

## Internet addiction and aggressive behavior among middle school students. (A field study on a sample of fourth-grade students in Sidi Bel Abbas)

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### Abstract

The current study aims to reveal the nature of the relationship between internet addiction and aggressive behavior on a sample of middle school students in Sidi Bel Abbas. The sample included fourth-grade middle school students. We also aimed to identify the differences in internet addiction and aggressive behavior in the sample according to gender. We used a descriptive analytical approach and used both an instrument to measure internet addiction and another to measure aggressive behavior and applied them to a sample of 98 boys and girls from fourth-grade middle school students. The study yielded the following findings:

There is a strong positive correlation between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among fourth-grade middle school students.

There are no statistically significant differences in internet addiction among fourth-grade middle school students due to gender.

There are no statistically significant differences in aggressive behavior among fourth-grade middle school students due to gender.

**Keywords** : Internet addiction ; Aggressive behavior ; Middle school students

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## I- Introduction :

Modern technology is witnessing rapid development in our current era, and one of the most important innovations that has changed the nature of our lives is the internet, as its use has become an essential part of the lives of individuals and societies. It allows us to access unlimited information and communicate with others around the world, in addition to many advantages. However, this technology generates many challenges and problems that may affect the daily lives of individuals and different societies. Among these problems, internet addiction stands out as an important topic that deserves scientific attention.

Internet addiction is a condition in which an individual feels an urgent need to use the internet excessively and continuously, making it an essential part of their life without being able to control it. This affects the daily activities of individuals and their social relationships, especially when it comes to adolescence, which coincides with the middle school period. In this sensitive stage, the individual's personality is formed, and their behavior and thinking patterns are shaped to make the internet a tempting source to explore a new world and experience various digital activities.

However, the rapid and excessive attraction to using the internet can cause negative effects, including aggressive behavior as a result of continuous exposure to violent and aggressive content on the internet. This can affect their view of the world and lead to negative changes in their behavior, which may lead to a lack of real social interaction, as well as the appearance of many mental disorders such as anxiety and depression, which leads to the individual's inability to achieve self- and social compatibility.

Many researchers in the field have been interested in the phenomenon of internet addiction, and studies on this phenomenon and its negative effects have multiplied, such as the study by Young (1999) which confirmed that internet addiction has several apparent effects, such as obsessive thoughts, decreased self-control, and several psychological problems, in addition to the study by Hamdi (2015) which showed that its results indicate the existence of a positive correlation between internet addiction and aggressive behavior, as we find the study by Dardey (2008) which aimed to know the extent of the spread of violence among high school students.

Correlated with the researchers' knowledge of previous studies, internet addiction has a direct impact on the behavior of students. This is what motivated us to conduct this research and to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of internet addiction and its relationship with aggressive

behavior. We aimed to identify ways to intervene and raise awareness to reduce the effects of internet addiction and improve the aggressive behavior of students, in order to ensure the positive impact on the future of these generations and their comprehensive development.

Based on the above , the research problem can be crystallized in the following questions :

- Is there a statistically significant relationship between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among fourth grade middle school students?
- Are there statistically significant differences in internet addiction among fourth grade middle school students due to the variable of gender?
- Are there statistically significant differences in aggressive behavior among fourth grade middle school students due to the variable of gender?

### **I.1.research hypotheses**

-There is a statistically significant relationship between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among fourth grade middle school students.

-There are statistically significant differences in internet addiction among fourth grade middle school students due to the variable of gender.

There are statistically significant differences in aggressive behavior among fourth grade middle school students due to the variable of gender

### **I. 2. The objectives of the study:**

-To identify the nature of the relationship between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among a sample of fourth grade middle school students.

-To highlight the differences in internet addiction among a sample of fourth grade middle school students according to the variable of gender.

-To highlight the differences in aggressive behavior among a sample of fourth grade middle school students according to the variable of gender.

### **I. 3.The importance of the study:**

-Adolescence is an important and sensitive period in the development of an individual's personality and identity.

- The technological revolution has had a significant impact on social, cultural, and behavioral changes, and these changes have had negative consequences for the lives of adolescents and individuals in general.

-It is important to explore the factors that influence internet addiction and to take measures to control this phenomenon and reduce its negative effects on adolescents and society as a whole.

- The spread of aggressive behaviors among students and the need to address it, because aggression is a social phenomenon that threatens the security and entity of society.
- The need to promote the idea of rational and positive use of the internet

## **I. 4.Theoretical framework of the study:**

### **I. 4.1Internet addiction:**

Young (1998) defined it as a psychological condition characterized by a strong dependence on the use of the Internet in an excessive and uncontrollable way, so that it causes a negative impact on the individual's life and his daily performance. Young also pointed to the existence of several reasons for Internet addiction, including escape from real problems or psychological pressures, seeking entertainment, and feeling a sense of belonging to a certain community online.

Internet addiction is also defined by Kris and Griffiths (2012) as a pathological condition accompanied by a strong, repetitive, excessive, and non-motivated dependence on the use of the Internet and related activities, where this interest may exceed neglect of other life responsibilities such as work, study, social relationships, and physical and mental health. Internet addiction is defined by the researchers as a psychological condition that includes the excessive and repeated use of the Internet and related activities, where this use becomes uncontrollable and causes negative effects on the self, health, and social life of the individual. Internet addiction can be operationally defined as the total score that individuals in the study sample obtain on Kimberly Young's Internet Addiction Scale.

#### **a)Types of Internet addiction:**

There are many types of Internet addiction, and here are some of the types that Winston (2010) referred to:

-Social media addiction: In this type of addiction, the individual becomes obsessed with social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

-Online gaming addiction: In this type of addiction, the individual spends hours every day playing online video games, neglecting their other duties and responsibilities.

-Online content watching addiction: This type of addiction includes watching videos, movies, TV shows, and other digital content excessively and irregularly.

-Online shopping addiction: In this type of addiction, the individual buys products online excessively and repeatedly, regardless of their real need for these purchases.

-Online pornography addiction: This type of addiction includes excessive reliance on watching pornographic content online in a way that is destructive to personal life and social relationships

#### **I. 4.2 Aggressive behavior:**

Baron and Richardson (1994) define aggressive behavior as any type of violent or hostile behavior that involves doing actions or behaviors that aim to harm others, either through words, physical violence, or emotional abuse. This aggressive behavior can manifest in different forms, such as bullying, hitting, cursing, insulting, threatening, verbal and physical abuse, and other behaviors that aim to harm others directly or indirectly.

Anderson and Bushman (2002) define aggressive behavior as a pattern of behavior that is characterized by hostility and aggression towards others, and includes the use of physical or verbal force to harm them. It can manifest in different forms, such as physical assault, threats of harm, verbal abuse, bullying, and property destruction.

The researchers define aggressive behavior as a type of behavior that is characterized by hostility and violence towards others in a direct or indirect way. This is manifested through the commission of actions and behaviors that aim to harm others, whether through aggressive speech, physical violence, emotional abuse, or any other actions that aim to have a negative impact on others.

Aggressive behavior can be operationally defined as the total score that study participants receive on the Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) developed by Arnold Buss and Mark Perry

### **a)Manifestations of aggressive behavior:**

-Aggressive individuals may exhibit a variety of behaviors to express their anger and frustration. These behaviors may include:

-Cursing and mocking: This involves the individual stating facts or information in a negative way.

-Insults: This involves the individual stating phrases or words that reduce the value of the other party (the victim) and make them a laughing stock.

-Hyperactivity and excessive movement: This is an ongoing state of excessive movement and activity.

-Destroying other people's property.

(Bushashi, 2013).

According to Fosfos (2006), the following are some of the signs of aggressive behavior in schools:

-Creating chaos in the classroom by laughing, talking, playing, and not paying attention.

-Not respecting teachers, peers, and administrators.

-Assaulting others, being stubborn, and making a lot of gestures and movements that express aggression.

-Not complying with the school's internal rules and deliberately neglecting the advice or homework that is required.

-Using profanity, disturbing others, and exercising power over them.

### **I. 5.methodological procedures:**

#### **a)The study methodology:**

The researchers used the descriptive-inductive approach to achieve the goals of the current study, as it is suitable for the nature of the study topic, variables, and hypotheses, in order to understand the nature of the relationship between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among a sample of middle school students, and to describe and interpret the two phenomena in light of the results obtains .

#### **b)Study boundaries:**

**Sampling** :The study was conducted at the Chaa Abdelkader Middle School in Sidi Bel Abbes on a sample of middle school students (fourth grade).

**Temporal boundaries:**The study was conducted on the field during April 2023

**Human boundaries:**The study included a sample of 98 fourth grade students, of whom 45 were boys and 53 were girls

The total study population includes middle school students, while the study sample included fourth grade students at Chaa Abdelkader Middle School in Sidi Bel Abbes. They were selected by simple random sampling, with a total of 98 male and female students, of whom 45 were boys and 53 were girls. Their ages ranged from 14 to 15 years old. The table below shows the characteristics of the sample members.

**Table 1.**This table shows the distribution of sample members by gender.

Gender	Repetition	Percentage
Males	45	46%
Females	53	54%
total	98	100%

**Source::** Zerriouh& Chekraoui, 2023

As shown in Table 1, the percentage of male individuals in the sample is at least 46%, while the percentage of female individuals is at most 54%. The researchers adopted two tools to collect the data of the current study sample, which were:

**c)The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Kimberly Young (1996):**

Is a 20-item self-report questionnaire with six subscales: salience, preoccupation, withdrawal, tolerance, loss of control, and social isolation. The IAT has been shown to have good psychometric properties, with high internal consistency and test-retest reliability. In a study of 86 individuals, Widyanto and McMurran (2004) found that the IAT had good factor

structure, with six factors that were highly correlated with each other. The factors were also found to have high internal consistency and test-retest reliability. The overall reliability of the IAT was moderate to good, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.54 to 0.82.

The scale consists of 20 items with 6 response options: (completely applies to me, applies to me a lot, applies to me to some extent, does not apply to me to some extent, does not apply to me much, does not apply to me at all). The scores are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 for grading. The scale has been translated from English to Arabic by many researchers. The psychometric properties of the scale were re-calculated by Maeigel and Bressemer (2016) by applying it to a sample of 200 students from the University of Baghdad. The validity of the scale was assessed using face validity and internal consistency. All correlation coefficients were significant at ( 0.01) . The split-half reliability was 0.91, and the internal consistency reliability was 0.95, which is suitable for the current study. (Maeigel & Bressemer, 2016).

#### **d)The Aggression Behavior Scale:**

The Aggression Behavior Scale: Arnold Buss and Mark Perry developed this scale in 1992. Moataz Syed Abdullah and Saleh Abu Obadah translated it into Arabic in 1995 after it was presented to a group of judges to ensure the validity of the items.

The scale consists of 29 items that include four dimensions: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. The final version of the scale contains 30 items after an item was added to the verbal aggression dimension. The participants answer the items by choosing one of five options: completely applies to me, often applies to me, applies to some extent, rarely applies to me, and does not apply. The total score of the scale ranges from 28 to 140. (Hamdi, 2015).

Researcher Hamdi (2015) calculated the psychometric properties of the Aggression Behavior Scale, including validity and reliability. The validity of the scale was assessed using internal consistency and split-half reliability, and the results showed high levels of validity. The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which was 0.68.



These results suggest that the Aggression Behavior Scale is a valid and reliable measure that can be used in the current study.

## **I.6 The psychometric properties of the current study scale:**

The researchers calculated the psychometric properties of both the Internet Addiction Scale and the Aggression Behavior Scale in order to ensure their validity in the current study.

### **First, Internet addiction scale:**

#### **1) Validity of the scale:**

The discriminant validity was calculated on a sample of 30 students from the fourth year of secondary school. The scale was applied and the scores were ranked in ascending order. Then, 27% of the lowest scores and 27% of the highest scores of the sample individuals were taken and two groups

were formed, each consisting of 8 individuals ( $30 \times 0.27 = 08$ ). Then, the t-test was calculated to identify the differences between the lower and upper groups using the SPSS program, and the results reached were as shown in the following table:

Table 2 shows the t-value for the significance of the difference between the lower group and the upper group of the Internet addiction scale.

**Table 2.** shows the t-value for the significance of the difference between the lower group and the upper group of the Internet addiction scale.

The Scale	Groups	N	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	T test	Significance level
Internet addiction	Lower group	08	10.23	72.18	11.56	0.01
	Supreme group	08	5.72	106.05		

**Source::** Zerriouh & Chekraoui, 2023

We note from Table 2 that the value of "t" is statistically significant at the significance level (0.01). This confirms to us that the scale distinguishes between the high levels of the property (the lower group and the upper

group). Hence, we conclude that the scale is valid and measures what it was designed to measure.

## 2)Reliability of the scale:

By calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient or relying on the SPSS program, the researchers reached a reliability coefficient with a value of (0.796), which is statistically significant at the significance level (0.01). Hence, we conclude that the scale has a high reliability.

## Second, the Aggression Behavior Scale:

### 1)Validity of the scale:

Two methods were used to calculate the validity of the Aggression Behavior Scale, namely: -The discriminant validity, and the results were as shown in the following table:

**Table 3.**The value of "t" for the significance of the difference between the lower group and the upper group of the Aggression Behavior Scale

The Scale	Groups	N	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	T-test	Significance level
Internet addiction	Lower group	08	47.15	2.36	10.88	0.01
	Supreme group	08	67.03	4.81		

**Source::** Zerriouh& Chekraoui, 2023

We note from Table (03) that the value of "t" is statistically significant at the significance level (0.01). This confirms that the scale distinguishes between the upper and lower groups, and is therefore valid and measures what it was designed to measure. Internal consistency validity: By calculating the correlation coefficient between each item of the Aggression Behavior Scale and its total score, the scores obtained were between 0.35 and 0.71, which are acceptable and statistically significant coefficients. Hence, the scale has a high validity.

## 2)Reliability of the scale:

The researchers calculated the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Aggression Behavior Scale and its value was (0.701), which is a statistically

significant coefficient at the significance level (0.01). Hence, we conclude that the scale has a high reliability.

## II Presentation, analysis, and discussion of the results:

### II .1 Presentation of the results of the first question:

Is there a statistically significant correlation between internet addiction and aggressive behavior? Table (04) shows this:

**Table 4.** shows the correlation coefficient between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among fourth year secondary school students

Variants	Correlation coefficient	Statistical significance	Moral significant
Internet addiction	0.771	0.000	Statistically significant
Aggressive behavior			

**Source::** Zerriouh& Chekraoui, 2023

Table (4) shows the Pearson correlation coefficient between the scores of internet addiction and aggressive behavior among fourth year secondary school students. A positive correlation was found between internet addiction and aggressive behavior, with a value of (0.771) at the significance level of (0.01). This indicates that the relationship between these two variables is a strong correlation, as the more internet addiction, the more aggressive behavior. Therefore, the first hypothesis was verified.

The results of the current study agreed with the results of a study by Nour (2011), which found a positive correlation between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among high school students. The results of the study by Hashhash (2008) also showed that there is a significant impact of playing electronic games on the appearance of aggressive behavior among high school students. The study by Gueider (2012) found that internet addiction has a negative impact on the appearance of aggressive behavior among primary school students. Finally, the study by Hamdi (2015) found a positive correlation between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among high school students.

As for the contradiction of the current study with other studies, according to the researchers' knowledge, no studies have been found that disagree with the results of this study. This is because it is logical that there is a positive correlation between internet addiction and aggressive behavior, and that the more the first variable increases, the more the second variable is expected to increase.

The positive correlation between internet addiction and aggressive behavior among fourth year secondary school students can be explained by several factors, including social isolation caused by internet addiction. Excessive use of the internet leads to isolation from the social environment, which reduces opportunities for communication and the development of social skills, leading to the escalation of feelings of alienation, depression, anxiety, and increased aggressive behavior. The positive correlation can also be attributed to the aggressive content of the internet, such as violent video games, which are among the most important factors that contribute to increased aggression in individuals. It is important to note that fourth year secondary school students are in a sensitive stage that coincides with adolescence, and students in this period tend to everything that is new and bright, and love exploration and continuous contact with the internet, thus being exposed to violent digital content continuously. In addition, the transition from childhood to adolescence and the many psychological and social pressures it carries lead to access to the internet and integration into violent digital activities, thus increasing their aggressive behavior

## II .2 Presentation of the results of the second question:

Are there statistically significant differences in internet addiction among fourth year secondary school students due to the gender variable?

Table (5) shows this:

**Table 5.** shows the results of the t-test for differences in internet addiction among fourth year secondary school students due to the gender variable

Variable	The number	Results Arithmetic average 1	Standard deviation	Degrees of freedom	Value (T)	sig
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Males	45	65.78	21,02			
Females	18.5538	69.15	18.24	96	1.296	0.202

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**Source::** Zerriouh& Chekraoui, 2023

The results of the t-test for differences in internet addiction among fourth year secondary school students due to the gender variable were not statistically significant, with a value of (1.296) at a significance level of (0.202). This means that there are no statistically significant differences in internet addiction between male and female fourth year secondary school students.

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The results of the current study, which showed no gender differences in internet addiction, are in contrast to the findings of other studies, such as the study by Petrie and Kan (1982), which found that men are more likely to be addicted to the internet than women. Similarly, the study by Zamil (2006) found that female university students are more likely to be addicted to the internet than male university students. Finally, the study by Tabaas and Mellal (2021) found that male university students are more likely to be addicted to the internet than female university students.

The researchers attribute the absence of gender differences in internet addiction to the fact that internet addiction is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a number of factors, including psychological, social, and environmental factors. These factors may be shared by men and women, which can explain the similarity in internet addiction between the sexes. This means that internet addiction can affect anyone, regardless of gender.

In addition, the researchers believe that the foreign cultural invasion and the equality of men and women in many rights and duties, including the

interaction of all individuals with technology, have made it natural and even necessary for everyone to interact with technology. This can also explain the similarity in internet addiction between the sexes.

This result, which shows that there is no difference in internet addiction between males and females, can be attributed to adolescence, which increases the likelihood of internet addiction for both genders to satisfy the need for belonging and communication. In addition, digital

This result, which shows that there is no difference in internet addiction between males and females, can be attributed to adolescence, which increases the likelihood of internet addiction for both genders to satisfy the need for belonging and communication. In addition, digital interactions between males and females have replaced real social interactions, as well as the tendency to escape from reality and entertainment. The internet becomes a gateway to escape from the pressures and challenges that adolescents face in everyday life, which leads to an unhealthy behavioral pattern. We also point to an important aspect, which is the technological invasion and the digital revolution and its negative effects, which are logically affecting both genders. Technological changes have become easier and less expensive, which reflects gender equality in using the internet. This is especially true as modern life has become more complex, which necessitates access to the internet in all areas regardless of gender

**II .3 Presentation of the results of the third question:**

Are there statistically significant differences in aggressive behavior among fourth-grade students due to gender? Table 6 shows this.

**Table 6.** shows the results of a t-test for differences in aggressive behavior among fourth-grade students due to gender

Variable	The number	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Degrees of freedom	T test	sig
Males	45	65.38	19.07	96	0.374	0.683
Females	53	67.66	18.28	18.58		

**Source:**Zerriouh& Chekraoui, 2023

The results of the t-test for differences in aggressive behavior among fourth-grade students showed a value of 0.374 at a significance level of 0.683. This value is greater than 0.05, which confirms that there are no statistically significant differences between fourth-grade students in aggressive behavior due to gender. This means that the third hypothesis was not supported.

The results of the current study agreed with the study by Alfalaki (2000), which showed no statistically significant differences in aggressive behavior between genders among middle school students. However, the current study also differed from several other studies, such as the study by Watfa (1999), which found that there were differences in overt aggression in favor of males, and the study by Tapir and Bolton (2004), which found that there were statistically significant differences in aggressive behavior in favor of males. Finally, the study by Jalal, El-Saeed (2005) found that there were differences between internet users on impulsive and aggressive personality traits.

The researchers explain the result that there is no difference in aggressive behavior between males and females due to gender to biological factors, the effect of hormones and brain structure, especially since the study sample is fourth-grade students, meaning that it coincides with the teenage stage and the physical, psychological and mental transformations that occur in this segment of society. As males show aggressive behavior directly, females tend to be inclined to other indirect aggressive behaviors such as talking, cursing, swearing, and non-physical violence. In addition, this result is attributed to social and cultural factors, as culture affects the formation of behavior in males and females, especially in the current time where the sexes are equal in all fields, especially after women have been trying hard to prove the opposite of what they were before. Culture also encourages aggressive behavior, and we can add psychological conditions, as psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, anger, and depression can affect the level of aggression in individuals regardless of their gender. We also do not forget the role of cultural transformations and changes that societies have witnessed over time.

## II-Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research on internet addiction and its relationship to aggressive behavior among middle school students can be said to represent an important and pressing issue that requires the attention of parents, teachers, and society in general, especially with the increasing use of the internet and social media, which has fundamentally changed the way individuals interact with the virtual world and had a significant impact on young people, especially in the middle school stage.

Excessive and uncontrolled use of the internet can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and depression in adolescents, which in turn increases the likelihood of developing aggressive behavior and a lack of self-control and social skills. Although the presence of digital internet

technology in the lives of adolescents cannot be denied, it should be considered a vital matter that requires the cooperation of the family, school, and society to build a healthy environment that helps students develop the skills of control and moderation in using the internet and to identify the best ways to prevent and intervene to ensure their correct development and healthy growth.

This study will eventually come up with a series of suggestions:

-The spread of aggressive behavior among students and the need to address its exacerbation, as it is a social phenomenon that threatens the security and entity of society.

-Developing awareness of the harms of excessive use of the internet and its negative effects on mental and social health.

-Educating teachers and parents about the need to consult with psychologists and educators in dealing with the challenges of the internet addiction phenomenon.

-Focusing on the age of 19 and over, which is the age of majority, for accessing the internet, especially the use of violent electronic programs, activities and games.



-Teachers and parents need to be aware of the need to provide support and containment to adolescents in order to prevent the development of aggressive behaviors.

-Awareness campaigns can be used to promote the rational and positive use of the internet.

- A safe and supportive learning environment should be created.

-Effective strategies should be developed to reduce the problem of aggressive behavior and improve relationships between students and teachers.

-It is important to conduct studies on the psychological and behavioral effects of internet addiction.

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