International JOURNAL OF SOCIAL, HUMANITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES Open Access Refereed E-Journal & Refereed & Indexed e-ISSN: 2630-6417

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Sports Sciences

Examination of Internet Addiction Levels during The Covid-19 Pandemic Period

Covid-19 Pandemi Döneminde İnternet Bağımlılık Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi

ABSTRACT

In this research, it is aimed to examine the internet addiction levels of students and graduates studying in the Department of Physical Education and Sports before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. "Internet Addiction Scale" prepared by Young was applied to 2000 people before and during the pandemic. In the evaluation of statistical data, SPSS 24 was used and average, total score and percentages were taken into account in internet usage levels. Pre-pandemic of graduates; While 218 (49.5%) were identified as "average users", 154 (35.0%) "risk users" and 68 (15.5%) as dependent internet users, during the Covid-19 pandemic period; 7 (1.4%) were determined as "average users", 240 (48.0%) "risk users" and 253 (50.6%) dependent internet users. Before the pandemic, 182 (32.5%) of the students were "average users", 206 (36.8%) "risk users" and 172 (30.7%) as dependent internet users. During the pandemic period, 7 (1.4%) "average users", 273 (54.6%) "risk users" and 220 (44.0%) dependent internet users. Before the pandemic of all participants; While the average number of users is 400, the number of risky users is 360 and the number of dependent users is 240, during the Covid-19 pandemic period; The average number of users increased to 14, the number of risky users to 513 and the number of dependent users to 473. Although the internet usage of the participants outside the course hours they took in distance education was questioned during the pandemic period, all participants, graduates and students were at risk and addicted during the pandemic period.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, Internet Addiction, Physical Education and Sports

Bu araştırmada Covid-19 pandemi öncesi ve pandemi döneminde Beden Eğitimi ve Spor bölümünde öğrenim gören öğrenci ve mezun olanların internet bağımlılık düzeylerinin incelenmesini amaçlanmaktadır. 2000 kişiye pandemi öncesinde ve pandemi döneminde Young tarafından hazırlanan "İnternet Bağımlılık ölçeği" uygulanmıştır. İstatistiksel verilerin değerlendirilmesinde SPSS 24 kullanılarak internet kullanım düzeylerinde ortalama, toplam puan ve yüzdelikler dikkate alınarak değerlendirilmiştir. Mezunların pandemi öncesi; 218'i (% 49,5) "ortalama kullanıcı", 154'ü (% 35,0) "riskli kullanıcı" ve 68'i (% 15,5) bağımlı internet kullanıcısı olarak tespit edilirken, Covid-19 pandemi döneminde; 7'si (% 1,4) "ortalama kullanıcı", 240'ı (% 48,0) "riskli kullanıcı" ve 253'ü (% 50,6) bağımlı internet kullanıcısı olarak tespit edilmiştir. Öğrencilerin pandemi öncesi 182'si (% 32,5) "ortalama kullanıcı", 206'sı (% 36,8) "riskli kullanıcı" ve 172'si (% 30,7) bağımlı internet kullanıcısı olarak tespit edilirken, Covid-19 pandemi döneminde 7'si (% 1,4) "ortalama kullanıcı", 273'ü (% 54,6) "riskli kullanıcı" ve 220'si (% 44,0) bağımlı internet kullanıcısı olarak tespit edilmiştir. Tüm katılımcıların pandemi öncesinde; ortalama kullanıcı sayısı 400, riskli kullanıcı sayısı 360 ve bağımlı kullanıcı sayısı 240 kişi iken, Covid-19 pandemi döneminde; ortalama kullanıcı sayısı 14, riskli kullanıcı sayısı 513 ve bağımlı kullanıcı sayısı 473'e yükselmiştir. Pandemi döneminde katılımcıların uzaktan eğitimde aldıkları ders saatleri dışındaki internet kullanıcılığı sorgulanmasına rağmen tüm katılımcılarda, mezun ve öğrencilerde pandemi döneminde riskli ve bağımlı kullanıcı oranları artmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19, Pandemi, İnternet bağımlılığı, Beden eğitimi ve Spor

Aliye Menevşe 1 0

How to Cite This Article
Menevşe, A. (2023).
"Examination of Internet
Addiction Levels during The
Covid-19 Pandemic Period",
Journal of Social, Humanities
and Administrative Sciences,
9(64):2740-2748. DOI:
http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/JOS
HAS.69684

Arrival: 25 March 2023 Published: 31 May 2023

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This journal is an open access, peer-reviewed international journal.

INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, the World Health Organization was informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown aetiology that occurred in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province of China. Later, the National Health Commission of China announced that the outbreak was associated with a seafood market in the city of Wuhan, and Chinese authorities identified a new type of coronavirus (2019-nCoV) that was isolated. Then, with the spread of the Covid-19 virus all over the world in a short time, the whole world was caught unprepared for this epidemic. The fact that the countries of the world were caught unprepared for the epidemic caused the measures could not be taken. It has been observed that the epidemic Numerous epidemics have been seen in history so far, resulting in a serious number of deaths. One of the first measures taken during epidemics that resulted in deaths was encouraging people to live in isolation from each other. The emergence of the Covid-19 epidemic and its spread all over the world in a short time and the death of a significant number of people caused the transition of people from social life to home life (Kaya Deniz, 2020). With people quarantining themselves at home, the slogan "evde hayat var" (there is life at home) has been used by many public institutions, the private sector and television channels, and recommendations have been made for people to stay at

¹ Assoc Dr. Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Faculty of Sports Sciences Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, İstanbul, Turkey

home. In the statement made by internet service providers in Turkey, during this period, it was stated that people's internet usage increased by 50% during daylight hours (Yıldırım & İpek, 2020).

Although the purpose of the emergence of the Internet was to increase communication and facilitate information sharing, the widespread use of the Internet faster than expected has led to excessive use and some people to experience some problems in their work, school and family lives due to the use of the Internet (Arisoy, 2009). Various terms such as "internet addiction", "pathological internet use", "excessive internet use" and "internet abuse" have been thrown out for consideration to describe the uncontrolled and harmful use of the internet (Ögel, 2012).

Young (1999) likened internet addiction to substance or alcohol use addiction as it causes academic, social and professional harm, and defined "problematic internet use" based on the criteria of "pathological gambling" in her later studies. Caplan (2005) used the term "problematic internet use" and defined this condition as a multidimensional syndrome consisting of cognitive and behavioural symptoms that cause negative social, academic/professional results (Telkök Sen, 2015).

The concept of "Internet addiction" was first introduced in 1995 by Goldberg (1996) by adapting the diagnostic criteria of "substance addiction" from DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4th Edition). The one who initiated the first scientific discussions in this field was a psychologist named Kimberly S. Young. Young is one of the experts who brought the concept of "Internet Addiction Disease" to the agenda, created the first diagnostic criteria in a serious way, and conducted the first epidemiological research on internet addiction based on these diagnostic criteria (Young, 1999), in her research, Young aimed to determine whether the internet is addictive, and if so, what problems it causes.

While Morahan-Martin & Schumacher (2000) state that internet addiction is the intense use of the internet, the inability to control the use and the significant harm to one's life; Davis (2001) presented a cognitive-behavioural model about problematic internet use and described problematic internet use not only as a behavioural addiction but also as a specific situation with cognition and behaviours that have negative consequences on life (Telkök Şen, 2015).

Caplan (2002) states that in the model he developed by integrating the social skills and self-presentation competence of the person into the previously proposed "cognitive-behavioural" model, individuals who are inadequate in presenting themselves prefer online communication to face-to-face communication. Preferring online social interaction encourages compulsive internet use, which leads to negative consequences such as excessive time spent on the internet, mood changes, and withdrawal symptoms when staying away from the internet. The psychosocial stress caused by these negative results causes the person to stay on the internet more and has been a sustaining factor for problematic internet use (Telkök Sen, 2015).

The increase in the number of people staying at home, the increase in internet usage time and the increase in TV watching rates can lead to physical inactivity and internet addiction. According to Doğan & İmamoğlu's (2020) survey, patience in students does not significantly vary by watching TV and the time when they follow the developments on coronavirus. In a study, it was revealed that the news and statements on social media about the corona virus epidemic the deterioration of people's quality of life but did not provide a change in anxiety situations (Yazıcı& İmamoğlu,2021). In the study of Sekban & İmamoğlu (2021), life satisfaction and health scores during the corona virus process vary according to the time spent watching television and watching coronavirus news on the internet. In this study, it is aimed to examine the internet addiction levels of students and graduates studying in the Department of Physical Education and Sports before and during the Covid-19 pandemic

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the survey model that is one of the quantitative research methods was used. The survey model is a research model that aims to detect a past or present situation as it is. The event, individual or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be defined in its own conditions and as it is. It is not intended to change or influence them (Karasar, 2020).

Research Group

While the Physical Education and Sports Departments are forming the study group of the research, the sample is the graduates and students. Our work that is primarily designed before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic process, it was initiated by applying 440 graduates and 560 students, 1000 people in total, however, during the Covid-19 pandemic process, the scale was applied to 2000 people in total as 500 graduates and 500 students. During the pandemic period, the internet usage of the participants except for the course hours in distance education was evaluated.

Data Collection Tool

Internet Addiction Self-Report Test (IAT)

Journal Of Social, Humanities And Administrative Sciences

2023 9 (64) MAY





Internet Addiction Self-Report Test (IAT) is a scale consisting of 20 questions developed by Young (1998). With the help of scale; It is aimed to determine the status of addicted, risky and average internet usage. As a result of the scale applied, the solution of the data was digitized using a six-point Likert scale. In scale, it is expressed as 1: never, 2: rarely, 3: often, 4: very often, and 5: constantly. On the scale, the most positive option is given 1 point and the most negative option is given 5 points. A low score indicates a good addiction level, and a high one indicates a bad addiction level.

Analysis of Data

In order to determine the internet addiction levels of the people participating in the research, the total scores they gave to the 20-item scale were calculated. In the evaluation, those who score 80 and above in total are defined as "addicted internet users", those who score between 50-79 as "risky internet users" and those who score 49 and below are defined as "average internet users".

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the whole scale was found to be 0.92 and the KMO value as 0.91 by the scale owner. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Bayraktar and its standardized Alpha value is 0.91, Spearman-Brown value is 0.87 (Bayraktar, 2001). These results suggest that the scale is reliable. In the evaluation of statistical data, SPSS 24 was used, and internet usage levels were evaluated by taking into account the average, total score and percentages.has turned into a pandemic due to the high risk of contagion and the inadequacy of the measures (Demirtaş & Çıplak, 2020).

RESULTS

Table 1: Average and Standard Deviation Values of Participants' Internet Addiction Levels in The Pre-Pandemic Period and During The Covid-19 Pandemic Period

| | | N | Avg. | Ss. |
|---------------------|----------|-----|--------|--------|
| Pre-Pandemic Period | Graduate | 440 | 1,6591 | ,73143 |
| | Student | 560 | 1,9821 | ,79558 |
| Pandemic Period | Graduate | 500 | 2,4920 | ,52772 |
| | Student | 500 | 2,4260 | ,52256 |

Table 1 shows the average and standard deviation values of the internet commitment levels of the individuals participating in the study during and before the Covid-19 pandemic. When the table is examined, it has been determined that the average of internet addiction of graduate students before the pandemic is 1.65; the average of the students who continue their education is 1.98. In the pandemic period, it has been determined that the average score of graduate students is 2.49; the students who continue their education are 2.42.





Table 2: Internet Addiction Levels of All Participants During The Covid 19 Pandemic Period and Pre-Pandemic Period

| Table 2. | internet Ad | idiction L | | Participants Duri |
|----------|-------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Score | Number | Score | Number | Internet Usage |
| | of | | of People | Level (0≤49) |
| | People | | | |
| Pandemi | ic Period | Pre-P | andemic | |
| | | Pe | eriod | |
| 21 | 1 | 21 | 15 | Average Users |
| 22 | 1 | 22 | 12 | |
| | | 23 | 17 | |
| | | 24 | 14 | |
| 25 | 1 | 25 | 16 | |
| | | 26 | 13 | |
| | | 27 | 13 | |
| 28 | 3 | 28 | 18 | |
| 29 | 1 | 29 | 12 | |
| | | 30 | 15 | |
| 31 | 1 | 31 | 9 | |
| 32 | 1 | 32 | 12 | |
| 33 | 1 | 33 | 5 | |
| 34 | 1 | 34 | 8 | |
| | | 35 | 12 | |
| 37 | 1 | 37 | 19 | |
| | | 38 | 14 | |
| 39 | 2 | 39 | 11 | |
| | | 40 | 22 | |
| | | 42 | 14 | |
| | | 43 | 22 | |
| | | 44 | 19 | |
| | | 45 | 21 | |
| | | 46 | 17 | |
| | | 47 | 13 | |
| | | 48 | 15 | |
| | | 49 | 22 | |
| — | 1 | | - | |

400

14

| Score | Number of People | Score | Number of People | Internet Usage Level (>50, ≤79) |
|--------|------------------|--------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| | or reopie | | of 1 copic | (* 50, 277) |
| Panden | nic Period | Pre-Pa | andemic | |
| | | Pe | riod | |
| 50 | 30 | 52 | 24 | Risky Users |
| 51 | 25 | 53 | 34 | |
| 52 | 23 | 58 | 42 | |
| 55 | 33 | 59 | 21 | |
| 58 | 45 | 60 | 46 | |
| 60 | 22 | 61 | 33 | |
| 62 | 11 | 64 | 37 | |
| 63 | 45 | 65 | 26 | |
| 67 | 39 | 68 | 28 | |
| 69 | 54 | 70 | 14 | |
| 70 | 57 | 73 | 24 | |
| 73 | 76 | 76 | 27 | |
| 75 | 36 | 77 | 1 | |
| 77 | 17 | 78 | 3 | |
| T | 513 | T | 360 | |

| Score | Number | Score | Number | Internet Usage Level |
|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|----------------------|
| | of People | | of People | (>79) |
| 83 | 110 | 80 | 51 | iet |
| 87 | 123 | 89 | 27 | Internet |
| 101 | 56 | 93 | 33 | |
| 110 | 58 | 105 | 62 | dent In |
| 113 | 96 | 112 | 55 | nde U |
| 120 | 30 | 114 | 12 | User |
| T | 473 | T | 240 | Ŏ |

Covid-19 pandemic period in the table; While the average number of users was 14, the number of risky users was 513 and the number of dependent users was 473, in the pre-pandemic period; The average number of users is 400, the number of risky users is 360 and the number of dependent users is 240.





Table 3: Internet Addiction Levels of Graduates Participating In The Covid-19 Pandemic Period and Pre-Pandemic Period Research

| Table 3: In | iternet Add | iction Le | vels of Grad | luates Participating |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------|
| Score | Number | Score | Number | Internet Usage |
| | of | | of People | Level (0≤49) |
| | People | | | |
| Pandemi | c Period | Pre-P | andemic | |
| | | | eirod | |
| 21 | 1 | 21 | 14 | Average Users |
| 22 | 1 | 22 | 8 | |
| | | 23 | 9 | |
| | | 24 | 11 | |
| 25 | 1 | 25 | 6 | |
| | | 26 | 1 | |
| | | 27 | 10 | |
| | | 28 | 10 | |
| | | 29 | 6 | |
| | | 30 | 10 | |
| | | 31 | 4 | |
| | | 32 | 11 | |
| | | 33 | 5 | |
| 34 | 1 | 34 | 4 | |
| | | 35 | 6 | |
| 37 | 1 | 37 | 9 | |
| | | 38 | 12 | |
| 39 | 2 | 39 | 5 | |
| | | 40 | 12 | |
| | | 42 | 4 | |
| | | 43 | 5 | |
| | | 44 | 9 | |
| | | 45 | 13 | |
| | | 46 | 7 | |
| | | 47 | 5 | |
| | | 48 | 15 | |
| | | 49 | 7 | |
| | | | | |

| COVIG-191 | andenne i | ciioù aiiù | i ie-i andem | ic Period Research |
|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Score | Number | Score | Number | Internet Usage Level |
| | of People | | of People | (>50, ≤79) |
| | | | | |
| Panden | nic Period | Pre-Pa | andemic | |
| | | Pe | riod | |
| 50 | 12 | 52 | 11 | Risky Users |
| 51 | 20 | 53 | 13 | - |
| 52 | 14 | 58 | 22 | |
| 55 | 25 | 59 | 9 | |
| 58 | 15 | 60 | 14 | |
| 60 | 22 | 61 | 21 | |
| 62 | 10 | 64 | 17 | |
| 63 | 20 | 65 | 9 | |
| 67 | 20 | 68 | 9 | |
| 69 | 33 | 70 | 5 | |
| 70 | 18 | 73 | 10 | |
| 73 | 30 | 76 | 10 | |
| 75 | 1 | 77 | 1 | |
| 77 | 0 | 78 | 3 | |
| T | 240 | T | 154 | |

| Score | Number | Score | Number | Internet Usage Level |
|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|----------------------|
| | of People | | of People | (>79) |
| 83 | 55 | 80 | 22 | iet |
| 87 | 50 | 89 | 13 | Internet |
| 101 | 30 | 93 | 15 | |
| 110 | 28 | 105 | 9 | dent In |
| 113 | 90 | 112 | 5 | nge D |
| 120 | 0 | 114 | 4 | User |
| Т | 253 | Т | 68 | ĬĞ |

| Pre-Pandemic Period (Graduate) | Frequency | % |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Average Users (0≤49) Point | 218 | % 49,5 |
| Risky Users (>50, ≤79) Point | 154 | % 35,0 |
| Dependent Internet Users (>79) Point | 68 | % 15,5 |
| Total | 440 | 100,0 |

Of the graduates participating in the pre-pandemic research, 218 (49.5%) were identified as "average users", 154 (35.0%) as "risky users" and 68 (15.5%) as dependent internet users.

| Pandemic Period (Graduate) | Frequency | % |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Average Users (0≤49) Point | 7 | % 1,4 |
| Risky Users (>50, ≤79) Point | 240 | % 48,0 |
| Dependent Internet Users (>79) Point | 253 | % 50,6 |
| Total | 500 | 100,0 |

Of the graduates participating in the study during the Covid 19 pandemic period, 7(1.4%) were identified as "average users", 240 (48.0%) as "risk users" and 253 (50.6%) as dependent internet users.





Table 4: Internet Addiction Levels of University Students Participating in The Covid 19 Pandemic Period and Pre-Pandemic Period Research

| Table 4: I | Table 4: Internet Addiction Levels of University | | | |
|------------|--|--------|--------------|----------------|
| Score | Number | Score | Number | Internet Usage |
| | of People | | of People | Level (0≤49) |
| Panden | nic Period | Pre-Pa | andemic | |
| | | Pe | eriod | |
| | | 21 | 1 | Average |
| | | 22 | 4 | Users |
| | | 23 | 8 | |
| | | 24 | 3 | |
| | | 25 | 10 | |
| | | 26 | 12 | |
| | | 27 | 3 | |
| 28 | 3 | 28 | 8 | |
| 29 | 1 | 29 | 6 | |
| | | 30 | 5 | |
| 31 | 1 | 31 | 5 | |
| 32 | 1 | 32 | 1 | |
| 33 | 1 | 33 | 0 | |
| | | 34 | 4 | |
| | | 35 | 6 | |
| | | 37 | 10 | |
| | | 38 | 2 | |
| | | 39 | 6 | |
| | | 40 | 10 | |
| | | 42 | 10 | |
| | | 43 | 17 | |
| | | 44 | 10 | |
| | | 45 | 8 | |
| | 1 | 46 | 10 | |
| | | 47 | 8 | |
| | 1 | 48 | 0 | |
| | 1 | 49 | 15 | |
| —— | + | | | l |

182

| Score | Number | Score | Number | Internet Usage Level |
|--------|------------|--------|-----------|----------------------|
| | of People | | of People | (>50, ≤79) |
| Panden | nic Period | Pre-Pa | andemic | |
| | | Pe | eriod | |
| 50 | 18 | 52 | 13 | Risky Users |
| 51 | 5 | 53 | 21 | |
| 52 | 9 | 58 | 20 | |
| 55 | 8 | 59 | 12 | |
| 58 | 30 | 60 | 32 | |
| 60 | 0 | 61 | 12 | |
| 62 | 1 | 64 | 20 | |
| 63 | 25 | 65 | 17 | |
| 67 | 19 | 68 | 19 | |
| 69 | 21 | 70 | 9 | |
| 70 | 39 | 73 | 14 | |
| 73 | 46 | 76 | 17 | |
| 75 | 35 | 77 | 0 | |
| 77 | 17 | 78 | 0 | |
| T | 273 | T | 206 | |

| Score | Number of People | Score | Number of People | Internet Usage Level (>79) |
|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 83 | 55 | 80 | 29 | et |
| 87 | 73 | 89 | 14 | Internet S |
| 101 | 26 | 93 | 18 | s s |
| 110 | 30 | 105 | 53 | lent I. Users |
| 113 | 6 | 112 | 50 | nde U |
| 120 | 30 | 114 | 8 | Dsendent Use |
| T | 220 | T | 172 | Ŏ |

| Pre-Pandemic Period (Student) | Frequency | % |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Average Users (0≤49) Point | 182 | 32,5 |
| Risky Users (>50, ≤79) Point | 206 | 36,8 |
| Dependent Internet Users (>79) Point | 172 | 30,7 |
| Total | 560 | 100,0 |

Of the students who participated in the research before the pandemic, 182 (32.5%) were determined as "average users", 206 (36.8%) "risk users" and 172 (30.7%) as dependent internet users.

| Pandemic Period (Student) | Frequency | % |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Average Users (0≤49) Point | 7 | % 1,4 |
| Risky Users (>50, ≤79) Point | 273 | % 54,6 |
| Dependent Internet Users (>79) Point | 220 | % 44,0 |
| Total | 500 | 100,0 |

Of the students participating in the study during the Covid 19 pandemic period, 7 (1.4%) were identified as "average users", 273 (54.6%) "risk users" and 220 (44.0%) as dependent internet users.

DISCUSSIONS

Douglas et al. (2008) reviewed published articles through meta-analysis and proposed the "conceptual model of internet addiction". According to this model, excessive use of the Internet is mostly determined by the internal needs and motivation of the individual (motivating factors such as hiding identity, reducing distress and relaxing effect, meeting social needs). On top of that, personal predisposition (being in environments that allow internet use, years of internet use, feeling misunderstood by others, feeling lonely, having little or no social life and/or self-confidence) is also important. The negative effects of Internet addiction can include various behaviours that may cause addiction (online porn, online stock market, virtual sex instead of normal intercourse, etc.) in addition to physical effects such as academic, social, economic, occupational and sleep time changes (Douglas et al, 2008).

Spada et al. (2008) proposed the "meta-cognition theory" which hypothesizes that negative cognitions are associated with problematic internet use and that as negative emotions such as anxiety, depression and distress increase,





problematic internet use will increase significantly. It has been observed that the number of addicted and risky users has increased in the negative stress environment that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought with it, especially health anxiety, depression, troubled days and economic concerns. Baltaci et al. (2020) determined that university students have difficulty in controlling their internet use during the Covid-19 pandemic period and that internet use negatively affects the relationships of family members. Similarly, Baltaci et al. (2021) stated that there was an increase in internet use during the Covid-19 epidemic process and stated that these situations had negative effects on the psycho-social health of individuals.

In recent years, genetic and biological studies in the field of neurobiology have focused on the deterioration of neurotransmission systems in internet addiction, with particular emphasis on serotonin and dopamine neurotransmitters. It has been stated that dopaminergic neurons extending from the ventral tegmental area to the mesolimbic and mesocortical areas can be activated by many psychoactive substances, which strengthens the role of dopaminergic neurons in the reward-addiction systems in the midbrain. It has been determined that the amount of dopamine, which gives pleasure, increases in the brains of internet addicts as soon as they connect to the internet, just like in the brains of alcohol-substance addicts (Arisoy, 2009). Studies have shown that decreased D2 receptor density in individuals with the A1 allele of the dopamine (D2) receptor may cause all substance addictions and behavioural addictions (Öztürk et al., 2007). In another study, decreased dopamine D2 receptor availability levels were observed in the dorsal caudate and striatum subsections, including the right putamen, in individuals with internet addiction (Kim et al., 2011). We believe that it is supportive in the studies that it is inevitable to experience problems that may threaten physiological health in neurobiological mechanisms due to the long hours of internet use and the increase in the rates of addicted and risky users with numerical analysis methods. Physiological and behavioural addictions have to be ignored due to many reasons such as the intensity experienced in the health sector during the Covid-19 pandemic, excessive patient management, loss of life and instant deaths, as well as directing all hospitals to Covid-19 treatments.

Lee et al. (2008) reported that the homozygous short allele variant of the serotonin transporter gene (5HTTLPR) was more common in the group with excessive internet use, in their case-control study based on the hypothesis that excessive internet use may have common neurobiological mechanisms due to high depressive symptoms. In another study in which plasma dopamine, serotonin and norepinephrine levels were measured, no change was observed in dopamine and serotonin levels, but it was reported that plasma norepinephrine levels were significantly lower in the internet-overuse group than in the control group (Zhang et al., 2013). The Covid-19 disease, which was experienced as a contagious virus all over the world in the second 10th year of the 21st century, threatened all humanity only physiologically and psychologically.

In their case-control study with 132 problematic internet users and 132 healthy users, Montag et al. suggested that one of the new candidate genes, the gene encoding the alpha-4 subunit of the nicotinic acetylcholine receptor (CHRNA4), may be associated with internet addiction (Montag et al., 2012).

In many studies examining the relationship between internet addiction and time spent on the internet, a positive relationship was found between internet addiction and the time spent on the internet. It has been determined that individuals stay on the Internet longer than non-addicted individuals, due to symptoms such as increasing the time they stay on the Internet (Telkök Şen, 2015). Hardie et al. (2007) found that non-addicted individuals use the Internet for an average of 21 hours a week, while addicted users use the Internet for an average of 68 hours a week. In another study conducted in the Czech Republic, it was determined that non-addicted individuals use the Internet for an average of 13 hours a week, and addicted individuals use the Internet for an average of 44 hours a week (Simkova & Cincera, 2004). There are differences in IA prevalence rates due to the absence of standardized diagnostic criteria for IA, the use of various scales with different cut-off scores in the diagnosis of IA, and differences in research designs and samples (Telkök Sen, 2015).

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