# The Impact of the Components of the Locus of Control in Internet Addiction, Case of Albania

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**Abstract**

This study will give an overview about the phenomenon of internet addiction in adolescents in Albania and also to study the impact of the components of the locus of control in internet addiction. The sample of the study consisted of 1156 adolescents, aged 15-18, in the city of Tirana. The data was collected through the application of the Internet Addiction Scale, Kimberly Young, which was composed of 20 items, and The Levenson locus of Control Scale, which is composed by 24 items. The obtained data are analyzed with SPSS software. This study show us that a large number of adolescents in Albania have a high risk to develop internet addiction in the nearest future and adolescents with internal locus of control have 35% less probability to develop internet addition than those with external locus of control (powerful others, chance).

*Keywords:* Internet addiction; internal locus of control; powerful others; chance; adolescents.

## 1. Introduction

The 20th century became the century of information and communication technologies. But, the 21st century, an Internet age, through which information all over the world is connected and accessed. According to authors in [4] we can solve almost all problems from banking to fun on the Internet. In other words, it has become an essential part of daily life. But according to other authors in [4], while the Internet has been a way of facilitating people's lives, some could not do without it; that is, they have developed an addiction to the Internet [4]. There are a lot of definitions about internet addiction. Goldberg used the term "addictive disorder" based on the substance addiction of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for mental disorder 4th edition (DSM-IV) for the first time, and he refers to Internet addiction as "pathological computer use". Young also suggested Internet addiction diagnosis criteria, including obsessions with the Internet, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, excessive computer use, lack of interes in other activities [7].

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Excessive Internet users have been called Internet addicts, pathological Internet users, computer addicts,

computer mediated communication addicts, and computer junkies. The term that has been most often used for problematic Internet use is —Internet addiction [8].

Kendal (1998) has defined Internet addiction as a kind of psychological addiction representing the need to be active all the time on the Internet. Besides, Griffiths has described Internet addiction as a kind of technology addiction and a behavioral addiction similar to a gambling habit. Other authors in [1] suggest that problematic Internet use to be conceptualized as an impulse control disorder [1]. And also, authors in [5] related internet addiction to poor impulse control [5]. According to Lin and Tsai [2], Internet-addicted people have a desire to spend more time on the Internet and get excited while they are using the Internet. They use the Internet in a compulsive manner and show withdrawal symptoms, and admit that Internet use negatively affects their lives in areas such as school, health, and parental relationships [2].

According to some authors in [10] when possible problems that could arise from internet addiction are taken into consideration, it is obvious that internet addiction has more threating and damaging effects on individuals in their puberty period [10]. Nowadays, the adoption of digital technologies is known to be higher in young adolescents than adults [6].

According to some authors in [3] locus of control refers to a set of beliefs about how one behaves and the relationship of that behavior to how one is rewarded or punished. Rotter defined locus of control as the degree to which a person believes that control of reinforcement is internal versus the degree to which it is external. If one believes that rewards are the results of one's own behavior, this would be an internal locus of control. On the other hand, if one believes that rewards occur as a result of intervention by others, one believes in an external locus of control.

Individuals with a strong belief in personal control would gain great satisfaction from playing video, computer or online games, as successful completion of and advancement to the next level of games entails mastery of a winning strategy which is a combination of the intuition of the game designers' intent and the skills of manipulating the objects, symbols and languages inside the artificial world of games. Research has demonstrated that an increased sense of personal control over the environment was found to be positively correlated with successful experiences of computer use [3].

### *1.1 Objectives*

1. To examine the level of Internet addiction among 15-18 years old Albanian high school students.
2. To explore in what extand can internal locus of control, powerful others, or chance predict internet addiction.

### *1.2 Research questions*

1. What is the level of internet addiction among Albanian adolescents?
2. What is the impact of the components of the locus of control (internal locus of control, powerful others, shance) in internet addiction?

## 2. Research Methods

## 2.1 Procedure

we used cluster method to recruit the participants from the population of high school students in 10 public high schools in the city of Tirana, Albania. 1156 adolescents participated in this study, age 15-18. We selected in casual way high schools from the list of schools from Tirana Regional Education Directorate (DAR), and then we use the method of clustering to select the classes in these high schools. Permission for participation of students was obtained from the director of each school and students voluntarily participated in research. Completion of the questionnaires was anonymous and there was a guarantee of confidentiality. The instruments were administered in the classrooms. All participants were told about purposes of the study.

## 2.2. Instruments

The data was gathered through Internet Addiction Test and Levenson Locus of Control Scale.

The Internet Addiction Test, developed by Dr. Kimberly Young, comprises 20 items rated in a five-point Likert scale (from 1 - not at all, to 5 – always), that measures mild, moderate and severe level of Internet Addiction. On the basis of the total score obtained on the test, the individual is placed into one of three categories: average online user (from 20 to 49) who has a full control of his or her usage; experiences occasional or frequent problems because of excessive Internet use (from 50 to 69); or has significant problems because of Internet use (from 80 to 100). The internal consistency of Internet Addiction Test is a = 0.903.

Levenson Locus of Control Scale was composed by 24 items, who measure three components of locus of control, especially internal locus of control, powerful from others and chance. 8 items of the scale plus 24 point measure internal locus of control, the 8 other items of the scale plus 24 point measure powerful from others, and the last 8 items plus 24 point measure chance. Likert scale was used to in rating the items from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The internal consistency of internal locus of control is a=.713. the internal consistency of powerful others is a=.667 and the internal consistency of change is a= 0.71.

## 2.3. Data Analysis

First, the questionnaires were coded and then all the data were entered to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22). They were subjected to frequency and percentage analyses. And then we used logistic regression to study the impact of the components of the locus of control in internet addiction.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 The level of internet addiction among Albanian adolescents

Most adolescents, part of this study, 561 (46.43%) were identified as average online users, which mean that they have control over the usage of internet. 249 (21.5%) were classified as possible Internet abusers, with moderate level of addiction, who experience occasional or frequent problems in their lives about internet usage. 206 adolescents (20.1 %) resulted non addicted, so they score under the 20 point in the test of internet addiction scale. And 14 adolescents or 1.2 % of them resulted very addicted with severe levels of internet addiction, scoring up to 80 points in the test of internet addiction. For more details, you can refer table 1.

**Table 1:** The level of internet addiction, mean and standard deviation

| Groups | n | % | X | SD | (n) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No addiction | 206 | 20.1 | | | |
| Average | 561 | 46.3 | | | |
| **Internet Addicion** | | | 36.8 | 18.25 | 1156 |
| Possible abusers | 249 | 21.5 | | | |
| Internet addicted | 14 | 1.2 | | | |

**Table 2:** Logistic regression between internet addiction, internal locus of control, powerful others and chance

| | Internet addiction | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locus of Control | With simptoms (n=259) | No simptoms (n=747) | OR | CI 95% | value p |
| Internal Locus of Control (n=614, 61.0) | 137 (52.9) | 477 (63.9) | **0.65** | **0.47-0.90** | **0.009** |
| Powerful from Others (n=121, 12.0) | 39 (15.1) | 82 (11.0) | 1.08 | 0.68-1.71 | 0.751 |
| Chance (n=271, 26.9) | 83 (32.0) | 188 (25.2) | reference | | |

**Table 3:** Logistic regression between internet addiction and internal locus of control and external locus of control

| | Internet addiction | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locus of Control | With simptoms (n=259) | No simptoms (n=747) | OR | CI 95% | Vlera p |
| External Locus of Control | 122 (47.1) | 270 (36.1) | **1.57** | **1.18-2.09** | **0.002** |
| Internal Locus of Control | 137 (52.9) | 477 (63.9) | referenca | | |

### *3.2 Impact of the internal locus of control, powerful from others and chance in internet addiction.*

In this study we used logistic regression to study the impact of the component of the locus of control, especially internal locus of control, powerful others and chance, in internet addiction. As seen in the table below, adolescents with internal locus of control have 35% less probability to develop internet addiction than those who believe that everything that happens in their life is due to shance. (OR=0.65; CI=95%: 0.47-0.90; P=0.009). For

those adolescents, powerful others who believe that other persons control the events in their life, does not change from those adolescents who believe that everything that happens in their life is due to chance or lucky. (0R=1.08; CI=95%: 0.68-1.71; P=0.751).

Adolescents with external locus of control, who believe that everything that happens in their life is controlled by fate or chance have 57% more probability to develop internet addiction than those adolescents with internal locus of control.  (0R=1.57; CI=95%, 1.18-2.09; P=0.002).

## 4.        Conclusion

The study shows us that most adolescents in Albania are at risk to develop internet addiction in the nearest future. They have moderate level of internet addiction, which experience occasional or frequent problems in their lives about internet usage. And only 1.2% of the samples of this study were very addicted to the internet. They show very high levels of internet addiction scoring up to 80 points in the test of internet addiction. According to this study, adolescents with internal locus of control have less probability than those adolescents with external locus of control to develop internet addiction. This also was shown in the study of Chak and Leung (2004), who says that internal locus of control positively correlated with successful experiences of computer use.

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