receive training programs to gain knowledge how to control and monitor their children's internet usage. Parents should decrease their own internet usage, and give quality time to their children. The reduction of communication gap between adolescence and parents also play an important role. Especially, child-father positive relationship act as a moderator that can strengthen fathers behavioral control and reduce the negative feelings of being rejected. There must be some training programs for parents to learn the paternal and maternal involvement in their children's daily life and parental control. Parental control including they can monitor, limit, and block internet activities. Adolescence with emotional, and psychological disturbances tries to get an escape in virtual world. Positive bonding between children and parents, mutual trust in a healthy, open and honest communication, and comfortable environment can work as a best coping strategy to keep safe adolescence from internet addiction and their dependency on virtual environment.

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