



The Journal of *News Science*

Vol. 15, No. 2, Ser.58, summer 2026, P. 40- 45

Journal homepage: <https://www.mjourcom.ir/>

DOI : <http://doi.org/10.22034/lrsi.2025.530669.1391>

Open Access

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A Synthetic Review of Correlates of Internet Addiction in Adolescents

Omid Ghasemi¹ | Fariborz Dortaj² | Ali Delavar³ | Golpar Mehrabi³

1. Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University, Qom Branch, Qom, Iran. Email: omid.ghasemi.psy@gmail.com
2. Corresponding Author, Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. Email: dortaj@atu.ac.ir
3. Professor, Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. Email: delavar@atu.ac.ir
4. Ph.D. in Higher Education Management, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran Iran. E-mail: mehrabi@atu.ac.ir

Received: June 24, 2025

Accepted: October 20, 2025

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction:

In Iran, internet addiction - particularly among adolescent student populations - has evolved into a multidimensional challenge with profound psychosocial consequences. A meta-analysis of 49 studies by Salarvand et al. (2022) revealed that approximately one-third of Iranian adolescents exhibit internet addiction, with a male-to-female ratio of 2:1. A systematic review of domestic research identified three fundamental knowledge gaps: (1) predominant reliance on quantitative assessment, (2) neglect of longitudinal approaches, and (3) insufficient focus on gender-based differences. The present study addresses these lacunae within the framework of indigenous media psychology, offering an evidence-based response to mounting concerns among mental health professionals regarding the "silent epidemic" of internet addiction among Iranian adolescents.

Method:

This applied research employs a qualitative approach utilizing cumulative synthesis methodology. The strategy incorporates meta-synthesis, complemented by inductive content analysis and subsequent synthesis of analytical findings. The study population comprised all accessible Persian-language research on internet addiction indexed in domestic databases. Initial searches identified 250 articles; after applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, 53 articles were retained for analysis. The temporal distribution of the retained studies was as follows: 6 studies (2025), 8 studies (2024), 17 studies (2023), 13 studies (2022), and 9 studies (2021).

Findings:

The results identified five antecedent domains of internet addiction:

1. Cognitive and Information Processing Factors: Personal and social information processing; attentional control; decision-making and self-regulation; attitude formation.
2. Emotional and Affective Regulation Factors: Emotion regulation; anxiety and depression; mental health and resilience.
3. Social and Interpersonal Factors: Social interactions; familial conflict and support; sociocultural pressures; parenting styles and parental roles.
4. Behavioral and Lifestyle Factors: High-risk behaviors; media and technology dependence; time management and academic performance.
5. Quality of Life and Physical Health: Sleep quality; general health and physical motivation.

The inter-coder reliability Kappa coefficient was 0.85, significantly exceeding the acceptable threshold ($\kappa > 0.60$), thereby confirming code independence and robustness.

Conclusion:

- Cognitive Factors: Impaired executive functions and maladaptive cognitions - consistent with Beck's Cognitive-Behavioral Theory - constitute core antecedents of internet addiction (Yu, 2023). Internet addiction significantly compromises self-control, a critical variable in decision-making processes (Müller et al., 2025). Furthermore, parental mediation plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward social media use (Cucci et al., 2024).
- Emotional Factors: Emotions play an undeniable role in addictive behaviors (Chrétien et al., 2025), particularly during the emotional maturation phase of adolescence. Anxiety mediates the relationship between adverse experiences and internet addiction (Liu et al., 2025). Internet addiction correlates directly with poor mental health (Molina et al., 2025), a condition exacerbated by reduced face-to-face interaction (Ergün et al., 2025).
- Social Factors: Internet and social media addiction inversely correlates with the quality of social interactions (Okafor & Onyemaechi, 2025). Parental internet dependency increases adolescent risk through parent-child conflict (Long et al., 2024), especially in households with internet-addicted parents (Panourgia et al., 2025). Digital peer pressure and life stressors contribute to addiction via psychological distress (Herrero et al., 2022), while low social support heightens risk by diminishing resilience (Cui & Chi, 2021).
- Behavioral Factors: Significant associations exist between internet addiction and high-risk behaviors (Muslić et al., 2025). Nomophobia - the fear of being separated from one's mobile phone - and internet addiction exhibit a reciprocal reinforcement dynamic (Muzzammil & Malik, 2025). This phenomenon can be interpreted through the lens of identity formation (the "extended self") and the fear of missing out (Li et al., 2025). Parental education programs have been shown to effectively reduce problematic internet use (Sela et al., 2025).

- Physical Health: Internet addiction correlates with significantly reduced sleep quality (Acharya et al., 2025) and elevated body mass index (BMI) among youth (Che Mokhtar & McGee, 2025).
- This study reveals a self-perpetuating cycle: compulsive news consumption activates the brain's reward system, reinforcing addictive behaviors, while internet addiction simultaneously impairs cognitive functions - including attention, decision-making, and impulse control. This manifests as heightened anxiety, depression, diminished self-esteem, and disrupted social relationships. Non-adaptive parenting styles, characterized by excessive rigidity or neglect, exacerbate these issues. Comprehensive solutions include media literacy education, the development of self-regulatory skills, and the fostering of supportive family environments. The findings underscore the necessity of early interventions and policy initiatives aimed at mitigating exposure to harmful online content.

Data Availability Statement.

Data available on request from the authors.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank anonymous reviewers.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Funding

Not applicable.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References:

- Afrash, I., & Khajir, J. (2021). Proposing an optimal model for Iranian podcast businesses. *News Science*, 10(38), 113–144. (in Persian)
- Aksoy, S., Avunduk, S., Gavcar, E. G., & Büber, A. (2025). Evaluation of social media privacy, internet addiction in adolescents who are victims of sexual abuse and digital awareness in their parents. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2025.01.030>
- Ali, H. F. M., Mousa, M. A. E. G., Atta, M. H. R., & Morsy, S. R. (2024). Exploring the association between internet addiction and time management among undergraduate nursing students. *BMC Nursing*, 23(1), 632. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-024-02273-5>
- Almulla, M. O., Alismail, A. M., Mahama, I., & Almulla, A. A. (2025). Resilience as a predictor of internet addictive behaviours: A study among Ghanaian and Saudi samples using structural equation modelling approach. *BMC Psychology*, 13(1), 77. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-02383-y>
- Arafat, D., Jamal, J., Sachs, A., Suchan, B., Juckel, G., & Thoma, P. (2025). Emotion recognition in individuals with elevated internet addiction scores: An event-related potential study. *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, 349, 111982. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pscychresns.2025.111982>
- Ataman-Bor, N., Dilbiler, Y., Duran, R., & Doğan, H. (2025). Challenges of the digital age: The relationship between internet addiction, loneliness and psychological resilience of university students. *Psychological Reports*, 00332941251335581. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941251335581>
- Babazadeh Moghadam, H., & Khodari, N. (2022). Access to the internet as a new fundamental right. *News Sciences*, 11(1), 73–116. (In Persian)
- Barat Dastjerdi, N., & Abedini, Y. (2023). The relationship between technology addiction and students' social skills. *Trends and Achievements in Learning Technology*, 1(2), 5–22. (In Persian)
- Bennett, S., Farrington, D. P., & Huesmann, L. R. (2005). Explaining gender differences in crime and violence: The importance of social cognitive skills. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 10(3), 263–288. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2004.07.001>
- Bhukya, A., & Lakshmana, G. (2025). Internet use, internet addiction, and mental health among adult population: Bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-025-00495-1>
- Bickham, D. S. (2021). Current research and viewpoints on internet addiction in adolescents. *Current Pediatrics Reports*, 9, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40124-020-00236-3>
- Bilge, M., Uçan, G., & Baydur, H. (2022). Investigating the association between adolescent internet addiction and parental attitudes. *International Journal of Public Health*, 67, 1605065. <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2022.1605065>
- Chrétien, S., et al. (2025). Emotional regulation in substance-related and addictive disorders treatment: A systematic review. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 1–96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-024-10366-8>

- Christ, C., et al. (2024). Internet-based emotion regulation training aimed at reducing violent revictimization and depressive symptoms in victimized depressed patients: Results of a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 355, 95–103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2024.03.028>
- Chu, X., et al. (2021). Social support and cyberbullying for university students: The mediating role of internet addiction and the moderating role of stress. *Current Psychology*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01607-9>
- Garland, E. L. (2021). Mindful positive emotion regulation as a treatment for addiction: From hedonic pleasure to self-transcendent meaning. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 39, 168–177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2021.03.019>
- Günaydin, N., et al. (2022). The relationship between problematic internet use in adolescents and emotion regulation difficulty and family internet attitude. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(2), 1135–1154. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22708>
- Hammood, Y. M., et al. (2025). Gender differences in the prevalence and psychopathological mechanisms of internet addiction among Iranians aged 18 to 24: A nationwide study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 163, 107428. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2025.107428>
- Ismail, A. (2024). The relationship between internet addiction and stress, anxiety, and depression in adolescents in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 77, 111–116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2024.03.007>
- Jiang, H., et al. (2025). The impact of emotional neglect on internet addiction among left-behind adolescents in rural China: A moderated mediation model. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 163, 107341. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2025.107341>
- Jin, L. Q., et al. (2025). Perceived social support and symptoms of depression and anxiety among Chinese adolescents: A moderated chain mediation model. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 27(1). <https://doi.org/10.32604/ijmhp.2025.057962>
- Khairi, Y., et al. (2023). Explaining internet addiction based on dimensions of metacognitive beliefs and emotional security in adolescent girls. *Family and Research*, 21(2), 27–41. (In Persian)
- Kong, F., et al. (2025). Mediating roles of psychological entitlement and presence of meaning in the associations between parental measures (rejection and overprotection) and adolescent internet addiction. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2025.04.131>
- Li, S., et al. (2025). The association between internet addiction and the risk of suicide attempts in Chinese adolescents aged 11–17 years: Prospective cohort study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 27, e52083. <https://doi.org/10.2196/52083>
- Li, Z., He, Q., Elhai, J. D., Montag, C., & Yang, H. (2025). Neural mechanisms of behavioral addiction: An ALE meta-analysis and MACM analysis. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.2024.00082>
- Liang, Y., Zeng, M., Zhou, Y., & Gong, J. (2025). Associations among child maltreatment, non-suicidal self-injury and internet addiction in adolescents: Longitudinal mediation of symptoms of complex posttraumatic stress disorder. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 166, 107507. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2025.107507>
- Liu, R., Wang, S., Tarimo, C. S., et al. (2025). Building machine learning predictive models for adolescent internet addiction: Key findings on self-esteem and resilience interaction. *Research Square*. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-5606509/v1>
- Liu, Y., Peng, J., Ding, J., Wang, J., et al. (2025). Anxiety mediated the relationship between bullying victimization and internet addiction in adolescents, and family support moderated the relationship. *BMC Pediatrics*, 25(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-024-05348-z>
- López-Martínez, L. F., Carretero, E. M., Carrasco, M. A., & Pérez-García, A. M. (2025). Self-regulation, emotional symptomatology, substance use, and social network addiction in adolescent self-harm. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(3), 257. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15030257>
- Mahmoudi Raja, S., Ebrahim Bozdi, A., & Samiei, M. (2024). The state of national order in the Islamic Republic of Iran in the last decade (With emphasis on the role and function of virtual networks). *News Sciences*, 14(1), 121–145. (In Persian)
- Marin, M. G., Nuñez, X., & de Almeida, R. M. M. (2021). Internet addiction and attention in adolescents: A systematic review. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 24(4), 237–249. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2019.0698>
- Muolaei, M. (2023). Policy-making desirable content for Iranian cyberspace: Future research with a retrospective method. *News Sciences*, 13(4), 112–132. (In Persian)
- Nagata, J. M., Paul, A., Yen, F., et al. (2025). Associations between media parenting practices and early adolescent screen use. *Pediatric Research*, 97(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41390-024-03471-0>
- Peng, J., Wang, J., Chen, J., Li, G., Xiao, H., Liu, Y., ... & Zhang, Y. (2025). Mobile phone addiction was the mediator and physical activity was the moderator between bullying victimization and sleep quality. *BMC Public Health*, 25(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-71797-2>
- Pourmudat, K., & Bashash, L. (2009). Investigating the development of social information processing in educable mentally retarded students. *Research in the Field of Exceptional Children*, 9(3), 1–12. (In Persian)
- Pourmudat, K., Neshat Doost, H., Kojbaf, M., & Talebi, H. (2021). Comparison of social information processing based on the social cognitive model of RickC and Dodge in children with and without disruptive mood disorder. *Cognitive Sciences Updates*, 23(2), 1–12. (In Persian)
- Prabhu, V., Lovett, J. T., & Munawar, K. (2021). Role of social and non-social online media: How to properly leverage your internet presence for professional development and research. *Abdominal Radiology*, 46(12), 5513–5520. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00261-021-03154-0>
- Rahman, M., Rabby, M. F., Kabir, M. R., et al. (2025). Associations between social media addiction, social media fatigue, fear of missing out, and sleep quality among university students in Bangladesh: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 44(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41043-025-00896-1>

- Salarvand, S., Albatineh, A. N., Dalvand, S., Baghban Karimi, E., & Ghanei Gheshlagh, R. (2022). Prevalence of internet addiction among Iranian university students: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 25(4), 213–222. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2021.0120>
- Shi, L. (2025). The mediating role of social anxiety in the association between personality traits and internet addiction and its underlying neural basis. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 112584. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpsycho.2025.112584>
- Su, W., Han, X., Yu, H., Wu, Y., & Potenza, M. N. (2020). Do men become addicted to internet gaming and women to social media? A meta-analysis examining gender-related differences in specific internet addiction. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 113, 106480. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106480>
- Tang, H., Li, Y., Dong, W., Guo, X., Wu, S., Chen, C., & Lu, G. (2024). The relationship between childhood trauma and internet addiction in adolescents: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 13(1), 36–50. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.2024.00001>
- Theopilus, Y., Al Mahmud, A., Davis, H., & Octavia, J. R. (2024). Preventive interventions for internet addiction in young children: Systematic review. *JMIR Mental Health*, 11(1), e56896. <https://doi.org/10.2196/56896>
- Tian, Y., Ding, H., & Li, Y. (2025). Characteristic structure of the relationships among depression, maladaptive cognition, and internet addiction and its temporal evolution in university students: A network analysis. *Stress and Health*, 41(1), e70000. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.70000>
- Tsumura, H., & Kusunoki, K. (2025). Attentional bias for internet-related information and emotional information in internet addiction: Moderating role of sleep quality. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12529-025-10363-0>
- Tunalgil, V., & Meral, G. (2025). A preliminary study on the relationship between parental internet addiction and their children's body mass index. *Sürekli Tıp Eğitimi Dergisi*, 33(6), 445–461. <https://doi.org/10.17942/sted.1514049>
- Wang, W. C. (2019). Exploring the relationship among free-time management, leisure boredom, and internet addiction in undergraduates in Taiwan. *Psychological Reports*, 122(5), 1651–1665. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294118789034>
- Wu, J., Wu, X., Tarimo, C. S., Zhao, W., Xia, Q., Xu, X., ... & Yang, Y. (2025). Network analysis of internet addiction and depression among Chinese adolescents. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 378, 119–127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2025.02.052>
- Yang, X., & Li, Y. (2025). Does gender matter? An examination of different impacts of parenting style on parent-adolescents conflicts over mobile phone use between boys and girls. In *Mobile Media Use Among Children and Youth in Asia* (pp. 139–155). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-2282-5_8
- Yankouskaya, A., Ali, R., AlShakhsi, S., Delvecchio, E., Manesis, N., Mazzeschi, C., ... & Panourgia, C. (2025). Emerging impact of parental internet addiction on adolescent internet use: A cross-cultural perspective. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 2025(1), 4336597. <https://doi.org/10.1155/cad/4336597>
- Yao, Y., She, K., & Wang, Y. (2025). Deconstructing social contact: Short video-mediated internet addiction in the post-COVID-19 era (A research survey based on university students). *Current Psychology*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-07293-1>
- Yi, Z., Wang, W., Wang, N., & Liu, Y. (2025). The relationship between empirical avoidance, anxiety, difficulty describing feelings and internet addiction among college students: A moderated mediation model. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2025.2453705>
- Zhang, H., Zhang, D., Ji, W., & Peng, S. (2025). Risk perception of COVID-19, depressive symptoms and internet addiction among undergraduates: A longitudinal study. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12, 1487472. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1487472>
- Zhong, G., Shu, Y., Zhou, Y., Li, H., Zhou, J., & Yang, L. (2025). The relationship between social support and smartphone addiction: The mediating role of negative emotions and self-control. *BMC Psychiatry*, 25(1), 167. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-025-06615-8>

Cite this article: Ghasemi, O.; Dortaj, D.; Delavar, A. & Mehrabi, G. (2026), A Synthetic Review of Correlates of Internet Addiction in Adolescents, *News Science*, 15 (2), 40-45.

DOI : <http://doi.org/10.22034/Irsi.2025.530669.1391>



© The Author(s) retain the copyright.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22034/Irsi.2025.530669.1391>

Publisher: Press Institute for Contemporary International Journalism (PICIJ)