

Students Well-Being and Internet Use During the Pandemic

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Abstract

Keywords:

internet consumption; addiction; well-being; depression; social anxiety; students.

The study Internet Use and Students Well-being aimed to investigate the relationship between Internet addiction (generated by excessive Internet use = more than 6 hours/day outside of compulsory activities, more than 3 consecutive months) (Tao R. and all, 2010) and student well-being, depression, and social anxiety in pandemic times when digital consumer behavior has changed due to the specific context. The correlational design was applied in the research carried out on a group of 35 students from years 2 and 3 of the Faculty of Political, Administrative, and Communication Sciences, Babeş Bolyai University, Cluj through a series of scientifically validated tests: Psychological Scale Well, Berlin Social Support Scales, Internet Addiction Test, Self-Reported Stress Questionnaire (PSS), Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale, DASS21. The results obtained showed positive correlations between the consumption of digital products and well-being (.494), with a statistical significance of 0.003, (≤ 0.05), and digital consumption and social anxiety (.319) with a statistical significance of 0.002. (≤ 0.05). In the case of the correlation between digital product consumption and depression, the correlation was negative (-0.228), with no statistical significance (≥ 0.05). Social support / positive relationships with others have proven to be a mediator between well-being and internet consumption. The overall effect of well-being on Internet addiction was positive (0.296), but statistically insignificant (0.708, not ≤ 0.05). Internet consumption for students who have pursued their academic pursuit digitally is a challenge to maintain the mental or physical well-being of the moment or perspective.

Zusammenfassung

Schlüsselworte:

Internetkonsum; Sucht; Wohlbefinden; Depression; soziale Ängste; Studenten.

Ziel der Studie „Internetnutzung und Wohlbefinden der Schüler“ war es, den Zusammenhang zwischen Internetsucht (verursacht durch übermäßige Internetnutzung = mehr als 6 Stunden/Tag außerhalb von Pflichtaktivitäten, mehr als 3 aufeinanderfolgende Monate) (Tao R., Huang X., Wang J., Zhang Z., Li M., 2010) und das Wohlbefinden von Schülern, Depressionen und soziale Ängste in Pandemiezeiten, in denen sich das digitale Verbraucherverhalten aufgrund des spezifischen Kontexts verändert hat. Das Korrelationsdesign wurde in der Forschung angewendet, die an einer Gruppe von 35 Studenten aus den Jahrgängen 2 und 3 der Fakultät für Politik-, Verwaltungs- und Kommunikationswissenschaften der Babeş-Bolyai-Universität in Cluj durchgeführt wurde, und zwar durch eine Reihe wissenschaftlich validierter Tests: Psychological Scale Well, Berliner Sozialunterstützungsskalen, Internet-Suchttest, Self-Reported Stress Questionnaire (PSS), Liebowitz-Skala für soziale Angst, DASS21. Die erhaltenen Ergebnisse zeigten positive Korrelationen zwischen dem Konsum digitaler Produkte und dem Wohlbefinden (.494) mit einer statistischen Signifikanz von 0,003 ($\leq 0,05$) und digitalem Konsum und sozialer Angst (.319) mit einer statistischen Signifikanz von 0,002. ($\leq 0,05$). Im Fall der Korrelation zwischen digitalem Produktkonsum und Depression war die Korrelation negativ (-0,228), ohne statistische Signifikanz ($\geq 0,05$). Soziale Unterstützung/positive Beziehungen zu anderen haben sich als Mittler zwischen Wohlbefinden und Internetkonsum erwiesen. Der Gesamteffekt des Wohlbefindens auf die Internetsucht war positiv (0,296), aber statistisch nicht signifikant (0,708, nicht $\leq 0,05$). Die Nutzung des Internets für Studierende, die ihre akademische Laufbahn digital verfolgt haben, stellt eine Herausforderung für die Aufrechterhaltung des geistigen oder körperlichen Wohlbefindens des jeweiligen Augenblicks oder der Perspektive dar.

1. Introduction: Theoretical foundation

During the long pandemic society and the age of war, the frequent use of the Internet was the best option that the world has. The imposed "social distance" was a "physical distance" after all and the communicational, relational, affective, cognitive, and psychological effects have had several impacts on everyone in the last two years. The isolated person finds his existential sphere on the Internet. The immediate consequences of excessive Internet use were: the effects on well-being, the manifestation of

depression, and social anxiety. During this period, depression and anxiety were the most common manifestations of psychological illness.

The correlation between well-being, social support/positive relationships, and depression/anxiety has a rich history for psychological research. This correlation between all the elements showed the human psyche's changes during the pandemic. The Internet was accessible and informative in all spaces because the technology was very quickly advanced.



There are Internet communities with interesting social interactions, and places for exchanges of information or entertainment (Rehman et al., 2022). The studies have long revealed an increasing trend in internet use (Anderson et al., 2013) for all age groups.

The problematic elements derived from Internet use were also recorded (Talis, 2022). For example, since the early years of the Internet, studies have identified loneliness and depression correlated with Internet use as mediators of psychological well-being (Kavetsos & Koutroumpis, 2011). The use of the internet on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter became a lifestyle for more and more categories of people during the pandemic. In fact, Internet consumption suddenly became indispensable, even mandatory. But the internet use presented an increased risk, for all users, of developing addiction (Talis, 2022). Studies showed that the excessive use of the internet by young adults can result in many negative outcomes (Leung & Lee, 2012a; Livingstone & Helsper, 2007; Murali & George, 2007). The biggest impact of uncontrolled internet use is recorded to be on the state of well-being, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and on the anxiety and depression of the users (Starcevic, 2013).

One of the favorite activities of students, as well as people in general, during the pandemic, was accessing the internet for the use of apps like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, games, eBay, etc. Internet activity that facilitates self-management is beneficial for well-being. Excessive Internet activity, indiscriminate use of the Internet, and Internet addiction are harmful to well-being. The Compensatory Carry-Over Action Model (CCAM) (Abbasi et al., 2021). describes the mechanisms regarding the way in which the use of the internet is bound to other behaviors of the lifestyle and well being and that individuals are driven by the objective of adopting and maintaining well being.

Previous research regarding internet consumption up until the pandemic has taken into account, especially the hedonic experience of consumers, defined as the level of pleasure, emotional gratification, and the pleasure of an individual, from an onedimensional perspective. During the pandemic, it was noticed how at, the emotional implication, pleasure, excitement, and sensual experience of the consumer was added to the necessity of digital consumption for academic, professional, relational, and existential purposes (to acquire food, medicine, clothes, household goods, all online). This influenced the intention and behavior of users on a longer period of time (Hong et al., 2014). The students were first in

Romania, who declared at the 2022 census of the National Institut of Statistics, that there is non-person among them has never used the internet: “Practically, if in 2014 there were still 2,7% non-users, then in 2015 – 2,3%, in 2016 the number increased again to 2,7%, so than in 2017 it decreased to 1,7%, and in 2018 the number of the non-users is 0” (“Accesul populației la tehnologia informațiilor și comunicațiilor, în anul 2018” – “Population access to information and communication technology in 2018”).

If the initial purpose of using the Internet was communication (98,9), e-mail (75,7%), Skype, Facetime, WhatsApp (66,8%), and socializing on networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat (95,4%), during the pandemic research of the information, goods, products, services. For entertainment, the Internet was used by 88.2% of the students included in the INS Survey. 76,7% listen to music, 29,5% watch TV shows (Onyemaechi et al., 2022).

From a psychological perspective, addiction is understood as the perpetuation by a person of behaviour that brings high costs and negative consequences to the self (DSM-5). Addicted persons cannot stop doing harmful behaviour. Addictions are classified in relation to their fields of manifestation: substance addiction, gambling addiction, pornography or video game addiction, etc. (Onyemaechi et al., 2022). The term *Internet Addiction* emerged in the late 1990s as „an impulse control disorder that does not involve an intoxicant” (Pawlikowski et al., 2013). Young (2017) developed a diagnostic questionnaire for AI by adopting the pathological gambling criterion in the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM-IV) by the American Psychiatric Association, attracting the interest of the global research community in investigations of the effects of AI (Yellowlees & Marks, 2007). The Internet is an indispensable part of contemporary society. It has necessary tools for anyone, used at home and at work. The major factors for consumption of the Internet are the possibility of getting in touch with other people, accessibility, availability, attractiveness, anonymity, and privacy. In several countries, clinical evidence of excessive use has been reported in many patients, with symptoms similar to addiction disorders already known (Young, 2017).

According to American researchers, in the US one in eight Americans had, before the pandemic, at least one symptom of internet addiction (Tafuni, 2016). In Great Britain, out of 1.300 people aged 16-51, 1,2%

were addicted to the Internet. People between the ages of 15 and 40 are the most affected by this addiction, according to British psychologists at Leeds University. Boys are more exposed to Internet addiction than girls. They use the Internet more 20 hours a week (Tafuni, 2016). The human brain's reward system is stimulated by addictive behaviors (smoking, alcohol, drug use, consumption, gambling, video games). The brain releases an amount of dopamine 10 times higher than in the case of natural rewards (eating behavior, sexual activity). In this context, the brain reduces its dopamine production. The ability of a person to enjoy is less. It will take increased involvement in that behavior to stimulate the brain to produce necessary dopamine to achieve pleasure (Chóliz et al., 2021).

Internet addiction can be observed when people spend 6 hours per day, 3 consecutive months, not with the aim of working or studying (Tao et al., 2010). They want to spend their time surfing the Internet, becoming inactive and antisocial. The symptoms (DSM-5) can be isolating young people in their rooms, ignoring family, and friends, and forgetting to eat or wash (Tao et al., 2010), lifestyle modification, decrease in physical activity, disinterest in their own health, sleep deprivation or changes in sleep rhythm, the alienation of friends, neglecting the workplace, passions, and personal obligations (Widyanto et al., 2008).

Young people's well-being is a difficult concept to describe, from a psychological perspective, due to its multifactorial nature. This concept was described in the final document of the 1978 Alma-Ata International Conference. It was considered essential for health assessment. Well-being is based on complete physical, mental and social comfort and not on the absence of disease or infirmity. Well-being is not a static state of health, but rather a dynamic one, which is multidimensional and needs to be contextualized, considering the multitude of aspects it encompasses (Dyer et al., 2022).

Not since the Second World War has international society experienced a major disruption to life at home, work, and education, as during the Covid-19 pandemic. The mental health of many people, including children, has been severely affected by the pandemic. National Health Service (NHS 2020) drew attention to the fact that there was an increase in children and young people affected during this period. If in 2017 one in nine people and children reported mental health problems, in 2020 one in six accused of mental health problems (Dyer et al., 2022). In addition, the number of people requiring mental health

support due to the pandemic is expected to triple over the next three to five years (Buchanan et al., 2022).

2. Problem Statement

The relationships between well-being and Internet addiction have been the best and most studied relationships. The International Relation Theory of Caplan (2022) constituted a model proposed to explain Internet Addiction. Caplan (2022) argued that the well-being of the people and interpersonal communication, and social support are important predictors to ignore the Internet. The study by Skoric et al. (2009) listed as predictors of problematic use of the Internet: the apprehension of oral communication and perceived inconveniences in using offline means. The Internet is used for emotional comfort. This is one of the ways to control Internet addiction (Onyemaechi et al., 2022).

The social support/support knows three approaches in specialized literature (Gable & Bedrov, 2021): (1) stress and coping perspective, (2) social constructionist perspective, and (3) relationship perspective. Socially isolated or lonely individuals report lower levels of social support (Gable & Bedrov, 2021) and lack supportive social networks that help protect individuals from the harmful effects of negative events and stressors.

Social networks support users to obtain maximum positive effects. (Lahey & Cohen, 2000). The literature has shown that relationship adjustment in young people is often critical, and failure in adjustment can be associated with Internet Gaming Addiction Disorder (IGD) (Yanqiu et al., 2022). How individuals' engagement on social media platforms has demonstrated an impact on their psychological well-being (Axford, 2009). Social media engagement contributes to both bonding and building social capital, which further increases perceived social support and subsequently improves psychological well-being. (Blackwell et al., 2022).

Depression is one of the most prevalent mental disorders in the world with more than 264 million people affected worldwide (World Health Organization, 2021). Onset is common in adolescence and young adulthood (Racine et al., 2021). Depression has a high recurrence rate (Harkness et al., 2020) and has been strongly linked to suicide (Fountoulakis et al., 2022). Many factors contribute to the development of depression (DSM-5). However, a large number of studies associate depressive symptoms with online media consumption in 10 to 24-year-olds because they were most exposed to digital consumption. This is of

particular concern with online media consumption (eg. social networking, online gambling, and Internet surfing), which has increased dramatically among adolescents and young adults over the past decade (Anderson & Jiang, 2018).

The data obtained from a survey (2018) claim that 95% of young people use their smartphone or computer, 45% are online "almost constantly" and 89% are online "several times a day" (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Although previous studies have shown that exposure to stressful situations is a predictor of the onset of a depressive episode (Harkness et al., 2010), other more recent studies, based on the cognitive-behavioral theory of depression, have shown that individual differences in experiencing and reacting to stress are also factors that increase the risk of depressive symptoms (Abela et al., 2006).

More and more studies associate online media consumption with depressive symptoms in young people (10-24 years old) (Lozano-Blasco et al., 2022). One of the meta-analyses aimed to examine whether the conflicting findings are due to the type and/or measurement of online media. A review of six databases identified 531 studies (476 cross-sectional, 52 longitudinal, and 3 studies used both designs) on the relationship between online media use and depressive symptoms in youth. Results showed a small bidirectional association between online media use and depressive symptoms (Lozano-Blasco et al., 2022).

However, the association was significantly greater for studies that measured online media use with media addiction scales than at the unit level of time spent online. The size of the effect does not differ depending on the type of media (internet, smartphone, social networks or online games).

Depressive symptoms are more closely related to the subjective experience of Internet addiction than to the actual time spent online. Depressive symptoms are also related to the direct consequences of excessive online use: lack of physical activity and sleep, less time with friends and family or being the author/victim of cyberbullying. (Lozano-Blasco et al., 2022).

Social anxiety disorder is the most common anxiety disorder. It has an early onset—by age 11 (50% of individuals) and by age 20 (80% of individuals)—and is a risk factor for later depressive illness and substance abuse (Stein & Stein, 2008). Functional neuroimaging studies indicate increased activity in the amygdala and insula in patients with social anxiety disorder, and genetic studies are

increasingly focusing on this and other underlying phenotypes (eg. personality trait neuroticism) to identify risk loci. There are now a number of effective cognitive-behavioral and pharmacological treatments for children and adults. Integrating and optimally disseminating these treatments and learning how to help the 30-40% of patients for whom treatment does not work are real challenges (Stein & Stein, 2008).

The self-presentation theory of social anxiety explains social anxiety in terms of people's concerns with the impressions others form of them (Leary & Jongman-Sereno, 2014). Theories involving the need for belonging and acceptance (Maslow's pyramid) demonstrate exactly why people worry so much about what others think of them. The conditions under which such concerns cause people to feel socially anxious are many and varied. The revised self-presentation theory also explains the behaviors that accompany social anxiety and provides implications for the clinical treatment of socially anxious clients (Leary & Jongman-Sereno, 2014). Young people with unlimited access to the Internet have been shown to be more vulnerable to Internet addiction.

Hur et al. (2019) showed that the desire to explore online first led to regular Internet use, and then led to increased uncontrollable use of online time. Hur et al. (2019) showed also that the development of Internet addiction disorder was influenced by the habits of young people to use the Internet in their demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Another study conducted by Liu and Kuo (2007) highlighted the fact that social anxiety along with the negative nature of interpersonal relationships are predictors of Internet addiction. Because individuals addicted to the Internet have difficulties in reducing or changing their excessive online behaviors in favor of those in real life, more and more researchers have as their topic of study the pathophysiological and cognitive mechanisms responsible for Internet addiction. This methodologically sound research is intended to contribute to relevant recommendations for effective, evidence-based treatments for Internet addiction.

3. Research Questions

This paper examined how excessive use of the Internet (over 6 hours/day outside of compulsory activities for more than three consecutive months) can negatively influence students' well-being, and accentuate depression and social anxiety. Depending on the social support that the user benefits from, the effects of excessive Internet use are reduced in intensity and duration. This study focused on social

support as a potential factor of psychological well-being that contributes to the controlled use of the Internet by students. The Internet usage behaviors investigated here include the most common Internet activities, the time spent on the Internet, and the settings in which it is most frequently used. The study aims to analyze the relationship between excessive internet consumption, with increased risk of addiction, and students' well-being.

Participants

The study participants were randomly selected from the students of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, specializing in Digital Media. The sample consists of 35 people. Females represent 82% of the sample, and males 18%, aged between 21 and 23 ($M = 22$). The composition of the sample by level of studies is 100% bachelor's level. The participants come from the urban environment (90%).

4. Research Assumptions

Hypothesis 1: Digital product consumption correlates positively with students' well-being.

Hypothesis 2: Digital product consumption correlates positively with depression in the case of students.

Hypothesis 3: Digital product consumption positively correlates with social anxiety in the case of students.

Hypothesis 4: Social support/positive relationships with others correlate negatively with excessive Internet use (which leads to addiction) in the case of students.

5. Research Methods

This study aims to examine the relationship between excessive Internet use (6 h/day for 3 months) that may lead to Internet addiction and well-being, social support, and depression/anxiety in emerging adult-students. Through this method of correlational research, it is established whether there is any association between variables to understand the relationships between them and for the prediction from one variable to another; whether there is a mediating relationship between social support, Internet addiction, and well-being. The information found can be used for or against the existence of relationships.

5.1. Procedures

The application of the questionnaires was carried out in the online version. Study participants were

informed of the purpose of the research and the voluntary and anonymous nature of participation and informed consent was obtained. Each participant completed the questionnaires, without being imposed a time limit for completion, and they returned the set of questionnaires also via the online version (google forms). At the time of the centralization of the results, due to the electronic format in which the sets of questionnaires were provided and which did not allow the omission of answers, none of the questionnaires was considered invalid. The obtained data were processed using the IBM SPSS 19 statistical program.

5.2. Instruments

The psychological well-being scale has been measured both in psychological practice and in the space of psychological research through the Psychological Well-Being Scale – Abbott et al. (2010). Social support is measured in psychological research with the Berlin Scales of Schwarzer & Schulz (2003). The phenomenon of Internet addiction, an increasingly present phenomenon in our psychic life, was translated into Romanian by Șerban-Drăgan Filip-Bogdan from Jelenchick et al. (2012). Assessing the psychometric properties of the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) in US college students. *Psychiatry Research*, 196(2–3), 296–301. International studies. The self-perceived stress questionnaire (PSS) was translated into Romanian by Popescu Marina, Văduva Cristina-Angela, Gherman Alexandru according to the original bibliographic reference Cohen and Janicki-Deverts (2012). Who's stressed? Distributions of psychological stress in the United States in probability samples from 1983, 2006, and 2009. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. International Studies Cohen et al. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 385-396. The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale was translated into Romanian by Ana Cosmoiu from Liebowitz (1987) and DASS1.

6. Findings

A database was created that included the participants' answers to a set of 6 questionnaires (Psychological Well-Being Scale, Berlin Scales of Social Support, Internet Addiction Test, Self-Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSS), Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale, DASS21). The data were analyzed in correlation and through the mediation relationship. In the processing and statistical analysis process, IBM SPSS 19 was used to establish correlations.

The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between Internet addiction (generated by excessive use of the Internet = more than 6 hours/day outside of compulsory activities, more than 3 consecutive months) and students' well-being, depression, and social anxiety (Appendix 1). Hypothesis 1 started from the premise that digital product consumption correlates positively with well-being in the case of students in years 2 and 3. The positive correlation (.494) obtained from the data analysis, with a statistical significance of 0.003, ($\leq 0,05$) confirms the starting hypothesis and conforms to the idea supported in several recent studies (e.g. Onyemaechi et al., 2022). In hypothesis 2, digital product consumption correlated negatively with depression in the case of students (-.228) but without statistical significance .188 ($\geq 0,05$). These results confirm the position supported in recent studies (Lozano-Blasco et al., 2022), according to which excessive time spent on the Internet is not positively correlated with depression of the Internet consumer subject.

In hypothesis 3, digital consumption correlates positively (.319) with social anxiety in the case of students, having a statistical significance of 0.002 ($\leq 0,05$). The results are consistent with what the studies support (Sullivan et al., 2007). In hypothesis 4, it is assumed that excessive internet consumption (which can generate internet addiction) correlates negatively with social support/positive relationships with others in the case of students. From Table 2, a positive correlation (.334) with a statistical significance of 0.050 ($\leq 0,05$) results. These results correspond to the approaches of the studies of Shelly, Bedrov (2022) or those of Cohen & Lakey in 2000 regarding the influence of the health status of social relations.

7. Discussions

Internet addiction does not have a long history in psychological theory and practice. Many of the treatment techniques are in the invention or testing phase. Nor is legislation developed, including treatment protocols, to carry out a specific activity in the field. In some countries, experiments have required regulations and continuous adjustments. For example, in China, the therapy called "the Chinese solution" (Talis, 2022) is used in at least 400 centers for the treatment of computer and Internet addicts. It is proposed as an antidote to this addiction, hospitalization in a rehab camp where it has the help of psychologists. If necessary, he will be given

medication to alleviate some of his desires. Hypnosis, strict discipline, physical exercises, activities and, if necessary, electric shock therapy are used. In 2012, a 15-year-old teenager died in a rehabilitation center during such treatment. After this case, the Chinese authorities banned the brutal methods in the clinics dealing with the treatment of Internet addiction. In South Korea, another way of treating emotional and behavioral problems was used: horseback riding (Huang et al., 2010). In order to prevent the emergence of Internet addiction, psychologists and psychiatrists active in the respective field recommend the following psycho-hygienic actions (Huang et al., 2010): Writing down the length of time spent in front of the computer and keeping records of how this was used time; Planning the activities related to the use of the Internet and the time for leaving them, before turning on the computer; Making short breaks while using the Internet, in which to look out the window to disconnect from the online environment and perceive the offline, i.e. real, life, which takes place at a slower pace; Establishing periods when they do not use the computer/internet or other technologies: for example, certain times of the day, or a certain day of the week. Specialists believe that these periods of "fasting" are useful for regaining control over one's life; To use conversations on the phone or, even better, meetings with friends in real-time and space, for example in a predetermined place: park, cafe, school, university, in any other public place; People who notice that they irritate those around them (family members or friends) because of the long use of the computer/internet and those who feel ashamed of the fact that they do not have a social life in the real world are recommended to consult a specialist psychologist and take a test to verify their addiction to the Internet or new technologies. The therapeutic process aims to prevent relapses after reducing the intensity/frequency of addiction. In this phase, the emphasis is on those methods and practices that the individual can apply to everyday problems that will arise in the future so that he does not return to old harmful habits. Specifically, the client's independence and ability to control and solve the problems he will face is developed, so that he has the best possible management capacity over his emotions and needs. A gradual transition from harmful behaviors that reinforce and maintain addiction, to healthy behaviors that solve the client's problems more efficiently and with lower (long-term) costs, is thus expected. Future research should test theoretical approaches, and intervention effects experimentally to prevent problematic Internet use and Internet addiction and improve well-being.

6. Conclusions

The study of the relationship between Internet consumption and well-being involved the analysis of the relationships between Internet addiction - as a phenomenon such as the consequence of excessive consumption of digital content ($\geq 6\text{h/day}/3$ consecutive months) - social support derived from social relationships, depression and anxiety as psychic manifestations experienced quite frequently by digital users. The pandemic period obviously influenced (according to studies from the period 2019-2022) human existence at the psychological level, but also in all its dimensions. Positive correlations between internet use, social anxiety and well-being were confirmed for students consuming digital content, but a negative and statistically insignificant correlation was noted between internet use and depression. Although many previous studies demonstrated a positive correlation between Internet use/Internet addiction and depression, more recent studies, carried out during the pandemic, have highlighted the existence of a negative correlation between the two phenomena. The explanation comes from the fact that during the pandemic the predictive factors of depression were much more numerous and of much greater intensity than the Internet. The unfavorable context caused vulnerable groups (e.g. teenage girls concerned about the ideal body image online, young people exposed to bullying, ...) pathological psychological manifestations (major depressive episodes, social anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic attacks, ...). The present study highlighted the fact that social support/positive relationships with others during the pandemic period (and not only) correlated positively with excessive Internet use because social support was obtained through the Internet during the period of physical isolation.

Authors note:

Claudia Chiorean is a researcher in the field of media psychology, mentalities, and media communication at the Journalism and Media Digital Department, Faculty of Political, Administrative, and Communicative, and the clinical psychologist of the FSPAC Career Center.

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Appendix 1

Correlations

		Internet addiction	Anxiety	Stress	Depression	Good feeling total
Internet addiction	Pearson Correlation	1	.503**	.637**	-.228	.494**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.000	.188	.003
	N	35	35	35	35	35
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.503**	1	.802**	-.220	.319
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.000	.204	.061
	N	35	35	35	35	35
Stress	Pearson Correlation	.637**	.802**	1	-.034	.365*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.848	.031
	N	35	35	35	35	35
Depression	Pearson Correlation	-.228	-.220	-.034	1	-.421*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.188	.204	.848		.012
	N	35	35	35	35	35
Well-being	Pearson Correlation	.494**	.319	.365*	-.421*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.061	.031	.012	
	N	35	35	35	35	35
Social Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.265	.327	.369*	-.099	.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.123	.055	.029	.570	.009
	N	35	35	35	35	35
Positive Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.334*	.514**	.440**	-.342*	.770**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.002	.008	.045	.000
	N	35	35	35	35	35

Correlations

		Social Anxiety	Positive relations with others
Internet Addiction	Pearson Correlation	.265	.334*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.123	.050
	N	35	35
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.327	.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.002
	N	35	35
Stress	Pearson Correlation	.369*	.440**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	.008
	N	35	35
Depression	Pearson Correlation	-.099	-.342*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.570	.045
	N	35	35
Total Well-being	Pearson Correlation	.438**	.770**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.000
	N	35	35
Social Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.395*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.019
	N	35	35
Positive Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.395*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	
	N	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).