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Internet Addiction and Its Effects on Academic Motivation: An Empirical Study among University Students

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Abstract

The Internet has emerged as a significant catalyst for societal transformation, impacting human behavior and giving rise to concerns about Internet addiction. University students represent a demographic that extensively utilizes the Internet for both informational and entertainment purposes. This research aims to investigate the interplay between Internet addiction and academic motivation, shedding light on the previously identified adverse effects on academic performance within a university context. The study endeavors to enhance our understanding of this issue by exploring potential connections between patterns of Internet use, Internet addiction, and students' motivation to study. A survey was conducted involving 187 students enrolled in three different faculties at the University of Tirana, Albania. Participants completed two questionnaires: the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). The collected data were subjected to analysis to identify instances of Internet addiction and ascertain any correlations between this phenomenon and academic motivation. The study's findings underscore the pervasive influence of the Internet on students' academic lives. The results reveal a negative association between levels of Internet addiction and various facets of motivation to study. Regardless of the purpose, extended Internet usage is shown to detrimentally impact academic performance. Consequently, it is imperative to closely monitor students' academic progress and address issues related to technology addiction through appropriate interventions.

Keywords: *Internet addiction, academic motivation, university students, technology.*

Introduction

The pervasive influence of the Internet has become an integral part of our daily lives, constituting a fundamental pillar of the contemporary information-driven society. In today's world, it is nearly inconceivable to envision an existence devoid of the Internet's presence. Recent statistics from January 2023 reveal that there are a staggering 5.16 billion Internet users globally, encompassing an impressive 64.4% of the world's population (Statista, 2023). The Internet's sphere of influence extends across a diverse spectrum of domains, with a mounting number of users engaging in a myriad of online activities. Notably, the cyber community has witnessed a significant surge in participation, with individuals of all age groups becoming active denizens of the digital realm.

Emerging research underscores the pivotal role of age as a determining factor in shaping Internet usage patterns. Adolescents, in particular, exhibit a pronounced inclination toward digital technologies, surpassing their adult counterparts in this regard. In Albania, for instance, a remarkable 94.3% of teenagers are regular Internet users (INSTAT

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Albania, 2023). Remarkably, it is the age bracket comprising high school and university students, that boasts the highest prevalence of computer and Internet utilization. This demographic accounts for a substantial 70% of all Internet users who harness the online medium for purposes ranging from information retrieval to entertainment.

As the primary generators and consumers of digital content, adolescents occupy a central position in the flourishing landscape of digital marketing endeavors (Montgomery, Gottlieb–Robles, & Larson, 2004). A significant portion of new products and services is meticulously crafted to resonate with the emotions, behaviors, and values that define youth culture. Consequently, young individuals emerge as early adopters and avid users of digital technologies. When coupled with the inherent psychological vulnerabilities associated with youth, this heightened involvement can render this age group susceptible to digital disturbances (Chou, Condron, & Belland, 2005; Tsai & Lin, 2003).

The excessive use of the Internet has been linked to a phenomenon referred to as "*Internet abuse*" by Morahan–Martin (2008). This term characterizes the patterns of Internet use that result in disruptions in an individual's life, although it does not inherently imply the presence of a specific disease or addictive behavior (Morahan–Martin, 2008). Researchers examining issues related to Internet usage have employed various terminologies to describe the adverse consequences of excessive Internet engagement, such as: Internet addiction, Internet addiction disorder, Internet dependence, problematic Internet use, or pathological Internet use (Chen et al. 2004; Chou and Hsai 2000; Griffiths 1998; Kandell 1998; Morahan-Martin and Schumacher). Despite the ongoing evolution and negotiation of the conceptualization of this condition in the realm of research, there is a consensus acknowledging its existence and the presentation of similar symptoms. These include impairments in academic and occupational spheres, interpersonal conflicts, an obsessive preoccupation with Internet use, the utilization of the Internet as a means to alleviate negative moods, and substantial disruptions in users' social lives (Morahan–Martin, 2008).

Some scholars and clinicians, including Young (1998), employ the term "*Internet addiction*" to classify this condition as a variant of impulse control disorder (Chou, Condron & Belland, 2005; Tsai & Lin, 2003). Although traditionally associated with physical dependencies on substances (Holden, 2001), the concept of addiction has been extended to encompass excessive Internet utilization. In this context, *"Internet addiction*" is defined as "*an individual's inability to control their Internet use, which in turn leads to feelings of distress and functional impairment of daily activities*" (Shapira et al., 2003). Young, in particular, characterizes Internet addiction as "an impulse-control disorder primarily characterized by psychological dependence on the Internet" (Young, 2004). As a relatively recent phenomenon, the propensity for excessive Internet usage is likely rooted in pre-existing psychological mechanisms. According to Yan (2009), only a minority of adolescents and adults possess a comprehensive understanding of the Internet's true nature. The addictive element may stem from the quest for stimulation through interactive online services, or the Internet may serve as a means of escaping the challenges encountered in real-life circumstances.

Theoretical Background

The role of the Internet in higher education has become increasingly significant, as evidenced by extensive research exploring its utilization and impact (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Moore et al., 2001). Scholars have devoted considerable attention to investigating Internet usage in higher education and its associated consequences. Throughout the years, various measures have been devised to operationalize the concept of Internet addiction and its related constructs. Some of these measurements have been rooted in specific theoretical frameworks, such as the cognitive behavioral model proposed by Davis

(2001). Additionally, alternative assessment tools have emerged from case studies, expert opinions, or existing literature pertaining to symptoms associated with Internet addiction.

While digital communication technologies in higher education offer numerous potential advantages (Weigel, 2002), they also raise several concerns. Leung and Lee (2012) unveiled a strong positive correlation between "*Internet literacy*" and academic performance. Chen et al. (2014) emphasized the significance of Internet-use anxiety in determining students' effective utilization of this technology. Age has emerged as a noteworthy determinant in the context of Internet addiction, rendering it a crucial issue within higher education (Kandell, 1998; Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000). For instance, Fortson et al. (2007) reported that 22% of college-aged students met the criteria for Internet addiction, while Sahin (2011) found that individuals under the age of 19 exhibited substantially higher levels of Internet addiction disorder compared to those over the age of 30.

Despite students often extolling the benefits of the Internet for academic purposes, an array of research findings has cast doubt on the relationship between the use of digital learning technologies and the overall learning experience and achievement in higher education (e.g., Hazelhurst et al., 2011; Shields & Kane, 2011). Young (1998), for example, conducted an analysis of Internet usage among undergraduates and discovered that 58% of those categorized as excessive Internet users also earned poor academic grades. Although several studies have explored the association between Internet addiction and academic performance, further research is warranted to probe into the impact of Internet addiction on students' motivation to study (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992; Schiefele Rheinberg, 1997).

Exploring the relationship between Internet addiction and motivation to study could yield valuable insights into how Internet addiction influences academic performance. Motivation to study is a multidimensional construct encompassing both internal and external driving forces for learning, individuals' self-perceptions of their learning capabilities, and the value ascribed to acquiring knowledge (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992). This motivation is considered a potent driver of learning and academic outcomes, with the potential to predict overall academic success (e.g., Murayama et al., 2013; Pintrich et al., 1991).

Methodology

In order to provide valuable insights to parents, educators, and counselors regarding the consequences of Internet use, it becomes imperative to undertake empirical investigations into the underlying variables associated with Internet addiction. This study embraced the concept of Internet addiction, as it allows for the evaluation of this condition within a nonpathological population and frames Internet behavior on a continuum that ranges from normal to problematic usage. The central objective of this study is to make a meaningful contribution to this area of inquiry by exploring potential connections between patterns of Internet use, Internet addiction, and motivation to study.

A total of 187 participants, comprising 100 females and 87 males, were recruited from three different faculties offering bachelor's degree programs at the University of Tirana, Albania. These participants willingly responded to our invitation to participate in this research endeavor. Over a period of three weeks designated for data collection, we disseminated 187 paper-based questionnaires evenly across the participants, who were approached in various academic settings, including faculty libraries, classrooms, lecture halls, and computer centers. Subsequently, the participants engaged in the completion of two distinct questionnaires, namely The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). These questionnaires were distributed solely among students who had willingly agreed to partake in the survey. The selected

sample represented a diverse array of academic disciplines, encompassing economic sciences, natural sciences, and foreign languages. It is essential to note that all participants volunteered to participate in the study. Given our anticipation of employing regression analyses and the involvement of approximately five to six variables in these regression procedures, our recruitment efforts continued until a count of 187 participants was reached. This figure was deemed adequate to ensure a sufficient number of cases for the planned analyses, as suggested by Howell (1998), which recommends 20 to 40 cases per variable.

The participants within our sample exhibited a mean age of 19.1 (± 1.9, ranging from 18 to 29) years. It is noteworthy that all participants were pursuing bachelor's degrees, distributed across three faculties as follows: 60 (32%) were enrolled in Foreign Languages, 70 (37.4%) in Economy, and 57 (30.6%) in Natural Sciences. The questionnaires were disseminated to the participating students, who were allotted approximately twentyfive minutes for each questionnaire completion.

Two inquiries were directed towards the participants concerning their Internet usage. In one query, respondents were prompted to select from three options indicating the average number of hours they spent on the Internet per day over the preceding three months. The responses were as follows: 73 individuals (39%) reported spending between 1 and 3 hours daily online, 88 individuals (47%) reported spending between 4 and 7 hours daily online, while 26 individuals (14%) reported spending over 7 hours daily online.

Furthermore, participants were requested to allocate the percentage of their online time to various Internet-related activities. The breakdown of their responses is as follows: 35% engaged in social media activities (such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.); 18% devoted their time to entertainment (comprising music, movies, and television); 23% were dedicated to educational pursuits (including college work and research); 14% participated in gaming activities; 10% utilized the Internet for shopping; and 6% allocated their online time to pornography-related content.

Materials

The Internet Addiction Test (IAT), originally introduced by Young (1998), stands as one of the most extensively employed instruments for evaluating Internet addiction, particularly among the younger demographic, as evidenced by its widespread utilization within the existing literature (e.g., Chang and Man Law 2008; Widyanto & McMurran 2004; Yang 2001; Young 1998a). The IAT comprises twenty items designed to gauge the severity of adverse consequences stemming from excessive Internet use. These items encompass aspects such as an individual's patterns of Internet usage, their perspectives on the Internet, and issues linked to Internet-related behavior. Respondents rate each item on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, culminating in a total score spanning from 20 to 1,000. For every item, respondents can choose a response ranging from 1 - "*not at all*" to 5 - "*always*," with higher aggregate item scores signifying a more pronounced degree of Internet addiction. While the factor structure of the IAT remains subject to ongoing debate (refer to Chang and Man Law 2008; Widyanto and McMurran 2004), Young (1998) has proposed that an IAT total score of 40 or higher indicates problematic Internet usage (see also Hardie and Tee 2007; Romano et al. 2013; Widyanto and McMurran 2004). The internal consistency of the scale, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, has been reported to range from 0.80 to 0.87 (Widyanto and McMurran, 2004; Young, 1998). Despite the fact that the IAT was developed a quarter-century ago, it continues to be employed in contemporary research to investigate fundamental phenomena, such as the interplay between various forms of addiction (Pallanti et al., 2006) and other correlates of Internet addiction (Ferraro et al., 2007; Li & Chung, 2006).

The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), formulated by Pintrich and DeGroot (1990), serves as a tool for assessing students' learning strategies and motivation to study. For the purposes of this study, only the motivation scale was utilized, encompassing 31 items designed to gauge students' motivation levels concerning various course topics. Each question is evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicative of heightened motivation to learn. Six distinct facets of study motivation are assessed: *intrinsic goal orientation* (comprising four items related to factors like challenge, curiosity, mastery, etc.); *extrinsic goal orientation* (comprising four items pertaining to considerations such as grades, rewards, and evaluations by others); *task value* (encompassing six items assessing the course's significance to the student); *control of learning* (comprising four items gauging the extent to which outcomes reflect the student's personal ability); and *self-efficacy for learning* (encompassing eight items gauging the student's belief in their capacity to learn). The score for each scale is determined by summing up the responses and dividing the total by the number of items associated with that particular scale. The internal consistency of the scales varies, ranging from 0.61 for extrinsic motivation to 0.88 for test anxiety (Pintrich 1991), and the correlations between these scales and final grades have been found to be satisfactory (Pintrich et al. 1991). This scale has been extensively employed among college students (Pintrich, 2004).

Procedure

Participants were informed about the study's nature, presented as research investigating learning styles and personality. Those interested in participating were instructed to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires were not translated into Albanian, because the students exhibited a high level of proficiency in the English language. Supplementary information was presented regarding the study, reiterating its focus on learning styles and personality and explaining the nature of the questionnaires to be completed. The information communicated the participants' right to discontinue their involvement at any point and detailed the measures in place to safeguard their privacy.

Results

Table 1-a displays the means for the variables to be analyzed in this study for each of the three disciplines. There is almost no difference between the means of these variables, with the exception that there were more males in the science and engineering group than in the other two. None of these variables displayed statistically significant differences (all p-values 0.05).

Table1-a: Means (standard deviations) for intrinsic orientation, extrinsic orientation, task value, control of learning, self-esteem, and test anxiety among students from various disciplines.

Faculty	Nr	%	Age	Intrinsic Orientation	Extrinsic Orientation	Task Value	Control of Learning	Self Esteem	Test Anxiety
Faculty of Foreign Languages	60	41	18.9 (1.8)	4.8 (1.2)	4.7 (1.7)	5.4 (1.2)	3.9 (1.3)	5.3 (1.1)	4.1 (1.6)
Faculty of	70	47	19 (1.9)	5.4 (1.1)	4.8 (1.5)	5.00	4.1 (1.2)	5.6 (1)	4.5 (1.9)

Economic Sciences						(1.8)			
Faculty of Natural Sciences	57	73	19.4 (2.00)	5.00 (1.3)	4.9 (1.6)	5.3 (1.3)	3.9 (1.2)	5.1 (1.2)	47 (1.8)

Table 1-b displays the mean Internet addiction scores for each discipline, as well as the numbers and percentages of students in each discipline who spend a specific number of hours per week on the Internet. Examining these data reveals that Natural Sciences students have a marginally higher Internet addiction score. According to the ANOVA results, the IAT score did not differ significantly between groups (p-value > 0.05), nor did the number of hours spent on the Internet per week (Good and Fit Test, p-value > 0.05).

Students in the three time usage categories scored significantly differently on the IAT:1-3 per day = 38.80 (+-10.2; range 20-75):4-7h per day = 39.4 (+-12.5; range: 20-80); and >7h per day = 44.2 (+-16.3; range: 26-90); p 0.05, partial eta2 =0.41; ANOVA results. Tukey's tests for statistically significant differences revealed that the >7 h per day group had substantially higher scores than the other two groups, ps 0.05, whereas the lower two usage groups did not differ from each other (p > 0.05).

Table1-b: Means (standards–deviations) for Internet addiction (IAT) and hours on the Internet.

	IAT	1-3 hours	4-7 hours	>7 hours
Faculty of Foreign Languages	40.7 (11.4%)	36 (60%)	16 (26.6%)	8 (13.4%)
Faculty of Economic Sciences	38.1 (9.8%)	17 (24.3 %)	43 (61.4%)	10 (14.3%)
Faculty of Natural Sciences	42.2 (14.1%)	20 (35%)	29 (5b.8)	8 (14.2%)

Table 2. displays the sample means and standard deviations for the motivation to study questionnaire (MSLQ) measures, as well as the means (standard deviations) for the test norms provided by Pintrich et al. (1991). In addition, the Pearson correlations between the scales, as well as their correlations with age and gender (point biserial correlation), are presented. The sample means were generally consistent with the normative data provided for this test, with the possible exception of control of learning, which appeared to be slightly lower than expected based on the normative data provided in the test manual (Pintrich et al., 1991). The scales were all highly correlated with one another, but there was no correlation between test scores and participants' age or gender.

Hierarchical multiple regressions were performed on the motivation to study scales in order to determine whether problematic Internet addiction had an independent effect on study motivation. In each instance, depression, anxiety, and social isolation scores were input into the first block of a regression model predicting the motivation to study score. On the second block, Internet addiction (IAT) was added as an additional predictor. If the second block was more significant than the first, it would indicate that problematic Internet use predicts study motivation independently of the first block.

The second block containing all predictors was statistically significantly related to intrinsic task orientation, F (5,182) =4.37, p0.05, R2=0.11 (intrinsic task orientation). IAT was the only significant predictor of intrinsic goal orientation in this second model.

Standardized beta = -0.402, p <0.05. F (1,180) = 3.84, p 0.05, indicates that the addition of IAT to the regression analysis resulted in a statistically significant enhancement in predictive accuracy relative to depression, anxiety, and social anxiety as predictors.

Neither the first block containing depression, anxiety, and social isolation nor the second block containing all predictors had a statistically significant relationship with extrinsic task orientation.

Neither the first block containing depression, anxiety, and social isolation, F (1,182) = 3.84, p > 0.0.05, R2= 0.03, nor the second block containing all predictors, F 1, R2= 0.03, was statistically associated with task value.

F (5, 182) = 2.21, p 0.05, R2 = 0.1 indicated a statistically significant relationship between the second block containing all predictors and intrinsic task orientation for control over learning. IAT was the only significant predictor of intrinsic goal orientation in this second model, with standardized beta = -0.31 and p 0.05. F (1,182) = 3.84, p 0.05; The addition of IAT to the regression analysis resulted in a statistically significant enhancement in predictive accuracy compared to depression, anxiety, and social anxiety as predictors.

The second block containing all predictors was statistically significantly related to intrinsic task orientation for learning self-efficacy, F (5,180) = 2.21, p 0.05, R2 = 0.2. IAT was the only significant predictor of intrinsic goal orientation in this second model (standardized beta = -0.402, p 0.05). F (1, 182) = 3.84, p 0.05; the addition of IAT to the regression analysis resulted in a statistically significant improvement in predictive accuracy compared to depression, anxiety, and social anxiety as predictors.

The second block containing all predictors was significantly associated with test anxiety, F (5,180) =2.21, p0.05, R2 = 0.21. IAT was the only significant predictor of intrinsic goal orientation in the second model (standardized beta = 0.421, p0.05). F 1 indicates that the addition of IAT to the regression analysis did not result in a statistically significant increase in predictive accuracy when compared to depression, anxiety, and social anxiety as predictors.

Table 2: Means and standard deviations for the motivation to study questionnaire scales, as well as the means (standard deviations) for the test norms and Pearson correlations with other subscales, age, and gender (point biserial correlation).

	Sample mean (SD)	Norm mean (SD)	EQ	TV	CL	SE	TA	Age	Gender
Intrinsic orientation	5.05 (1.19)	5.13 (1.1)	0.471*	0.547*	0.513*	0.598	0.213*	-0.201	-0.072
Extrinsic Orientation	4.80 (1.59)	5.2 (1.07)		0.684*	0.532*	0.401*	0.456*	-0.014	-0.113
Task value	5.22 (1.46)	5.8 (1.31)			0.731*	0.462*	0.351*	-0.023	-0.141
Control of Learning	3.97 (1.23)	5.94 (1.05)				0.397*	0.311*	-0.037	-0.093
Self-efficacy	5.35 (1.09)	5.72 (1.13)					0.017	-0.114	-0.031
Test Anxiety	4.43	3.87						0.101	-0.065

	(1.77)	(1.51)							

*P <0.05

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to explore the nexus between Internet addiction, assessed via the Internet Addiction Test (Young, 1998), and several dimensions of academic motivation (Pintrich et al., 1991). Higher levels of Internet addiction were found to be inversely related to various facets of motivation to study, including intrinsic goal orientation, learning control, and learning self-efficacy. While prior research has established a link between Internet addiction and academic performance in college students (Hazelhurst et al., 2011; Kubey et al., 2001; Shields & Kane, 2011; Young, 1998), the present findings indicate that Internet-related issues also impact elements of motivation to study. These specific facets have been associated with Internet addiction among college-aged adults (Gundogar et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2013; Romano et al., 2013; Weinstein & Lejoyeux, 2010) and have predictive value in terms of diminished study motivation (Kim & Pekrun, 2014). Thus, these results unveil a relatively novel, independent association between Internet use and students' motivation to study.

The scores attained on the employed motivation assessment tool, the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990), closely resembled those reported in previous studies employing this instrument with similar participant groups and utilizing the same scale (e.g., Pintrich et al., 1991). The levels of Internet addiction observed in this sample exceeded the estimated prevalence in the general population, which stands at approximately 10% (Christakis, 2010). However, this aligns with findings from studies utilizing university samples within the same age range (Romano et al., 2013). The absence of the previously observed gender association with Internet addiction (Johansson & Gotestam, 2004) may be attributed to the relatively youthful composition of the sample and the swiftly evolving nature of Internet usage. Furthermore, aside from anxiety, the levels of psychological disorders in the sample conformed to expectations for this demographic. The specific relationship uncovered between Internet addiction and motivation to study encompassed multiple aspects of motivation, particularly intrinsic goal orientation, control over learning, and self-efficacy, hinting at the possibility that Internet-related problems might adversely impact academic performance (Hazelhurst et al., 2011; Shields & Kane) by affecting components of motivation that, to varying degrees, relate to an individual's goals and self-perceptions.

Regarding implications for higher education, the present findings point to a potential concern associated with the growing reliance on digital devices as educational tools, as heightened Internet usage may contribute to increased Internet dependency issues. As Internet or digital dependence escalates, motivation to study appears to decline. This holds true irrespective of the academic discipline, as students from three diverse fields exhibited strikingly similar results regarding Internet utilization, Internet addiction, and study motivation. However, it should be noted that the objective of this study was not to identify a causal mechanism; rather, it merely highlights a plausible association.

Nonetheless, it is worth emphasizing that students in the higher Internet usage categories (> 7 hours) demonstrated a greater degree of Internet dependency, as indicated by the Internet Addiction Test. This connection suggests a possible mechanism whereby mandating Internet usage for studying may heighten the risk of Internet dependence and, consequently, diminish study motivation. This supposition, however, must be qualified since correlations of the sort depicted by the current data do not furnish evidence of causation; additional longitudinal research will be necessary to establish this connection. The nature and extent of Internet usage may also play a mediating role in this mechanism, a topic deserving of further investigation.

The study is not without its limitations, which warrant further exploration to assess their impact on the findings and generalizability. The recruitment strategy employed may constrain the generalizability of the findings, despite the sample possessing characteristics consistent with those observed in other studies. It remains uncertain whether these students are representative of all students. The distribution of the sample by age and gender in various disciplines suggests comparability along these dimensions. However, low-level Internet users have yet to be included in the survey. Relying on self-reported Internet issues and self-reported research motivation could be perceived as a limitation, although the inclusion of objective measures related to these traits enhances the study's robustness. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that behavioral addiction and study motivation are predominantly subjective constructs that do not necessarily align with objectively quantifiable behaviors. For instance, Internet addiction (Young, 1998) pertains to disturbances in an individual's functioning rather than the quantity of hours spent on the Internet, making it challenging to objectively quantify this domain.

This study has unearthed an association between Internet addiction and diminished motivation to study, especially concerning self-generated motivational domains, which may pose challenges for institutions of higher education. With the increasing utilization of digital learning tools, certain students may require support, as heightened reliance on these tools may negatively impact their educational experiences and outcomes.

Conclusions and Limitations

In light of the proliferation of Internet usage and its manifold conveniences, concerns have arisen regarding the potential repercussions of excessive Internet engagement on the lives of students. The apprehensions voiced by parents and educators have spurred a wave of research aimed at elucidating the development of maladaptive online behaviors, including Internet addiction. This study sought to provide a multidimensional understanding of Internet addiction and scrutinize the underlying factor structure of its assessment tool, Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT). The investigation encompassed a cohort comprising 60.3% female and 39.7% male undergraduate students from the University of Tirana.

Employing the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), this study, conducted on a sample of 187 Albanian university students, spotlighted an exploration of students' Internet addiction and its correlative relationship with motivation to study.

Regarding implications for higher education, the present findings point to a potential concern associated with the growing reliance on digital devices as educational tools, as heightened Internet usage may contribute to increased Internet dependency issues. As Internet or digital dependence escalates, motivation to study appears to decline. This holds true irrespective of the academic discipline, as students from three diverse fields exhibited strikingly similar results regarding Internet utilization, Internet addiction, and study motivation. However, it should be noted that the objective of this study was not to identify a causal mechanism; rather, it merely highlights a plausible association.

It is imperative that subsequent research endeavors be undertaken to monitor these students. The realm of empirical research into Internet abuse remains relatively nascent, warranting a greater volume of studies to establish a robust theoretical foundation and efficacious assessment and intervention tools.

While a subset of students at the University of Tirana manifests primary indicators of Internet addiction, it is incumbent upon us to equip young individuals with the knowledge necessary for the prudent use of the Internet, thereby mitigating the risk of this potential disorder. Further investigations into the structural aspects of Internet addiction can enhance our comprehension of this phenomenon, along with the characteristics of associated measurement instruments. To assess the validity and reliability of the IAT,

future research endeavors of a similar nature may be undertaken with diverse demographic cohorts. Furthermore, the adverse impact of the Internet warrants continued exploration. It is our aspiration that this study will stimulate ongoing discourse and furnish a foundation for subsequent research endeavors, offering pertinent insights from the distinctive cultural context of Albania. This study is subject to the same limitations observed in extant literature. Longitudinal studies are imperative for ascertaining causality among these variables. Finally, it is worth noting that the IAT scores are reflective of the level of Internet abuse at the time of data collection and do not provide insights into its developmental trajectory.

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