

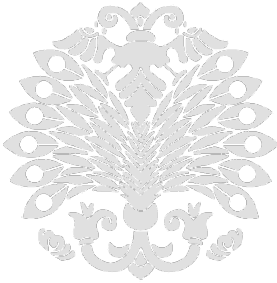
Examining the Internet Usage Behavior of Adolescents After the Covid-19 Pandemic

Covid-19 Salgın Süreci Sonrası Ergenlerin İnternet Kullanım Davranışlarının İncelenmesi

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates adolescents' problematic internet use after the Covid-19 pandemic period. In the research using the scanning method, a total of 336 adolescent participants, 233 (69.3%) girls and 103 (30.7%) boys, were reached online and a questionnaire consisting of 11 questions was conducted. The first two questions of the questionnaire are about demographic information including gender and grade level. Seven of the nine questions are closed-ended and two are open-ended. Quantitative data were analyzed with simple statistical analysis in the SPSS package program, and qualitative data were analyzed with thematic analysis. In the quantitative findings, information is presented about adolescents' internet usage purposes and duration, and their perception of addiction by gender and grade level. As for the qualitative findings, while the theme of internet use results is defined in two categories as negative reflections of internet use and neutral evaluation of internet use, the theme of the meaning of internet usage was evaluated in three different categories as negative a attributed to internet usage, positive meanings attributed to internet usage and neutral meanings attributed to internet usage. As a result, most of the adolescents who participated in the study perceive the reflections of their internet usage behavior negatively and attribute both positive and negative meanings to the internet.

Keywords: Adolescent, addiction, covid-19 pandemic, Internet use, problematic Internet use

Öz

Bu çalışma, ergenlerin Covid-19 pandemi süreci sonrasındaki problemleri internet kullanım durumlarını araştırmaktadır. Tarama yöntemi kullanılan araştırmada, 233 (%69.3) kız, 103 (%30.7) erkek toplam 336 ergen katılımcıya çevrimiçi şekilde ulaşılmış ve 11 sorudan oluşan bir anket uygulanmıştır. Anketin ilk iki sorusu cinsiyet ve sınıf düzeyi gibi demografik bilgilerle ilgilidir. Dokuz sorunun yedisi kapalı uçlu ve ikisi açık uçludur. Katılımcılardan elde edilen nicel veriler SPSS paket programında basit istatistik analiziyle, nitel veriler ise tematik analiz ile analiz edilmiştir. Nicel bulgularda, ergenlerin internet kullanım amaçları ve süreleri, cinsiyet ve sınıf düzeyine göre bağımlılık algılarına dair bilgiler sunulmaktadır. Nitel bulgularda ise internet kullanım sonuçları teması "internet kullanımının olumsuz yansımaları", "internet kullanımını nötr değerlendirme" olmak üzere iki kategoride tanımlanırken, internet kullanımının anlamı teması "internet kullanımına yüklenen olumsuz anlamlar", "internet kullanımına yüklenen olumlu anlamlar" ve "internet kullanımına yüklenen nötr anlamlar" olmak üzere üç farklı kategoride değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuç olarak araştırmaya katılan ergenlerin birçoğu, internet kullanım davranışlarının yansımalarını olumsuz algılamakta, internete hem olumlu hem de olumsuz anlamlar yüklemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Bağımlılık, covid-19 salgını, ergen, internet kullanımı, problemleri internet kullanımı

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Introduction

The use and impact of technology, which is preferred for different purposes by individuals in different developmental stages, is increasing day by day. One of the factors that technology brings and has an impact on human life is the internet. The Internet has significantly changed interpersonal communication practices. Thanks to this emerging digital technology, instant messaging and social media tools have become preferred because they accelerate interaction; ease of access to music and videos and user-created content facilitated the entry of a new era in media usage. As of April 2023, there are 5.18 billion internet users worldwide, indicating that 64.6 percent of the world's population is in contact with the internet. Although the internet is used extensively by both genders, it is emphasized that men use the internet more intensively than women. When examined in terms of developmental periods, it is known that internet use is higher among individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 all over the world and this age constitutes 75 percent of the world average (Statista Internet Statistics, 2023).

Covid-19 Pandemic and Internet Usage

Internet use is a remarkable issue in the Covid-19 process, which has affected the world in the recent years (Avena et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2020; Király et al., 2020). The drastic measures taken to control the Covid-19 pandemic, such as quarantine, resulted in heightened levels of fear and uncertainty, as well as stressful situations such as social isolation and limited mobility (Brooks et al., 2020). Addictive behaviors such as different substances, gambling and video games can be used as coping strategies to reduce increased stress, anxiety and depressive mood (Király et al., 2020). In addition, it is stated that the loneliness resulting from the quarantine leads to intense internet use because people spent more than six hours a day on the internet during the pandemic, and the use increased even more during the quarantine. However, it is seen that young individuals face the risk of problematic internet use as a result of increasing their use levels by feeling more lonely (Alheneidi et al., 2021). It is stated that the prevalence of problematic internet use varies between 4% and 43.8% during the Covid-19 pandemic process (Burkauskas et al., 2022), and this supports that internet use has become problematic during the pandemic process.

Covid-19 Process and Internet Usage Purposes

To discuss problematic internet use, the purposes for which individuals use the internet are as important as the amount of time spent online. Research shows that adolescents

primarily use the internet for work and educational purposes during the pandemic process followed by social media, information seeking, entertainment and playing online games (Siste et al., 2021). The internet environment, which contains content and activities that can positively affect the education process of adolescents, can bring different negative results when used unconsciously. Adolescents who engage in prolonged gaming activities with negative content while using the internet for a long time without time and place limits can rely on unverified information instead of doing research, and access negative content such as violence, drugs and terrorism. This situation may impair their development process as well as pose a risk to their educational processes (Aydın, 2011). It is seen that the use of internet and social media during the pandemic process has increased compared to the pre-pandemic period, and this situation has both positive and negative results. The use of the internet, which is perceived as positive for cultural activities, information resources open to free access, and entertainment activities, is perceived as a negative result in terms of individuals spending all their free time in this environment (Yıldırım & İpek, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the consequences of internet use behavior in terms of informing adolescents about negative use.

Covid-19 Process and Internet Applications

During the pandemic, the shift to conducting business and providing communication channels through online platforms has been one of the factors contributing to the increased internet usage. It is seen that the adolescent group, which is known to have high internet usage before the pandemic process, benefited from internet-specific social media applications both for education, socialization and to get information (Öncü, 2022). Considering that the intense and uncontrolled use of social media applications and online games raises the risk of addiction (Guessoum et al., 2020), it can be said that it is critical to know what the applications used during and after the pandemic are in terms of preventive studies. However, it can be said that adolescents' perceptions of their internet use behaviors become more significant as an element that needs to be addressed. As a matter of fact, in this period of identity acquisition, it is important to recognize misconceptions and intervene before they turn into habits. For example, perceiving the internet as a medium where social relations can be established more than a social environment and as a means of eliminating loneliness may increase the risk of addiction (Çevik & Yıldız, 2017).

In summary

The internet became an environment in which individuals spent considerable time engaging with various applications and for diverse purposes during the pandemic. Accordingly, it can be thought that information about how internet use behaviors are shaped after the pandemic process, the purposes and duration of use will give an idea about the risk of addiction that adolescents may experience. In fact, the purposes of internet use and the amount of time spent on the internet are thought to be effective factors on the risk of addiction (Derin & Bilge, 2016). In addition, problematic internet use, which is considered in the context of behavioral addiction types, can be considered as a factor that can affect different dimensions such as quality of daily life, social relationships (Ceyhan, 2008) and interpersonal relationships (Milani et al., 2009), life satisfaction, subjective well-being (Derin & Bilge, 2016), school success (Yavuz, 2018), sleep (Kokka et al., 2021) and academic motivation level (Akbaba & Kaya, 2022). It is known that getting through this period in a healthy way, during which adolescents gain their identity and prepare for the next level of education, is important for the following periods. Therefore it becomes important how the internet usage behavior of individuals who experience an extraordinary process such as the Covid-19 pandemic during adolescence is affected. For this reason, it is seen that research has been conducted to understand the nature of problematic internet usage behaviors of adolescents during Covid-19 in different cultures (Baltacı et al., 2021; Ilesanmi et al., 2021; Paulus et al., 2022; Vejmelka & Matković, 2021). However, after the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a lack of research that evaluates problematic internet use in terms of adolescents. In a study examining research on problematic internet use, it is stated that problematic internet use may be associated with health problems of the young population, and the Covid-19 pandemic process may cause problematic internet use and thus health problems (Ruckwongpatr et al., 2022).

In the light of all these considerations, this study aimed to describe the situation of the internet use behavior that increased during the pandemic process after the process. In this regard, the applications that adolescents use on the internet, the duration and time interval of internet use, their perceptions of addiction, the consequences of internet use and the meanings they attribute to the internet are discussed. Thus, it is thought that the results of this study will shed light on preventive and curative studies to be carried out by providing a perspective on adolescents' internet use to mental health professionals working with adolescents. Furthermore, it can be said that the extent to which internet use, which may be a risk factor for adolescents, is perceived as addiction and what kind of

consequences they face as a result of internet use, will provide information to parents and teachers about the situation after the intensified use during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the light of these explanations, it is examined whether there is a change in adolescents' internet use behaviors after the Covid-19 pandemic process. In this direction, the situation of internet use, which increased due to reasons such as quarantine and distance education during the Covid-19 process, after the process, whether there is a difference in the applications and time used, internet usage results and addiction perceptions are examined. Therefore, answers to the following questions are sought:

- How did adolescents choose to use the internet during the Covid-19 pandemic period?
- What is the distribution of adolescents' perceptions of addiction towards themselves during and after the Covid-19 pandemic according to gender and grade level?
- What are the meanings that adolescents attribute to the internet after the Covid-19 pandemic?
- What are adolescents' evaluations of the results of internet usage behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic period?

Methods

Research Model

The research general screening model is used. A screening study was carried out on a certain group to make a general judgment about the internet usage behaviors of adolescents after the Covid-19 period. Data is collected with a questionnaire developed in accordance with this model (Büyüköztürk et al., 2010; Karasar, 2002).

Participants

The participants of the research rely on convenience sampling, which includes the elements that are completely available, quick and easy to reach, which is one of the sampling methods in qualitative research (Patton, 2005). In addition, adolescents who were still in their adolescence period, continued formal education, volunteered for the research and informed their families about the research, participated in the research. The participants consist of a total of 336 adolescents, 233 (69.3%) girls and 103 (30.7%) boys. In addition, 99 (29.5%) of the participants attend the 9th grade, 75 (22.2%) attend the 10th grade, 101 (30.1%) attend the 11th grade, and 61 (18%) attend the 12th grade. Attempts were made to reach participants from all grade levels. The link containing the interview form was shared with the adolescents who were informed about the study before the study and those who wanted to participate voluntarily and informed their families about this issue.

Data Collection Tools

A questionnaire developed to determine the internet usage behaviors and perceptions of adolescents during (during and after) the Covid-19 pandemic period was used as a data collection tool in the study. Considering related literature, questions were constructed and expert opinions were obtained from two field experts. Then, a pilot study was conducted with six adolescents and the final version was given. The first two questions of the questionnaire are about demographic information including gender and grade level. The other nine questions are aimed to examine and evaluate adolescents' internet usage behavior during the pandemic period. Seven of the nine questions are closed-ended and two are open-ended. The "Other" option was included in the answer section of closed-ended questions, allowing students to express the points they deemed necessary regarding the question. With open-ended questions, it was aimed to obtain information about the results of adolescents' internet usage behaviors and the meaning they attach to the internet.

Data Collection and Analysis

Before the data collection phase of the research, "research ethics permission" was obtained from the Scientific Research Publication Ethics Board of Dumlupınar University, dated 26.01.23, with decision number 2023/01 and decision number 2023/02-66. Then, data was obtained with the questionnaire prepared online via Google Forms between February and June 2023. During this process, the participants were informed about the research in advance, and the family was informed through the link containing the interview form and consent form. Thus, informed consent was obtained from the participants and families were informed. The average response time was found to be between 10-15 minutes. The quantitative data obtained from the closed-ended questions were subjected to frequency analysis, and certain codes, categories and themes were obtained through thematic analysis from the qualitative data obtained from the two open-ended questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Responses to these two questions are presented as excerpts, with the participants' gender and grade level indicated in parentheses beside each excerpt.

Validity and Reliability of the Research

In order to ensure the validity of the findings, which is known as the accuracy of reflecting the data accurately, the study tried to present the participants' perspectives clearly and accurately, and examples of the participants' direct expressions were given. Similarly, in the method section, the process has been tried to be explained in detail. By adding the other option to closed-ended questions, the participants were allowed to express themselves objectively. Ensuring consistency and objectivity by avoiding personal and research method biases that may have affected the findings is a factor that increases the reliability of the study.

In order to ensure reliability in the study, the researcher individually analyzed the data obtained from two open-ended questions, then a different expert in qualitative studies and research was asked to make the analysis, and then the findings were examined comparatively (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Results

The findings are presented according to four subheadings. First, it is indicated how adolescents used the internet during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this regard, the focus was on internet usage times during and now during the pandemic, internet usage time frame, applications that have been used extensively since the pandemic, applications that are difficult to say no to right now, and purposes of internet use. Then, the distribution of adolescents' addiction perceptions towards themselves during the Covid-19 pandemic according to gender and grade level, the meanings attributed to the internet, and evaluations regarding the results of internet use behavior are presented, respectively.

Internet Usage Preferences of Adolescents during Covid-19

In this section, the findings of the research data are discussed and evaluated. The internet usage hours of the adolescents participating in the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.*Distribution of Adolescents' Internet Usage Hours*

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Covid 19 process internet usage		1-2 hours	3-4 hours	5-6 hours	7-18 hours	Other	
	<i>n</i>	38	39	60	149	50	336
	%	11.31	11.61	17.86	44.34	14.88	100
Current internet usage		1-2 hours	3-4 hours	5-6 hours	7-18 hours	Other	
	<i>n</i>	73	122	70	44	27	336
	%	21.73	36.31	20.83	13.10	8.04	100
Internet usage time range		Before 17.00	17.00-20.00	20.00-22.00	22.00-00.00	After 00.00	
	<i>n</i>	27	43	113	120	33	336
	%	8.04	12.80	33.63	35.71	9.82	100

As can be seen in Table 1, 149 (44.34%) of 336 adolescents used the internet between 7-18 hours during the Covid-19 pandemic process. It is noteworthy that the number of adolescents using the Internet for 7-18 hours decreased from 149 to 44, while the number of adolescents using the Internet for 3-4 hours decreased from 39 to 122. The cut-off

points of the internet usage hours of the adolescents were based on the answers they gave. In the internet usage time interval, it is noteworthy that the most internet usage time is between 22.00 and 00.00 and the least usage is before 17.00. Information on the internet usage behaviors of the adolescents is Table 2.

Table 2.*Distribution of Adolescents' Internet Use Practices and Purposes*

		1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Apps used during and after the Covid 19		Social Media Apps	Chats Apps	Research Apps	Game Apps	Shopping Apps	Others Apps	
	<i>n</i>	187	66	63	12	3	5	336
	%	55.6	19.6	18.7	3.6	0.9	1.5	100
Applications that are difficult to say no		Social Media Apps	Chats Apps	Shopping Apps	Game Apps	Others Apps	None	
	<i>n</i>	161	16	1	28	34	96	336
	%	47.9	4.9	3	8.3	10.1	28.6	100
Internet usage purpose		Social Media	Screen	Chat	Game	Research	Other	
	<i>n</i>	160	66	52	32	22	4	336
	%	47.6	19.6	15.5	9.5	6.5	1.2	100

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the most used applications by adolescents since the Covid-19 process are; social media (n: 187) (instagram, snapchat, tiktok, pinterest, reddit, facebook, twitter), followed by messaging applications (n=66) (whatsapp, messenger, kwai), research (n: 63) (Google, EBA), games (n=12) (Cs go, epic games, discord, clash royale, league of legends, Pubg), shopping applications (n: 3) (trendyol, Hepsiburada, misli.com, sahibinden) and other applications (n=5) (Spotify, Netflix, Youtube). However, adolescents state that they have difficulty controlling the use of social media applications (n=161). In general, when we look at the purposes of

internet use, adolescents use social media the most for watching videos, chatting, playing games and doing research, respectively. Those who chose the other option made statements such as claims, coding, listening to music and all.

Distribution of Adolescents' Perceptions of Addiction by Class and Gender

In Figure 1, there is information about which type of internet use is valid for adolescents' perceptions of being dependent on themselves.

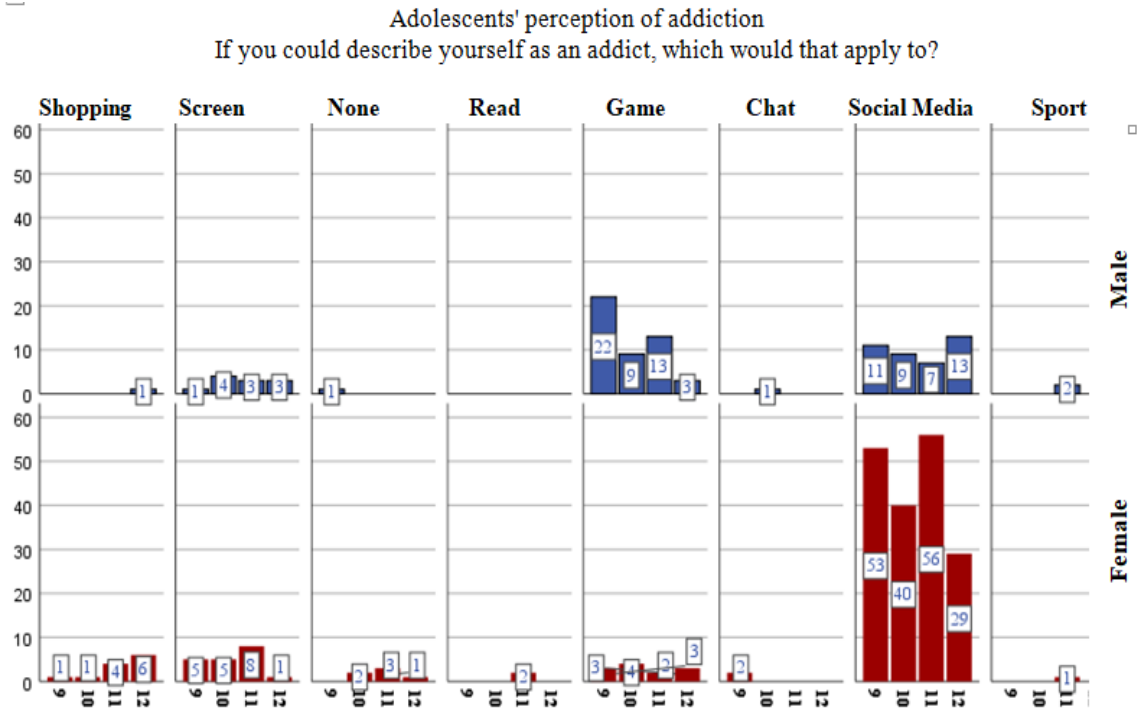


Figure 1.
Adolescents' Perceptions of Addiction by Gender and Class Level

As can be seen in Figure 1, adolescents perceive themselves as the most social media addicts in both genders and all grade levels. However, girls are more likely to perceive themselves as social media addicts. Similarly, it is noteworthy that adolescents perceive themselves as game and screen addicts in both genders and all grade levels. It is seen that boys perceive themselves as game addicts more than girls, while girls perceive themselves as more screen and shopping addicts. While the number of adolescents who do not perceive themselves as addicts is seven, it can be said that six of them are girls. When analyzed by grade level, adolescents attending the ninth grade mostly perceive themselves as social media (n:64) and game (n:25) addicts.

Examining the Meaning that Adolescents Attribute to Their Internet Usage Behavior

The codes, categories and themes regarding the meaning that the participants attribute to their internet usage behavior are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
The Meaning that Adolescents Attribute to Their Internet Usage Behaviors

Themes	Categories	Codes
The Meaning of Internet Usage	Negative Meanings	Addictive
	Attributed to Internet Use	Unnecessary
		Restrictive
		Facilitator
	Positive Meanings	Entertaining
	Attributed to Internet Use	Need
		Socializerc
		Relaxing
	Neutral Meanings	Absurdity
	Attributed to Internet Use	Instability

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the theme of meaning attributed to internet use is collected under 10 different codes and three different categories. It is noteworthy that the participants' internet perceptions were shaped as both positive, negative and neutral. Under the category of negative meanings attributed to internet use, there are codes that describe it as restrictive, addictive and unnecessary; under the category of positive meanings, there are facilitation, comfort, socialization, entertainment and need codes. The neutral meanings category consists of

codes called meaninglessness and ambivalence. Although participants evaluate internet use in the context of negative and neutral results, their positive perceptions towards the internet are striking. Despite this, the fact that many of the participants included statements about the addiction code in their answers is a remarkable finding in terms of problematic internet use. Codes under the positive perception category; It explains that the internet is perceived as facilitating and entertaining, is considered a necessity, and its intense use during the Covid-19 period. Examples of participants' direct statements are presented below.

I can't last a second without the Internet, I spend a large and important part of my life there. (Girl, Grade 11)

I can't survive without internet, I can't stand... (Male, Grade 10)

Once I sit on it, I can't let go. (Male, Grade 11)

Even if it is a bad habit, I will not give up. (Girl, Grade 10)

It's a waste of time, we deal with unnecessary things. (Girl, Grade 12)

Whether it is or not. (Girl, Grade 9)

It's nothing to me because I don't like to look. (Male, Grade 10)

I do not use unnecessary, social media and similar applications, they are of no use to me other than research and communication. (Girl, Grade 11)

The internet limits your range of motion and you feel handcuffed. (Girl, 9th Grade)

It's something I'm constantly stuck in the same spot where I can't make progress for myself. (Girl, Grade 11)

It is a must-have thing in life because it helps us to do everything in an easier way. (Girl, Grade 11)

When necessary, problems can be solved by the effect of the internet. (Male, Grade 11)

It gives you the opportunity to have everything at hand. (Girl, Grade 10)

Entertainment, education, shopping, etc. Access to things is easier and shorter. (Male, Grade 11)

It is an area where we can have fun in a time when technology is dominant and in the difficulties of life. (Girl, Grade 11)

When I go to the Internet, I have a lot of fun while chatting and playing videos or games. (Girl, Grade 9)

It's a tool that lets me have fun. (Girl, Grade 9)

The internet is like our hands and feet. We need it for even the smallest thing. (Male, Grade 12)

It can be necessary at any time. (Girl, Grade 12)

It's a must-have because most of the time there are things we learn from the internet. (Male, Grade 9)

For me, the internet is an important way of communication. Because it allows me to talk to people I can't talk to face to face. (Male, Grade 10)

I spend most of my time chatting. (Girl, Grade 9)

A place where I can socialize easily. (Girl, Grade 12)

I use it to relax and calm down. (Girl, Grade 11)

My mind is blown, it feels good. (Girl, Grade 12)

When I'm in a bad mood, I immediately run to the Internet. (Girl, Grade 10)

Every time I enter, I take all my stress and forget everything and become happy. (Girl, Grade 11)

I don't know. (Girl, Grade 12)

I have no idea. (Male, Grade 11)

Nothing. (Male, Grade 9)

It's a waste of time, but it seems like there are places where it is used well. (Girl, Grade 10)

Sometimes it is necessary and sometimes unnecessary. (Male, Grade 10)

Examining the Results of Adolescents' Internet Usage Behaviors

The themes, categories and codes regarding the results of internet use are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

The Consequences of Adolescents' Internet Usage Behavior

Themes	Categories	Codes
Consequences of Internet Use	Negative Reflections of Internet Use	Waste of Time
		Health Problems
		Academic Fail
		Dependence
	Neutral Assessment of Internet Use	Delay
		Personal Problems
		Family Problems
		Distancing from Reality
		Don't Think it Has Any Effect
		Unawareness of the Impact

As seen in Table 4, participants state that their internet usage behavior has more than one consequence. When the expressions are evaluated, they can be discussed in the categories of negative reflections of the theme of the consequences of internet use and neutral evaluation. The category of negative reflections of internet use consists of eight different codes called "loss of time, health problems, academic failure, addiction, procrastination, personal problems, family problems, distance from reality". In health problems, participants often experience eye pain, burning, eye redness, headache and neck pain, tension and contractions in the muscles and body; He talks about personal problems such as forgetfulness, inability to focus, asocialization, laziness, negative affect and psychological problems. It is noteworthy that there are 32 statements indicating that internet use leads to addiction in its reflections on life. Another category, impartial evaluation of internet use, consists of two codes: "not thinking it has an

effect and not being aware of its effect". Although the participants do not think that the internet has any effect, they think that it does not have a negative effect or they state that they have no idea about its effects.

Sometimes I realize that I'm wasting my time or that I'm wasting too much time. (Male, Grade 10)

I feel like I can't control my time. (Girl, Grade 11)

I don't waste my time and use it well. (Girl, Grade 9)

I wear glasses, my back and head hurt often. (Male, Grade 10)

It negatively affects my academic performance. (Girl, Grade 9)

It makes me very tired but I can't give up. Not without. (Girl, Grade 11)

It has negative effects such as delaying the work that needs to be done. (Girl, Grade 10)

Sometimes I dive into the internet and eat my study time, lessons are left. (Girl, Grade 10)

It creates insecurity. I am experiencing negative emotions. (Girl, Grade 10)

I can't focus, I'm lazy. I became antisocial. (Male, Grade 11)

I constantly feel depressed. (Girl, Grade 12)

My communication with my family is badly affected. Conflict is happening. (Male, Grade 10)

It makes me feel like I've spent my life there, it makes me think that you can be happier and have more fun there. Facts are not like that. (Girl, Grade 10)

I don't have it because I usually use it consciously. I don't think it has any effect. (Male, Grade 12)

I have no idea. I never thought. (Male, Grade 10)

I can't say anything about it. I don't know. (Girl, Grade 10)

Discussion

As a result of this study, a perspective has been reached on the internet usage behaviors of adolescents from the Covid-19 pandemic process to this day. It was seen that this period of time that adolescents use the internet between 7-18 hours during the distance education period, which started during the pandemic, decreased with the transition to face-to-face education. Considering the possibility that the level of internet addiction will increase as the duration of internet use increases (Yılmazsoy & Kahraman, 2017), it can be said that the distance education period carries the risk of increasing internet addiction. On the other hand, the fact that adolescents perform their education and training processes on the internet during the distance education period, communication with their friends and different needs may have increased their usage time. As a matter of fact, adolescents state that they use youtube, whatsapp and game applications the most, followed by instagram, respectively. This is a clue that adolescents try to meet their needs such as communication and entertainment on the

Internet. However, it is noteworthy that the time interval when adolescents use the internet the most is between 22.00 and 00.00, and the least use is before 17.00. This gives an important clue when evaluated both in the distance education period and in the face-to-face education period. The time before sleep is very precious. According to the circadian rhythm, which expresses the changes in the physiological and biological processes of the organism for approximately one day, sleep at certain hours is very important and is also related to the growth hormone (Akinci & Orhan, 2016). For this reason, it can be thought that adolescents' spending these hours on the internet instead of sleeping may be an obstacle to their healthy development. Similarly, adolescents who cannot get a healthy night's sleep are at risk of not being productive in the school time frame the next day. However, considering that problematic internet use is associated with sleep (Kokka et al., 2021), adolescents' preference for internet use over sleep can be considered as a signal for problematic internet use.

Since the Covid-19 process, adolescents have been spending time intensively on social media applications such as instagram, snapchat, tiktok, pinterest, reddit, facebook, twitter; They chat with applications like whatsapp, messenger, kwai, do research with applications such as Google, EBA, they prefer Cs go, epic games, discord, clash royale, league of legends, Pubg games, trendyol, Hepsiburada, misli.com, shopping in applications like sahibinden. and they use applications such as Spotify, Netflix, Youtube. It is noteworthy that adolescents who use different applications for different purposes have difficulty in saying no and the application they cannot control is social media applications. It is important to support adolescents (Öncü, 2022) who use social media applications to meet their learning and entertainment needs in a controlled and beneficial way. In addition, considering that the intense and uncontrolled use of social media applications and online games raise the risk of addiction (Guessoum et al., 2020), it can be thought that it becomes necessary to carry out preventive studies and raise awareness for adolescents.

Adolescents state that they use the internet mostly for watching videos, playing games, chatting, doing research and shopping, after social media. During the pandemic, adolescents prefer the internet mostly for work and education, followed by the use of social media, information seeking, entertainment and online gaming (Siste et al., 2021), which supports the research findings. Despite this, adolescents state that even if they start using the internet for educational and research purposes, they suddenly find

themselves using the internet for a different purpose and have difficulty controlling it (Topçuoğlu & Kuruçay, 2022). In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, adolescents may perceive the internet they use for purposes such as social media, playing online games, shopping, and watching movies and TV series as an escape route from psycho-social problems that they may encounter over time, and this may pose a risk in terms of problematic internet use (Baltacı et al., 2021). Finally, it is known that role-playing games such as World of Warcraft or Second Life, in which the person plays a character operating in an online environment, and virtual relationships established through instant messaging through applications such as ICQ, MSN, Yahoo, or online dating sites lead to problematic internet use (Acier & Kern, 2011). In this respect, it can be said that the usage purposes expressed by the adolescents in this study also represent a risk in terms of problematic internet. Because it is seen that the purposes of internet use and the time spent on the internet are considered as determinants for the risk of addiction (Derin & Bilge, 2016).

How adolescents perceive themselves, especially during adolescence, is an issue that needs to be addressed. It raises the question of how adolescents who try to achieve identity gain perceive themselves to be dependent. In this study, adolescents perceive themselves as the most social media addicts in both genders and all grade levels, however, it is seen that this perception is higher in female adolescents. In addition, it is noteworthy that adolescents perceive themselves as game and screen addicts in both genders and all grade levels. It is thought that it will be useful to review the pandemic process to explain the relevant situation. During the pandemic, meeting different needs such as entertainment, communication and learning via the internet has attracted adolescents to the screen more than ever. However, in a recent study, the fact that the game addiction level of the 17-year-old group is higher than the other age groups (Gürsu & Özçelik, 2022) confirms this perception. Similarly, the increase in the time that adolescents spend on the screen during the Covid-19 pandemic process, and the fact that they will not give accurate information to their parents about this time and bring the risk of uncontrolled use to the agenda (Topçuoğlu & Kuruçay, 2022) makes the issue of screen addiction remarkable. In addition, as a result of the study, boys perceive themselves as game addicts more than girls, while girls perceive themselves as more screen and shopping addicts. In a study examining the researches on game addiction, it was seen that gender had an effect in 21 studies and it was concluded that the game addiction levels of men were higher (Şimşek & Karakuş-Yılmaz, 2020). This situation supports that male adolescents perceive themselves as game addicts. In addition to this, it

comes to the fore that gaming behavior poses a risk for male adolescents' problematic internet use. In addition, the fact that girls have a higher risk of screen addiction than boys (Çetinkaya, 2019) supports the results of the research. These results emphasize that internet usage purposes may differ according to gender and this situation has become a factor that should be taken into account in prevention studies carried out in schools.

Another result discussed in the study is the situations faced by adolescents as a result of internet use behavior. It is noteworthy that these results are perceived negatively or neutrally by adolescents. As a matter of fact, internet use, which is mostly evaluated in terms of loss of time, health problems, academic failure, addiction, procrastination, personal problems, family problems, alienation from reality, is also evaluated as not thinking that it has negative consequences and not being aware of its effects. Similarly, during the Covid-19 pandemic process, difficulties in controlling internet usage, causing problems in family relations and social interaction (Baltacı et al., 2020), problematic internet use can be associated with health problems, the Covid-19 pandemic process, problematic internet use and the knowledge that it may cause health problems (Ruckwongpatr et al., 2022) supports the research result. Finally, it is seen that adolescents' perceptions of internet use behaviors are both positive, negative and neutral. In this context, the internet, which can be perceived as restrictive, addictive and unnecessary according to the usage situation, can also be seen as facilitating, relaxing, socializing, entertaining and needy. In addition, it is noteworthy that adolescents who do not give meaning to internet use and do not think about it, perceive it neutrally. In a study that deals with perceptions of the Internet in the context of family, it was concluded that there are positive perceptions of the Internet in terms of accessing information, socializing, being a facilitator, and negative perceptions in terms of the accuracy of information, becoming an information dump and creating the risk of addiction (Akkaya, 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

As a result, this research tries to contribute to understand the internet usage of adolescents after the Covid-19 process. Usage periods, purposes, applications they use can be considered as clues about the risk of problematic internet use. The perceptions of addiction according to grade level and gender can provide resources for possible preventive studies to be conducted. It can also provide data to field workers and researchers about the intensive use during the pandemic process and its reflections on the next process. In

addition, it can lay the groundwork for planning prevention studies at individual and societal level in line with possible risk factors and adolescents' perceptions of the Internet.

Although this study has significant implications for understanding the problematic internet use of adolescents, it can be said that there are limitations in the generalization of the results. In order to enrich the research results, at least 10 participants with different characteristics and groups are recommended (Hill, 2012). In this study, it was tried to reach the participant who would allow generalization in terms of gender and class level. However, in the study, the problematic internet usage situation was tried to be explained by using the qualitative research method, which offers different opportunities due to its nature. Another limitation is the inability to make quantitative measurements using a valid scale in order to embody the problematic internet use experiences of adolescents. In order to offer ideas for different studies on problematic internet use and to generalize the experience, participants can be diversified on topics such as place of residence, school type, socioeconomic status. Thus, results can be produced with a more general perspective on problematic internet use of adolescents.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Covid-19 salgın sürecinin öncesinde, ergenler tarafından yoğun şekilde kullanılan internet, salgın sürecinde farklı kullanım amaçları ve uygulama türleri ile daha da fazla zaman geçirilen bir ortam hâline gelmiştir. Bu nedenle salgın süreci sonrasında internet kullanım davranışlarının nasıl şekillendiği, amaçları ve kullanım süreleri ile ilgili bilgilerin, ergenlerin yaşayabileceği bağımlılık riski konusunda fikir sunacağı düşünülebilir. Nitekim internet kullanım amaçları ve internette geçirilen süre bağımlılık riski üzerinde etkili birer unsur olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Derin & Bilge, 2016). Ayrıca davranışsal bağımlılık türleri bağlamında değerlendirilen problemli internet kullanımı ergenlerin günlük yaşam, sosyal ilişkiler (Ceyhan, 2008) ve kişiler arası ilişkilerin kalitesi (Milani ve ark., 2009), yaşam doyumu ve öznel iyi oluş (Derin & Bilge, 2016), okul başarısı (Yavuz, 2018), uyku (Kokka ve ark., 2021) ve akademik güdülenme düzeyi (Akbaba & Kaya, 2022) gibi farklı boyutları etkileyebilecek bir unsur olarak değerlendirilebilir. Ergenlerin kimlik kazanımını gerçekleştirdiği ve bir üst eğitim kademesine hazırlandıkları bu dönemin sağlıklı şekilde atlatılmasının ilerleyen dönemler için önem arz ettiği bilinmektedir. Bu nedenle Covid-19 salgını gibi olağan dışı bir süreci ergenlik döneminde yaşayan bireylerin, internet kullanım davranışlarının ne şekilde etkilendiği önem kazanmaktadır. Bu nedenle farklı kültürlerde Covid-19 sürecinde ergenlerin problemli internet kullanım davranışlarının doğasını anlamaya yönelik araştırmalar yapıldığı görülmektedir (Baltacı ve ark., 2021; Ilesanmi ve ark., 2021; Paulus ve ark., 2022; Vejmelka ve Matković, 2021). Fakat Covid-19 salgını sonrasında problemli internet kullanımını ergenler boyutu ile değerlendiren araştırmaya rastlanmamıştır. Problemli internet kullanımı konusundaki araştırmaları inceleyen bir çalışmada problemli internet kullanımının genç nüfusun sağlık sorunlarıyla ilişkilendirilebileceği, Covid-19 salgın sürecinin, problemli internet kullanımı ve dolayısıyla sağlık sorunlarına yol açabileceği ifade edilmektedir (Ruckwongpatr ve ark., 2022). Bütün bu açıklamalar ışığında bu araştırmada, salgın sürecinde artan internet kullanım davranışının süreç sonrasında ne durumda olduğunu betimlemek amaçlanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda ergenlerin internette kullandığı uygulamalar, internet kullanım süreleri ve saat aralığı, bağımlılık algıları, internet kullanımının sonuçları ile internete yükledikleri anlamlar ele alınmaktadır.

Yöntem

Araştırmada genel tarama modeli kullanılmaktadır. Nitekim Covid-19 salgın süreci sonrasında ergenlerin internet kullanım davranışlarına ilişkin genel bir yargıya varmak amacıyla belli bir grup üzerinde tarama çalışması yapılmıştır. Bu modele uygun olarak geliştirilen ve 11 sorudan oluşan çevrimiçi bir anket aracılığıyla katılımcılardan veriler toplanmıştır (Büyüköztürk ve ark., 2010; Karasar, 2002). Araştırmanın katılımcıları, henüz ergenlik döneminde olan, örgün eğitime devam eden, araştırmaya gönüllü olan ve ailelerini araştırma hakkında bilgilendiren ergenlerdir. Bu bağlamda 233'ü (%69,3) kız, 103'ü (%30,7) erkek olmak üzere toplam 336 ergenden, 99'u (%29,5) 9. sınıfa, 75'i (%22,2) 10. sınıfa, 101'i (%30,1) 11. sınıfa ve 61'i (%18) 12. sınıfa devam etmektedir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak, Covid-19 salgın sürecinde (salgın sırasında ve sonrasında) ergenlerin internet kullanım davranışlarını ve algılarını belirlemek amacıyla hazırlanan ikisi demografik bilgi, ikisi açık uçlu olmak üzere 11 sorudan oluşan anket kullanılmıştır. Anketin ilk iki sorusu cinsiyet ve sınıf düzeyi gibi demografik bilgilerle ilgilidir. Dokuz sorunun yedisi kapalı uçlu ve ikisi açık uçludur. Katılımcıların ortalama yanıt verme süresi 10-15 dakika arasında bulunmuştur. Sürecin sonunda kapalı uçlu sorulardan elde edilen veriler frekans analizine tabi tutulmuş, iki açık uçlu sorudan elde edilen verilerden ise tematik analiz yoluyla belirli kodlar, kategoriler ve temalar elde edilmiştir.

Bulgular

Araştırma sonucunda, Covid-19 salgını sürecinde ergenlerin 7-18 saat arasında internet kullandıkları görülmüştür. İnterneti Covid-19 sürecinde 7-18 saat arası kullanan ergen sayısının süreç sonrasında 149'dan 44'e düştüğü, 3-4 saat internet kullanan ergen sayısının ise 39'dan 122'ye çıktığı dikkat çekmektedir. Bu durum Covid-19 süreci sonrasında ergenlerin internet kullanım süresinin azaldığına işaret etmektedir. Uzaktan eğitimin sona ermesi ve karantina sürecinin sonlanmasının bu sonuç üzerinde etkili olabileceği söylenebilir. Ergenlerin en fazla internet kullanımının 22.00-00.00 saatleri arasında, en az internet kullanımının ise 17.00 öncesi olduğu dikkat çekmektedir. Ayrıca Covid-19 salgın sürecinden bu yana ergenlerin en çok kullandığı uygulamaların; sosyal medya (Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok, Pinterest, Reddit, Facebook, Twitter) ardından sırasıyla sohbet etme (Whatsapp, Messenger, Kwai), araştırma yapma (Google, EBA), oyun oynama (Cs Go, Epik Oyunlar, Discord, Clans Royale, League of Legends, Pubg), alışveriş yapma (Trendyol, Hepsiburada, misli.com, sahibinden) ve diğer etkinlikler (n:5) (Spotify, Netflix, Youtube) amacına hizmet eden uygulamalar olduğu görülmektedir. Ergenlerin hayır demekte zorlandıkları ve kontrol edemedikleri uygulamanın sosyal medya olması dikkat çekmektedir. Genel olarak ergenler sosyal medya kullanmak, video izlemek, sohbet etmek, oyun oynamak ve araştırma yapmak amacı ile interneti kullanmaktadır. Diğer seçeneği tercih edenler

ise iddia, kodlama, müzik dinleme ve hepsi gibi seçenekler üretmiştir. Bununla birlikte kızların kendilerini sosyal medya bağımlısı olarak algılama olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğu, her iki cinsiyette ve tüm sınıf düzeylerinde ergenlerin kendilerini oyun ve ekran bağımlısı olarak algıladıkları dikkat çekmektedir. Erkeklerin kızlara göre kendilerini daha fazla oyun bağımlısı olarak algıladıkları, kızların ise kendilerini daha çok ekran ve alışveriş bağımlısı olarak algıladıkları görülmektedir. Kendini bağımlı olarak görmeyen ergenlerin sayısı yedi iken bunların altısının kız olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Sınıf düzeyine göre bağımlılık algıları incelendiğinde ise dokuzuncu sınıfa devam eden ergenler, kendilerini çoğunlukla sosyal medya ve oyun bağımlısı olarak algılamaktadır.

Sonuç

Araştırmanın nitel verileri incelendiğinde; internet kullanımının anlamı teması “internet kullanımına yüklenen olumsuz anlamlar”, “internet kullanımına yüklenen olumlu anlamlar” ve “internet kullanımına yüklenen nötr anlamlar” olmak üzere üç kategoride; internet kullanım sonuçları temasının ise “Internet kullanımının olumsuz yansımaları”, “internet kullanımını nötr değerlendirme” olmak üzere iki kategoride tanımlandığı görülmektedir. Bu bulgu ışığında; ergenlerin, internet kullanım davranışlarının sonuçlarını olumsuz algıladıkları ve internet kullanım davranışlarına hem olumlu hem de olumsuz anlamlar yükledikleri dikkat çekmektedir. Sonuç olarak bu araştırma, Covid-19 süreci sonrasında ergenlerin internet kullanım durumlarının anlamlandırılmasına katkı sağlamaya çalışmaktadır. Ergenlerin internet kullanım süreleri, amaçları, en çok kullandıkları uygulamalar problemlili internet kullanımının riskine ilişkin ipuçları olarak değerlendirilebilir. Sınıf düzeyi ve cinsiyete göre bağımlılık algıları planlanacak olası önleyici çalışmalara kaynak sağlayabilir. Ayrıca saha çalışanlarına ve araştırmacılara Covid-19 salgın sürecindeki yoğun kullanım ve bunun sonraki sürece yansımaları hakkında fikir sunabilir. Ayrıca olası risk faktörleri ve ergenlerin internet algıları doğrultusunda bireysel ve toplumsal düzeyde önleme çalışmalarının planlanmasına zemin hazırlayabilir. Bu çalışmanın ergenlerin problemlili internet kullanımını anlama açısından önemli çıkarımları olsa da sonuçların genellemesinde sınırlılıkların olduğu söylenebilir. Araştırma sonuçlarının zenginleştirilmesi amacıyla farklı özellik ve gruplara sahip en az 10 katılımcının katılımı önerilmektedir (Hill, 2012). Bu çalışmada cinsiyet ve sınıf düzeyi açısından genellemeye izin verecek katılımcıya ulaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırmanın diğer bir sınırlılığı kesitsel olmasıdır. Süreç sonrasında problemlili internet kullanımı davranışının doğasını anlayabilmek için boylamsal çalışmalar ve ergenlerin problemlili internet kullanım deneyimlerini daha derinlemesine irdelenecek karma yöntem çalışmaları planlanabilir. Problemlili internet kullanımına ilişkin farklı çalışmalara fikir sunmak ve deneyimi genelleştirmek adına katılımcılar yaşadıkları yer, okul türü, sosyoekonomik durum gibi konularda çeşitlendirilebilir. Böylece ergenlerin problemlili internet kullanımına ilişkin daha genel bir bakış açısıyla sonuçlar üretilebilir.