Children's Age and Gender Differences in Internet Parenting Styles

İnternet Aile Tutumunun Yaş ve Cinsiyet Değişkenlerine göre Değişimi

Mehmet Barış HORZUM [*] İbrahim DUMAN[**] Mehmet UYSAL[***]

Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine whether the Internet family style changes according to age and gender. The study was based on a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The participants of the study were randomly sampled from secondary and high school students in Sakarya - Turkey. A total of 1839 children participated in this study. As a result of the research it was seen that parental control and parental warmth were high in both females and males in the 10–11 age group. This shows that families maintained high levels of control and warmth with regard to the Internet at younger ages, however control and warmth continues to decrease for both genders in later ages. Considering gender, in males, parental control and parental warmth with regard to the Internet was seen to decline substantially at the age of 12. In females, parental control and warmth for the use of Internet decline substantially at the age of 14. Moreover, when compared to males, this decline occurs two years later.

Keywords: Internet parental style, parental warmth, parental control, age, gender

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[*] Doç. Dr., Sakarya Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, ORCID: 0000-0003-3567-0779 mhorzum@sakarya.edu.tr

[**] Arş. Gör., Hakkari Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, (Sakarya Üniversitesinde doktora öğrencisi), ORCID: 0000-0002-4662-5503 dumani44@gmail.com

[***]   Arş. Gör., Sakarya Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, ORCID: 0000-0003-1387-2476 mehmetuysal@sakarya.edu.tr

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı internet aile tutumunun yaş ve cinsiyete göre değişip değişmediğini incelemektir. Çalışma, nicel kesitsel araştırma modeline dayanmaktadır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları Sakarya ilindeki ortaokul ve lise öğrencileri arasından rastgele örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak seçilmiştir. Bu çalışmaya toplam 1839 çocuk katılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda, 10–11 yaş grubundaki kız ve erkeklerde aile kontrolü ve aile yakınlığının yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Bu durum, ailelerin daha genç yaşlarda İnternet ile ilgili olarak yüksek düzeyde kontrol ve yakınlık sağladıklarını göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte ilerleyen yaşlarda hem erkeklerde hem de kızlarda kontrol ve yakınlık azalmaya devam etmektedir. Cinsiyet göz önüne alındığında, erkeklerde internet ile ilgili aile kontrolünün ve aile yakınlıklarının 12 yaşında önemli ölçüde azaldığı görülmüştür. Kızlarda internet kullanımında ise aile kontrolü ve yakınlığının 14 yaşında önemli ölçüde azalmakta olduğu görülmektedir. Erkeklere kıyasla kızlarda bu düşüş iki yıl daha sonra gerçekleşmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Internet aile tutumu, aile yakınlığı, aile kontrolü, yaş, cinsiyet

Introduction

With the development of Internet technologies, especially mobile technologies, rates of Internet use are increasing every passing day. According to the Internet World Stats data from December 31, 2017, more than 3.9 billion people use the Internet, corresponding to 51.7% of the world population (which was 50.1% a year before). In the same report it can be seen that the rate of Internet use has increased up to 79.7% in Europe, which accounts for 10.8% of the world population. A total of 56 million people use the Internet in Turkey, accounting for 69.6% of its population.

Due to this rapid development of Internet technologies and their widespread use, how these technologies affect societies from various perspectives has been the subject of many studies. There are many advantages and opportunities that Internet technologies offer to the world today. Studies have shown that the Internet offers its users easy access to information, fast and high-quality communication facilities, opportunities for online education and possibilities of use for enjoyment (Johnson, 2010; Ihmeideh & Shawareb, 2014; Austin & Reed, 1999). Other studies show that the use of Internet contributes to the social and mental development of children (Greenfield & Yan, 2006) and improves their visual intelligences (DeBell & Chapman, 2006).

Using the Internet can be advantageous or disadvantageous (Tripp & Herr-Stephenson, 2009). Several studies have shown that many individuals, especially children and adolescents, are exposed to cyber bullying (van Rooij & van den Eijden, 2007; Peluchettea, Karl, Wood & Williams, 2015; Aricak & Ozbay, 2016), harassment (Reyns at al., 2011; Smoker & March, 2017), pornographic and violent content (Chisholm, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2005; Peterson & Densley 2017) and similar situations in virtual environments. In addition, research has shown that Internet users are likely to experience social loneliness and depression (Chen & Lin, 2015; Anderson et al., 2017), declining quality of life (Çelik & Odacı, 2013; Livingstone et al., 2017) academic failure (Dunbar et al., 2017; Yang & Tung, 2007), and certain different psychological problems (Ko, Yen, Yen, Chen & Chen, 2012; Wegmann et al., 2017).

Children use the Internet for a variety of reasons, such as chatting with their friends or people that they met online, playing games in the virtual environment, doing school assignments, watching web TV or creating their own web channels (Livingstone, 2003; Johnson, 2011; Horzum & Bektaş, 2014). Duerager and Livingstone (2012) have underlined the fact that parents have an important role in how their children use the Internet, which cannot be overlooked. How parents monitor, direct, inform, and guide their children when they use the Internet is of great importance for the children to be minimally affected by the potential hazards of the Internet environment (Duerager & Livingstone, 2012; Leung & Lee, 2012). Parents should not only monitor their children, but also listen to them and help them find solutions to the problems they face (Valcke, Bonte, Wever & Rots, 2010).
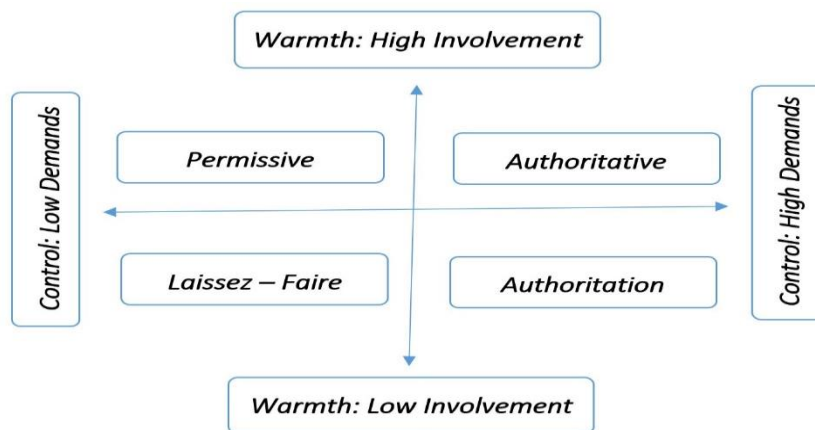
Parenting Styles

Family life, especially the life in the home environment, has a significant effect on the personal development of individuals. It has been explored through different variables in many studies that parents have an important role on the personal development of children (White & Klein, 2008; Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

In recent years, rapid developments in Internet technologies, especially in mobile technologies, have affected the family life undeniably. The fact that access to this technology has become easier, has made it easier for children and adolescents to face potential dangers and risks. This has also increased the responsibility of parents to protect their children from such dangers (Duerager & Livingstone, 2012; Valcke et al., 2010; Mikeska et al., 2017). Research has shown that parenting style is an important variable that affect children's use of the Internet (Valcke et al., 2010; Chou & Lee, 2017).

Parenting styles are generally expressed as the interaction of parents with their children in social life, and the actions and attitudes of parents towards exerting control over their children (Maccoby & Martin 1983; Baumrind 1991). Parenting styles have become an important issue in children's use of the Internet as it is in every area that deals with the social life. Studies have been carried out particularly on Internet access in every household or even in every personal technology (smart phone, tablet PC or laptop), the criteria that affect how time is spent on the Internet (Huang, Lu, Liu, You, Pan, Wei & Wang, 2009), whether family control is necessary (Shih, 2003; Wang, Bianchi, & Raley, 2005), and how the Internet use is shaped by parenting styles (Valcke, Bonte, De Wever, & Rots, 2010; Hsu, 2005). Such studies supported the importance of parenting styles.

Research on parenting styles have been influenced by Baurimd's (1971) research on substance users and their families. Parenting styles that were initially categorized into three as authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles were later separated into four after the permissive parenting style was divided into two and thus the laissez-faire parenting style was added. Valcke et al. (2010) has placed parenting styles on two dimensions; parental warmth and parental control. The relationship between parenting styles and these dimensions has been classified as high or low.

The high level of control indicates that the family controls the child's use of the Internet (time and content), while the low level of control indicates that the child's internet usage is not controlled. In Parental Warmth, if family supports their child when he/she is using the Internet means that the parental warmth level is high, otherwise it is low. Rooijj and van den Eijden (2007) prepared the "Internet parenting styles scale" to identify parenting styles. The original of this scale is in Dutch. It was adapted to English by Valcke, Bonte, Werer and Rots (2010) and to

Figure 1. **Parenting styles (based on Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983)**

Turkish by Ayas and Horzum (2013).

The Influence of Gender on Internet Parenting Styles

The gender factor has significant effects on the internet use of children and adolescents. Parents may also be found to behave differently to their daughters and sons (Ayas & Horzum 2013). It has been revealed in many research studies that parenting styles can cause different effects on the Internet use of females and males (i.e. males are more inclined to use the Internet and consequently more exposed to dangers than females (Lau & Yuen 2013; Kabasakal 2015)). Many studies have reported that males, especially in lower age groups, are more exposed to bullying than females, and that they experience more addiction problems (Li, 2006; Chiou & Wan, 2006; Leung & Lee 2012a).

It has been found that, while fathers treat their sons more favorably, mothers choose daughters (Tucker, McHale & Crouter, 2003; Phares et al., 2009). Although there are some cultural differences, parents, especially fathers are more tolerant of their sons, while they have a more protectionist and authoritarian attitude towards their daughters. Many research findings show that male individuals are more likely to be problematic in their use of the Internet than females (Carbonell et al., 2012; Esen & Siyez, 2011; Frangos et al., 2010).

The Influence of Age on Internet Parenting Styles

Children and adolescents at different ages also use the Internet in different ways. Both Internet use intentions and behaviors of children as well as attitudes of their families differ according to the children's age (Gutman et al., 2010; Piko & Balázs, 2012; Roche et al., 2008; Horzum, 2011; Deniz et al., 2016).

Milani et al. (2009) found that Internet users between the ages of 14 and 19 spent a large amount of time on the Internet and that these individuals encountered more problems when using the Internet. Attitudes and behaviors of parents also change according to children's age. For example, Özgür (2016) has found that parents behave more authoritatively towards their children until the ages of 9–10, they are more permissive between the ages of 11–12, while in older age groups, they leave their children alone and do not interfere too much (Laissez-faire).

Rosen, Cheever and Carrier (2008) have investigated the effects of parenting styles on the use of Myspace. They have stated that parenting styles vary with respect to student age, the authoritative and negligent parenting styles are predominant in general, but the permissive and negligent parenting styles stand out as the student ages.

Family styles differ for different age groups (Gutman et al., 2010; Horzum, 2011; Deniz et al., 2016). There are disagreements in the literature about the relation between Internet parenting styles and children's age. Therefore, this study aims to control the change of family style according to age.

Moreover, in the literature there is a gap which considers age and gender together in relation to internet parenting styles. Researches emphasize that parental control level is lower in boys than girls. However, there is lack of study on how this control changes at different ages. The analysis of age and gender together will allow to evaluate the change of parental warmth and parental control in the process.

This study tries to fill this gap and resolve disagreements by examining the parenting styles of families with respect to the age and the gender of their children at the same time. This study is considered to be important in terms of shaping future studies on families by understanding how their control and warmth vary according to age groups and genders.

To sum up; this study aims to answer following research questions:

1. Does parental control vary according to age and gender of the child?

2. Does parental warmth vary according to age and gender of the child?

Method

The study was based on a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The cross-sectional survey design is a model of which variables are measured instantly for once. In cross-sectional survey designs data is collected at one point in time in order to make inferences about a population.

Participants

The participants of the study were randomly sampled from secondary and high school students of Sakarya province in Turkey. Printed forms of questionnaires were distributed to guidance counsellors of each school that were chosen randomly for the study. Then these forms were filled out by students under the teachers' supervision. In the study, a total of 2000 questionnaires were distributed, and data were obtained from 1839 participants. Of the students participating in the study, 991 (53.9%) were female, 791 (43%) were male. Of the participants, 90 (4.9%) were 10 years old; 321 (17.5%), 11 years old; 262 (14.2%), 12 years old; 216 (11.7%), 13 years old; 210 (11.4%), 14 years old; 219 (11.95), 15 years old; 246 (13.4%), 16 years old; and 219 (11.9%) were 17 years old. 56 participants didn't state their gender and age, and one participant didn't state his/her gender. Of the students, 409 (223%) were at the 5th grade; 263 (14.8%), 6th grade; 188 (10.5%), 7th grade; 224 (12.6%), 8th grade; 201 (11.3%), 9th grade; 260 (14.6%), 10th grade; 198 (11.1%), 11th grade; and 34 (1.9%) were at the 12th grade. 5 did not answer this question. Because the 12th-grade students were preparing for the university entrance exam, not many 12th grade students could be reached in the data collection stage. Of the students who participated in the study, 1238(69.5%) declared to have computers and 536 (30.1%) did not and 8 participants did not answer this question. Again, 1330 (74.5%) of the participants stated that they had Internet connections and 452 (25.2%) did not have Internet connections. When the students were asked about their ability to use the Internet, 74 (4.2%) stated that they were able to use the Internet very little; 147 (8.2%), little; 600 (33.7%), at a medium level; 491 (27.6%), well; and 435 (25.5%) stated that they could use the Internet at a very good level. 35 participants did not answer this question. When asked about their parents' status, 1594 (89.5%) of the students stated that they lived with both parents; 81 (4.5%), with their mothers; 31 (1.7%), with their fathers; and 43 (2.4%) stated that they lived with other relatives 33 participants did not answer this question.

Instruments

In the study, the Internet parenting styles scale was used. In addition to this scale, the students were asked about their demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, grade, whether they had computers, whether they had Internet connection, the level of Internet use, family status and who they would ask for support when they experienced a problem on the Internet.

Internet Parenting Styles Scale

The Internet Parenting Styles scale was developed by van Rooij and van den Eijnden (2007). The original of the scale is in Dutch. It was adapted to Turkish by Ayas and Horzum (2013) using the English version of the scale, which was adapted by Valcke, Bonte, Werer and Rots (2010). The scale has 25 items with 5-point Likert type ratings. It consists of two factors. The "parental control" factor is made up of 11 items and the "parental warmth" factor, 14 items. Factor scores are calculated by taking the sum of the items in the factors (Ayas & Horzum, 2013; Horzum & Bektaş, 2014). Cronbach's alpha was 0.86 for the parental control factor, and 0.92 for the parental warmth factor.

This scale can be utilized in two different ways. First, score for parental control and warmth dimensions is calculated by totaling the responses to the Likert style item. The second way, which is preferred in the original study, consists of a two dimensional continuous structure with parental control and parental warmth (Valcke et al., 2010; Horzum & Bektaş, 2014). In this study, two dimensional continuous structures were preferred in order to see the effect of age and gender.

Procedure and data analysis

Two-way ANOVAs were run to determine the relationships and differences between the variables. These analyses were carried out using IBM SPSS 20.

Result

The students scored between 11 and 55 in the control dimension of the Internet parenting styles, and the mean control score (mean ± SD) was 27.58 ± 10.29. They scored between 14 and 70 in the warmth dimension, and the mean warmth score (mean ± SD) was found as 42.66 ± 14.99. In the study, two two-way ANOVA analyses were performed separately for the control and warmth dimensions.

Findings on Parental Control

Descriptive statistics of the participants regarding parental control are presented in Table 1 according to gender and age.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the participants regarding parental control according to gender and age.

Age		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
					Parental control scores					
Female	n	56	170	131	80	79	137	184	154	991
	$\overline{X}$	34.29	34.58	31.11	31.36	24.60	25.15	25.42	22.93	28.23
	SD	9.72	8.92	8.83	9.23	7.91	10.18	10.08	9.83	10.39
Male	n	34	151	131	136	131	82	61	65	791
	$\overline{X}$	31.62	34.25	27.72	26.23	24.60	23.82	20.33	19.77	26.73
	SD	10.09	9.53	9.53	8.82	8.24	9.25	7.22	9.88	10.12
Total	n	90	321	262	216	210	219	245	219	1782
	$\overline{X}$	33.28	34.43	29.41	28.12	24.60	24.65	24.15	21.99	27.57
	SD	9.89	9.20	9.32	9.29	8.10	9.84	9.69	9.93	10.29

A general linear model with the parental control score as the dependent variable and age and gender as the fixed factors was established and tested. There was a significant influence of age and gender on the parental control (Table 2).

Table 2. General linear model with age and gender as the fixed factors and parental control scores as the dependent variable.

	df	F	p	η^2
Corrected model	15	28.111	.000	.193
Intercept	1	12459.082	.000	.876
Gender	1	28.928	.000	.016
Age	7	55.404	.000	.180
Gender * age	7	2.461	.016	.010
Error	1766			
Total	1782			

As a result of the analysis, it was found that there was a significant difference according to gender (p<.05). Although the difference was significant, the effect size was low. When the source of the difference was examined, it was found that the parents exerted more control over the Internet use of their female children (mean ± SD) (28.23 ± 10.39) than that of their male children (mean ± SD) (26.73 ± 10.12). Moreover, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the parental control of children's Internet use according to the age groups of the participants (p<.05). In terms of the age variable, the statistical difference was significant as well as having a high effect size. This can be interpreted as that age is a more significant determinant of parental control. When the source of the difference was examined, it was found that the parents of 10 (mean ± SD) (33.28 ± 9.89) and 11 (mean ± SD) (34.43 ± 9.20) year-old children exerted more control over the Internet use of their children than that of older children. In addition, the parents of 12 (mean ± SD) (29.41 ± 9.32) and 13 (mean ± SD) (28.12 ± 9.29) year-old children exerted more control over the Internet use of their children than that of high school children. These findings suggest that the parents of middle-school-age children exerted more control over the Internet use than the parents of high-school-age children, and that this occurred most often in the first two years of middle school.

There was also a statistically significant interaction effect of age and gender on the scores of parental control over the Internet use (p<.05). Although the difference was significant, the effect size was low. The differences based on gender for every age group was examined using the Bonferroni multiple comparison test, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Parental control scores with respect to gender and age groups, with significant gender differences.

Age	Gender	$\overline{X}$ Difference	SD	p
12	Female-Male	3.39	1.15	.003*
13	Female-Male	5.14	1.31	.000*
16	Female-Male	5.09	1.37	.000*
17	Female-Male	3.16	1.37	.022*

Note: *=p<.05.

Considering Table 3, there were significant differences between males and females at the age of 12, 13, 16 and 17. In the other age groups, the differences were not significant. In all groups with significant differences, girls were found to have more control over their use of the Internet by their parents than their male counterparts. In other age groups (these age groups correspond to the two years at the beginning of secondary school and high school), girls and boys were monitored by their parents in terms of Internet use in a similar way.

The differences based on age for every gender was examined using the Bonferroni multiple comparison test, and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Parental control scores with respect to age and gender, with significant age differences.

Female				Male			
Ages	$\overline{X}_D$	SD	p	Ages	$\overline{X}_D$	SD	p
10–14	9.69	1.62	.000*	10–14	7.02	1.79	.003*
10–15	9.14	1.47	.000*	10–15	7.80	1.89	.001*
10–16	8.87	1.42	.000*	10–16	11.29	1.99	.000*
10–17	11.36	1.45	.000*	10–17	11.85	1.97	.000*
11–14	9.99	1.26	.000*	11–12	6.53	1.11	.000*
11–15	9.44	1.07	.000*	11–13	8.02	1.10	.000*
11–16	9.16	0.99	.000*	11–14	9.65	1.11	.000*
11–17	11.65	1.03	.000*	11–15	10.44	1.27	.000*
12–14	6.51	1.32	.000*	11–16	13.92	1.41	.000*
12–15	5.96	1.14	.000*	11–17	14.48	1.38	.000*
12–16	5.69	1.06	.000*	12–16	7.39	1.44	.000*
12–17	8.18	1.10	.000*	12–17	7.95	1.41	.000*
13–14	6.77	1.47	.000*	13–16	5.90	1.43	.001*
13–15	6.22	1.31	.000*	13–17	6.46	1.40	.000*
13–16	5.94	1.24	.000*	14–17	4.83	1.41	.017*
13–17	8.43	1.28	.000*				

Note: *=p<.05, D= Difference.

Considering Table 4, the high level of control exerted by parents over the Internet use of girls at ages 10, 11, 12, and 13, which are the middle school age group, drops compared to the age range of high school education. There was a high level of control exerted by parents over the Internet use of males at ages 10 and 11. This situation continued to decline with age. In males, age 17 was the age with the lowest parental control.

When the significance of the interaction effect of age and gender on the control dimension of the Internet parenting styles in Figure 1 was examined, it was found that there was a similar control exerted by parents over the males and females aged 11 and 14, supporting the above findings. Other than that, the highest control was at the age of 11. The lowest control was at the age of 17 in both groups. The parental control in girls was higher than in boys in all age ranges. While there was a sharp drop in control in girls between 13 and 14 years of age in middle school and high school education, it was observed that there was a regular decrease in parental control in males depending on age.
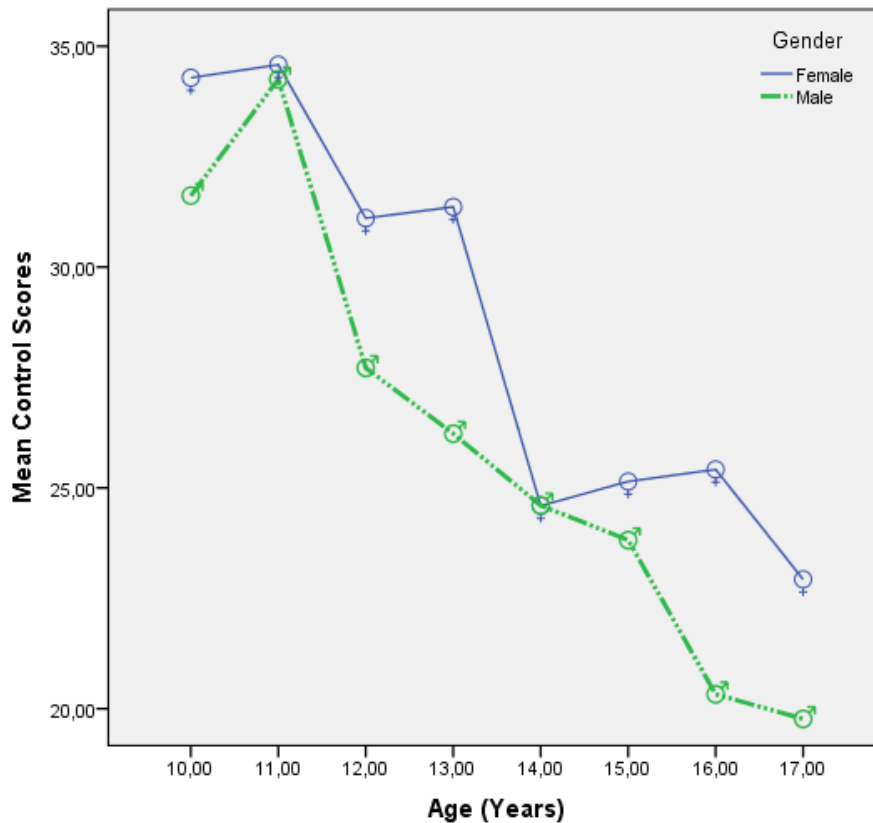
Figure 2. **Parental control scores according to age and gender.**

Findings on Parental Warmth

Descriptive statistics of the participants regarding parental warmth are presented in Table 5 according to gender and age.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of parental warmth of the participants according to gender and age.

Age		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
					Parental warmth scores					
Female	n	56	170	131	80	79	137	184	154	991
	$\overline{X}$	55.04	53.45	50.08	50.28	43.00	37.81	40.12	36.92	44.80
	SD	12.13	10.64	12.20	11.04	12.55	14.30	14.73	13.92	14.60
Male	n	34	151	131	136	131	82	61	65	791
	$\overline{X}$	47.77	50.29	41.99	38.66	35.70	33.93	31.75	31.20	39.70
	SD	13.80	13.16	14.62	12.93	13.20	13.46	12.85	15.48	15.03
Total	n	90	321	262	216	210	219	245	219	1782
	$\overline{X}$	52.29	51.96	46.03	42.96	38.45	36.36	38.04	35.22	42.53
	SD	13.19	11.98	14.04	13.47	13.41	14.09	14.71	14.60	15.00

A general linear model with the parental warmth score as the dependent variable and age and gender as the fixed factors was established and tested. There was a significant influence of age and gender on parental warmth (Table 6).

Table 6. General linear model with age and gender as the fixed factors and parental warmth scores as the dependent variable.

	df	F	p	η^2
Corrected model	15	34.077	.000	.224
Intercept	1	14638.288	.000	.892
Gender	1	97.694	.000	.052
Age	7	57.350	.000	.185
Gender * age	7	2,393	.019	.009
Error	1766			
Total	1782			

As a result of the analysis, it was found that parental warmth scores of the parents of the students who participated in the study had significant differences according to gender ($p<.05$). Although the difference was significant, the effect size was low. When the source of the difference was examined, it was found that the parents were showed stronger parental warmth towards Internet use of their female children (mean ± SE) (44.80 ± 14.60) than that of male children (mean ± SD) (39.70 ± 15.03). Moreover, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the parental warmth of parents about their children's Internet use according to the age groups of the participants ($p<.05$).

In terms of the age variable, the statistical difference was significant as well as having a high effect size. This can be interpreted as that age is a more significant determinant of the parental warmth variable. When the source of the difference was examined, it was found that the parents were more supportive of (showed a stronger parental warmth towards) Internet use of their 10 (mean ± SD) (52.29 ± 13.19) and 11 (mean ± SD) (51.96 ± 11.98) year-old children than that of older children. In addition, the parents of 12 (mean ± SD) (46.03 ± 14.04) and 13 (mean ± SD) (42.96 ± 13.47) year-old children supported the Internet use of their children more than that of high school children. These findings suggest that the parents of middle-school-age children supported the Internet use more than the parents of high-school-age children, and that this occurred most often in the first two years of middle school.

There was also a statistically significant interaction effect of age and gender on the scores of parental support of the Internet use (p<.05). Although the difference was significant, the effect size was low. The differences based on gender for every age group was examined using the Bonferroni multiple comparison test, and the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Parental warmth scores with respect to gender and age groups, with significant gender differences.

Age	Gender	$\overline{X}$ Difference	SD	p
10	Female-Male	7.27	2.89	.012*
11	Female-Male	3.16	1.48	.034*
12	Female-Male	8.08	1.64	.000*
13	Female-Male	11.61	1.87	.000*
14	Female-Male	7.30	1.89	.000*
15	Female-Male	3.88	1.85	.036*
16	Female-Male	8.37	1.96	.000*
17	Female-Male	5.72	1.96	.004*

Note: *=p<.05.

Considering Table 7, there were significant differences between males and females in all age groups. In all groups with significant differences, girls were found to have more support for their use of the Internet by their parents than their male counterparts. The differences based on age for every gender was examined using the Bonferroni multiple comparison test, and the results are presented in Table 8.

Considering Table 8, the high level of support by parents for the Internet use of girls at ages 10, 11, 12, and 13, which are the middle school age group, increases compared to the age range of high school education. There was a high level of support by parents for the Internet use of males at the age 11. This situation continued to decline with age. In males, age 17 was the age with the lowest parental warmth.

When the significance of the interaction effect of age and gender on the control dimension of the Internet parenting styles in Figure 1 was examined, it was found that females had the highest parental warmth score at the age of 10, whereas males had it at the age of 11, supporting the above findings. While the scores in the age range of 10 to 13 were close to each other, there was a sharp decline after 13 years of age, at age 14 and 15. That is, the support of families for the Internet of their female children was significantly reduced at the age of 14,

which is the beginning of high school. In males, it was observed that there was a decrease in parental warmth steadily after age 11 according to age. Therefore, it is seen that the parental warmth in females was higher than males in all age ranges.

Table 8. Parental warmth scores with respect to age and gender, with significant age differences.

	Female				Male		
Age	$\overline{X}_D$	SD	p	Age	$\overline{X}_D$	SD	p
10–14	12.04	2.31	.000*	10–13	9.10	2.54	.010*
10–15	17.23	2.10	.000*	10–14	12.06	2.55	.000*
10–16	14.92	2.02	.000*	10–15	13.84	2.71	.000*
10–17	18.12	2.07	.000*	10–16	16.01	2.84	.000*
11–14	10.45	1.81	.000*	10–17	16.57	2.81	.000*
11–15	15.64	1.52	.000*	11–12	8.30	1.58	.000*
11–16	13.33	1.41	.000*	11–13	11.63	1.57	.000*
11–17	16.53	1.48	.000*	11–14	14.59	1.58	.000*
12–14	7.08	1.89	.005*	11–15	16.37	1.82	.000*
12–15	12.27	1.62	.000*	11–16	18.54	2.01	.000*
12–16	9.96	1.52	.000*	11–17	19.09	1.97	.000*
12–17	13.16	1.58	.000*	12–14	6.29	1.64	.004*
13–14	7.28	2.10	.016*	12–15	8.07	1.87	.000*
13–15	12.47	1.87	.000*	12–16	10.24	2.06	.000*
13–16	10.16	1.78	.000*	12–17	10.79	2.01	.000*
13–17	13.36	1.83	.000*	13–16	6.91	2.04	.021*
				13–17	7.46	2.00	.006*

Note: *=p<.05, D= Difference.

Discussion

Considering the Internet parenting styles, it was seen that parental control and parental warmth were high in both females and males in the 10–11 age group. This shows that families maintained high levels of control and warmth with regard to the Internet at younger ages, and that this situation continued to diminish in both males and females in later ages. This finding is consistent with current literature. The studies of Valcke, Bonte, De Wever and Rots (2010), Deniz, Horzum, Ayas and Koç (2016), and Özgür (2016), have foregrounded the fact that as age decreases and grade level increases, the autocratic parenting style decreases — that is, the control diminishes. Mitchell, Finkelhor and Wolak (2005) have stated that filtering software are widely used in younger children, while Wang, Bianchi, and Raley (2005) have stated that a relatively higher level of parental monitoring is in effect. Rosen, Cheever and Carrier (2008)

have argued that in young children, families limit the use of the Internet and use monitoring software.
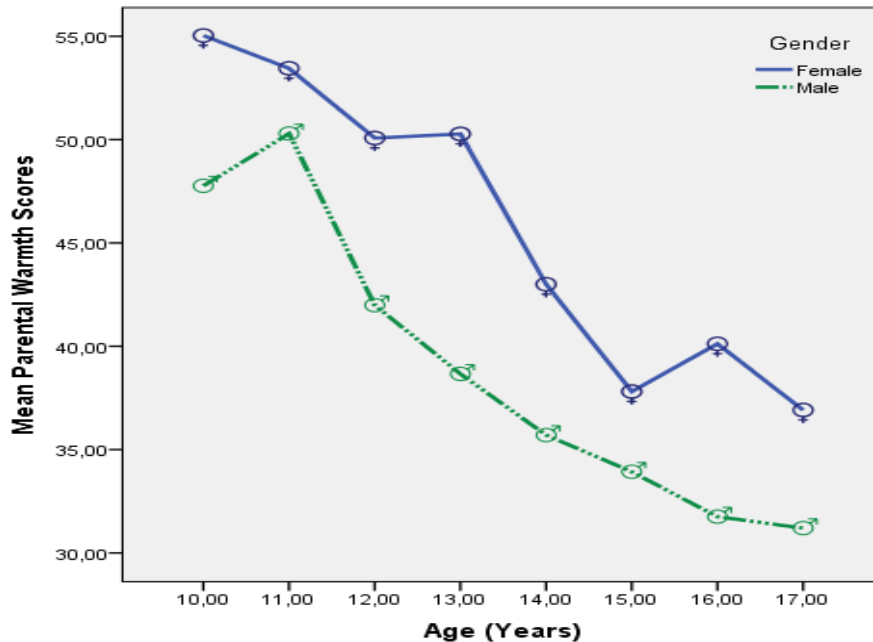
Figure 3. Parental warmth scores according to age and gender.

Considering gender, in males, parental control and parental warmth with regard to the Internet was seen to decline substantially at the age of 12. This demonstrates that families reduced the level of control over and support for the Internet use of their male children at and after age 12. Hortzum and Bektaş (2014) also have shown that the families of 5th grade students have less autocratic parenting style. This presents proof that after the age of 12, families reduce the level of control over and support for the Internet use. The reason why this happens can be seen in the fact that computers are seen as a toy for boys and that boys have more opportunities to use computers in Internet cafés (Horzum, 2011).

In females, parental control and warmth for the use of Internet decline substantially at the age of 14. Moreover, when compared to males, this decline occurs two years far ahead. In the study of Deniz, Horzum, Ayas and Koç (2016), Internet parenting styles and general parenting styles were found to be related. This shows that how families approach to their children in general applies to how they approach to their children's use of the Internet. In this respect, In Turkey, families keep warmth and control higher in females; in males, this situation is less than in females (Deniz, Horzum, Ayas & Koç, 2016) and it appears that there is also a similar trend with respect to the Internet.

Another one of the important findings of the study is the relationship between age and control dimensions of parenting styles. When we look at Figure 1 in the findings section, it is seen that as the age increases, the averages of the parenting control decrease. These declines with certain breakpoints are consistent with previous research. It is seen that in studies dealing with the relationship between problem behaviors (smoking, alcohol and substance use) and parental control, parental control decreases as age increases (Gutman et al., 2010; Piko and

Balázs, 2012; Roche et al., 2008). Similarly, when studies of Internet use behaviors are examined, it is seen that parental control decreases with age (Alvarez, Torres, Rodrigez, Padilla & Rodrigo, 2013; Özgür, 2016; Rosen, Cheever, & Carrier, 2008; Valcke et al., 2010). This may indicate that parents think their children have more information about the Internet as they age and that they can protect themselves against the threats that may come from the Internet (Wang, Bianchi & Raley, 2005).

When the findings on warmth — the other dimension of the parenting styles — and Figure 2 are examined, it is seen that students' perception of the parental warmth decreases as they age as it is in the control dimension. As children age, a decrease in their communication with their parents may be one of the causes of reduced perceived warmth. In a study by Livingstone et al. (2017), it was revealed that parents exhibited permissive attitudes rather than restrictive interventions as their children's digital skills improved. In other words, children who are left alone are less aware of parental warmth.

Limitations and Suggestions

A number of limitations can be listed for this study. In the study, the data were only collected from children. Only the data gathered from children have the quality to show the Internet parenting style they perceive. In subsequent studies, a similar study can be carried out by collecting data on the Internet parenting styles of families themselves. Moreover, data can be gathered from elementary school and kindergarten level (the range of 3–9 years), and studies related to parental control over and support for the Internet in that age group can be carried out. Cultural comparisons can also be made by collecting data from different countries at a similar age range.

Another limitation of the study is the use of a scale as a data collection instrument. In order to improve the validity of collected data, data on Internet parenting styles can be collected from families and children. Additionally, the validity of the data can be improved by collecting data through software applications for children's Internet use.

Based on the results of this study parents can be advised to be more involved with their daughters around age 14, and with their sons around age 12. Because as it can be seen from findings, children at those ages and genders perceive parental control and parental warmth substantially less. Also parents can apply internet parenting styles questionnaire themselves and be informed about their internet parenting styles and precautions accordingly.

In this study, parental control and warmth with regard to the Internet were examined according to age and gender of children. Future studies can be carried out on variables such as Internet use experiences of parents and children, Internet and technology ownership of parents and children, marital status of parents, and whether they work or not.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was found that parental control and parental warmth with regard to the Internet was higher in females than in males. Moreover, the study revealed that parental control and warmth with regard to the Internet decreased at a younger age in males. In this respect, the study shows that males may be exposed to adverse effects of the Internet (such as Internet and game addiction, and cyber bullying) at younger ages.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Günümüzde teknoloji ve internetteki hızlı gelişme ve büyük orandaki kullanımı nedeniyle bu teknolojilerin toplumları nasıl etkiledikleri çeşitli açılardan birçok araştırmanın konusu olmuştur. İnternet teknolojilerinin günümüz dünyasına sunduğu birçok avantaj ve fırsatlar bulanmaktadır. Literatürdeki birçok çalışmada internetin kullanıcılara bilgiye erişim kolaylığı, hızlı ve kaliteli iletişim olanakları, çevrimiçi eğitim alma fırsatları, eğlenmek amaçlı kulanım olanakları sunduğu belirtilmektedir (Johnson, 2010; Ihmeideh & Shawareb, 2014; Austin & Reed, 1999). Hatta internet kullanımının çocukların sosyal ve zihinsel gelişimine katkı sağladığını (Greenfield & Yan, 2006) ve görsel zekâlarının geliştirdiğini (DeBell & Chapman, 2006) ortaya koyan akademik çalışmalar da olmuştur.

Araştırmalar çocukların internet kullanımını etkileyen birçok farklı değişkenden önemli bir tanesinin de aile tutumunun (parenting style), olduğunu göstermektedir (Valcke et al., 2010, Chou & Lee, 2017). Aile tutumu, genel olarak sosyal yaşantı içerisinde ebeveynlerin çocuk ile olan etkileşimi, çocuğun kontrolüne yönelik ebeveynlerin eylem ve tutumları olarak ifade edilmektedir (Maccoby ve Martin 1983; Baumrind 1991). Ailelerin tutumu sosyal yaşamı ilgilendiren her alanda olduğu gibi internetin kullanımında da önemli bir unsur haline gelmiştir. Özellikle internet teknolojilerinin gelişimi artık her hane hatta her bireyin kişisel teknolojik araçlardan (akıllı telefon, tablet bilgisayar, dizüstü bilgisayar v.b.) internet erişim olanağının bulunması, internette geçirilen bu zamanın hangi kriterlerden etkilendiği (Huang, Lu, Liu, You, Pan, Wei, & Wang, 2009), aile denetimine gerekli olup olmadığı (Shih, 2003; Wang, Bianchi, & Raley, 2005) ve aile tutumuyla nasıl şekillendiği (Valcke, Bonte, De Wever, & Rots, 2010; Hsu, 2005) üzerine çalışmalar yapılmıştır. Bu durum internet aile tutumunu ön plana çıkarmıştır.

Literatür incelendiğinde 9-17 yaş aralığında çocuğu bulunan ailelerin internet aile tutumlarının çocuklarının yaş ve cinsiyetlerine göre değişip değişmediğini inceleyen bir çalışma bulunmadığı görülmüştür. Ailelerin çocuklarının yaş ve cinsiyetlerine göre aile internet tutumlarının incelenmesi hangi yaş grubu ve cinsiyete göre kontrol ve yakınlığı değiştiğinin görülerek ailelere yönelik yapılacak çalışmaların şekillendirilmesi açısından önemli görülmektedir.

Yöntem

Bu çalışmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden kesitsel araştırma yöntemi temel alınmıştır. Kesitsel çalışma yöntemi değişkenlerin bir kerede anında ölçüldüğü bir yöntemdir.

Katılımcılar

Araştırmanın katılımcıları ortaokul ve lise öğrencilerinden rastgele örneklenmiştir. Araştırmada toplam 2000 kişiye ölçek formu gönderilmiş, 1839'undan veri elde edilmiştir. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerden 991'i (53.9%) kadın, 791'i (43%) erkektir ve 57 kişi cinsiyetini doldurmamıştır. Katılımcılardan 90'ı (4.9%) on, 321'i (17.5%) on bir, 262'si (14.2%) on iki, 216'sı (11.7%) on üç, 210'u (11.4%) on dört, 219'u (11.9%) on beş, 246'sı (13.4%) on altı ve 219'u (11.9%) on yedi yaşındadır. Öğrencilerden 56'sı yaş bilgisini doldurmamıştır. Öğrencilerden 409'si (22.3%) beşinci, 263'i (14.8%) altıncı, 188'ü (10.5%) yedinci, 224'sı

(12.6%) sekizinci, 201'si (11.3%) dokuzuncu, 260'ı (14.6%) onuncu, 198'ü (11.1%) on birinci ve 34'ı (1.9%) on ikinci sınıf öğrencisidir. 5 kişi ise bu soruyu cevapsız bırakmıştır. On ikinci sınıf öğrencileri üniversite sınavına hazırlandıklarından veri toplama aşamasında çok fazla 12. sınıf öğrencisine ulaşılamamıştır. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerden 1238'inin (69.5%) bilgisayarlarının olduğunu, 536'si (30.1%) bilgisayarlarının olmadığını ifade etmiştir. Yine katılımcılardan 1330'u (74.5%) internet bağlantılarının olduğunu, 452'i (25.2%) internet bağlantılarının olmadığını ifade etmiştir. Öğrencilere internet kullanım düzeyleri sorulduğunda öğrencilerden 74'ü (4.2%) çok az, 147'si (8.2%) az, 600'i (33.7%) orta, 491'i (27.6%) iyi ve 435'ü (25.5%) çok iyi düzeyde internet kullanabildiğini ifade etmiştir. Öğrencilere ailelerinin durumları sorulduğunda öğrencilerden 1594'ünün (89.5%) anne ve babanın birlikte olduğunu, 81'si (4.5%) annesiyle, 31'i (1.7%) babasıyla ve 43'ü (2.4%) diğer akrabalarıyla yaşadıklarını ifade etmiştir. 33 kişi ise bu soruya cevap vermemiştir.

Veri toplama Araçları

Araştırmada internet aile tutumu ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Bu ölçeğe ek olarak öğrencilerin demografik özelliklerini belirlemek üzere cinsiyet, yaş, sınıf, bilgisayarın olup olmadığı, internet bağlantısının olup olmadığı, internet kullanım düzeyi, ailesinin durumu ve internetle ilgili bir problemle karşılaştıklarında kimden yardım aldıkları ile ilgili bilgiler sorulmuştur.

İnternet Aile Tutumu Ölçeği

İnternet aile tutumu ölçeği van Rooij ve van den Eijden (2007) tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Ölçeğin orijinali Felemenkçe iken, Valcke, Bonte, De Wever ve Rots (2010) tarafından yapılan İngilizceye çevrilmiş Ayas ve Horzum (2013) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlanmıştır. Ölçek 25 madde 5'li Likert tipi derecelemeye sahiptir. Ölçek iki faktörden oluşmaktadır. "Aile Kontrolü" faktörü 11 ve "Aile Yakınlığı" faktörü 14 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Ölçeği oluşturan iki faktörde yer alan maddeler toplanarak faktörlere ait toplam puanlar üzerinden işlem yapılabilmektedir. Ayas ve Horzum (2013) ve Horzum ve Bektaş (2014)' ın çalışmalarında Cronbach's α değerinin aile kontrolü için 0.86, ve aile yakınlığı için 0.92 olduğu görülmektedir.

Veri analizi

Araştırmada, değişkenler arasındaki ilişki ve farklılıkları belirlemek için iki faktörlü ANOVA kullanılmıştır. Bu analizler SPSS 20 ile gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Bulgular, Sonuç ve Tartışma

İnternet aile tutumu incelendiğinde aile kontrolünün ve aile yakınlığının hem kızlarda hem de erkeklerde 10-11 yaş grubunda yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. Bu durum ailelerin daha küçük yaşlarda internet kontrolü ve yakınlığını yüksek düzeyde tuttuğu ve bulgular incelendiğinde ilerleyen yaşlarda hem kızlarda hem de erkeklerde bu durumun azalarak devam ettiğini göstermektedir. Bu bulgu literatürdeki mevcut çalışmalarla tutarlıdır. Valcke, Bonte, De Wever, and Rots (2010), Deniz, Horzum, Ayas ve Koç'un (2016) ve Özgür'ün (2016) yaptığı çalışmalarda yaş azaldıkça ve sınıf seviyesi arttıkça denetimin yüksek olduğu otokratik aile tutumunun azaldığı yani kontrolün azaldığına yönelik bulgular ön plana çıkmaktadır. Mitchell, Finkelhor ve Wolak (2005) küçük yaşlardaki çocuklarda filtreleme yazılımları kullanılırken, Wang, Bianchi, ve Raley (2005) daha büyük yaşlarda aile kontrolünün takip etme şeklinde olduğunu ifade etmektedirler. Rosen, Cheever ve Carrier (2008) küçük yaşlardaki çocuklarda

ailelerin internet kullanımına sınır koydukları ve izleme yazılımlarını kullandıklarını ifade etmektedir.

Cinsiyete göre erkeklerde internet aile kontrolünün ve yakınlığının 12 yaşında ciddi bir düşüş yaşadığı görülmektedir. Bu durum ailelerin 12 yaş ve sonrasında erkek çocuklarındaki internet kontrollerini ve yakınlığını azalttıklarını göstermektedir. Horzum ve Bektaş (2014) çalışmasında benzer şekilde 5. Sınıf öğrencilerinin ailelerinin daha az otokratik aile tutumuna sahip olduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu durum 12 yaşından sonra ailelerin internet kontrolünü ve yakınlığını azalttığına yönelik kanıt sunmaktadır. Erkeklerde 12 yaşında internet aile kontrolünün ve yakınlığının azalmasının nedeni olarak bilgisayarların erkek oyuncağı olarak görülmesi ve erkek çocukların internet kafelerde bilgisayar kullanabilme olanağının daha fazla olması görülebilir (Horzum 2011).

Kızlarda ise aile internet kontrolü ve yakınlığı 14 yaşında ciddi bir düşüş gerçekleşmektedir. Ayrıca erkeklerle kıyaslandığında internet kontroldeki ve yakınlığındaki düşüş 2 yaş gecikmeli gerçekleştiği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu bulgu Türkiye'deki ailelerin internet aile kontrolünde ve yakınlığında yaşa göre kızların daha fazla kontrol edildiği ve daha fazla yakınlık gösterildiği bulgusu ile tutarlıdır. Deniz, Horzum, Ayas ve Koç'un (2016) çalışmasında internet aile tutumu ile genel aile tutumunun ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu durum ailelerin genel anlamda çocuklarda yaklaşımının internette de benzer şekilde olduğunu gösterecek niteliktedir. Bu yönüyle Türkiye'de aileler kızları konusunda yakınlığı ve kontrolü daha yüksek tutarken erkek çocuklarında bu durum kızlara göre daha az gerçekleşmektedir (Deniz, Horzum, Ayas ve Koç, 2016) ve internet kullanımı konusunda da benzer bir eğilimin olduğu görülmektedir.

Araştırmanın önemli bulgularından bir tanesi de yaş ile aile tutumunun kontrol boyutu arasındaki ilişkidir. Bulgular bölümündeki Şekil 1 incelendiğinde yaş arttıkça, kontrol ortalamalarının düştüğü görülmektedir. Bazı kırılma noktaları bulunan bu düşüşler önceki araştırmalar ile uyumludur. Problemli davranışlar (sigara, alkol v.b. madde kullanımı) ve aile kontrolü arasındaki ilişkileri ele alan çalışmalarda yaş arttıkça aile kontrolünün azaldığı görülmektedir (Gutman vd., 2010; Piko ve Balázs, 2012; Roche vd., 2008). Benzer şekilde internet kullanımı davranışlarının incelendiği çalışmalarda da yaş ile beraber aile kontrolünün azaldığı görülmektedir (Alvarez, Torres, Rodrigez, Padilla ve Rodrigo; 2013; Özgür, 2016; Rosen, Cheever, ve Carrier, 2008; Valcke vd., 2010) Bu durum ebeveynlerin, çocukların yaşı ilerledikçe internet hakkında daha fazla bilgiye sahip olduklarını ve bu sebeple internetten gelebilecek tehlikelere karşı kendilerini koruyabileceklerini düşünmeleri gösterilebilir (Wang, Bianchi ve Raley, 2005).

Aile tutumunun diğer boyutu yakınlık hakkında elde edilen bulgular ve Şekil 2 incelendiğinde, kontrol boyutunda olduğu gibi yaş ilerledikçe öğrencilerin aile yakınlığı algılarının azaldığı görülmektedir. Çocukların yaşları ilerledikçe ebeveynleri ile olan iletişimlerinin azalması, algılanan yakınlığın azalmasının sebeplerinden biri olabilir. Livingstone ve arkadaşları (2017) yaptığı çalışmada, ebeveynlerin çocuklarının dijital becerileri arttıkça onlara kısıtlayıcı müdahaleler yerine, izin verici tutumlar sergilediklerini ortaya koymuştur. Diğer bir ifade ile serbest bırakılan çocuklar aile yakınlığını daha az algılamaktadırlar.

Araştırma sonucunda internet aile kontrolü ve yakınlığının kızlarda erkeklere göre daha yüksek olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca çalışmada ailelerin internet kontrolü ve yakınlığının erkeklerde daha küçük yaşlarda azaldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu yönüyle erkeklerin internetin olumsuz etkilerine (internet ve oyun bağımlılığı, sanal zorbalık gibi) daha küçük yaşlarda maruz kalabileceğini gösterecek niteliktedir.