Exploring the Relationships between Internet Usage and Family Values of College Students

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

Electronic revolution and the explosion of information have had quantitative and qualitative effects in the world. Iran has the 18th rank among the world's Internet users (1). Students are one of the main internet users. They have to do school assignments, write articles and view training videos, but problematic Internet use make their loneliness (2).

The use of new technologies makes changes in people's reaction in front of the family values (3). Internet addiction can make changes in lifestyle and family values (4-6). Values have a vital role, preference, and priority aspects (6). The six features of all the family features like the contrast between the children and the family, parental supervision, rulemaking, conformity with the rules and the use of positive encouragement values effects on youth (7).

The majority of Internet users are college student. Professional and semi-professional internet users found among the students due to their profession and access to the facilities at campuses. Access to the Internet, interactive environment, the intimate atmosphere, emotional relationships, engagements in group discussions, acceptation in interactive environment, satisfaction of anonymity on the Internet and parental internet awareness can effect on family values (8).

Family problems are showed as long standoff between family members, quarrels, divorce, educational and occupational problems is high in families whose children are dependent on the Internet and loneliness (9). Therefore, the more relativity with the virtual world can cause the less connection with the real world and family.

The present research is a descriptive, cross-sectional study carried on from 25 Oct to 30 Dec 2014 at the Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran. A questionnaire created by the researchers which had two parts. Part I gives information about the demographic variables and the part II asks about the information such as Internet addiction, intimate atmosphere in the internet, the use of the Internet, parental internet awareness, satisfaction of being anonymous in the internet and the family values on 5 degree Likert scale.

The student`s internet addiction 16.1% at high level and 17.4% at the very high level. 18% of students were using the Internet at high level and 13% at very high levels. Besides, there is a significant negative correlation between the student's internet addiction and the family values, ($P<0.05$) and a significant and negative correlation between the use of the Internet and family values ($P<0.05$). It means that the more the usage of the internet increases, the less the students take attention to the family values. For every daily hour of internet use at home, the user will lose or scope from communication with the family for

half an hour and this scope to an open society can cause the isolation from the real society (3). There is a significant negative correlation between the intimate atmosphere in the internet and family values (*P*<0.01). One of the reasons for Internet addiction is loneliness (3, 10). When a person cannot experience an intimate atmosphere in the real world, he will tend to experience in a virtual environment. Family misbehaviors and being away from the family are other reasons (6). Furthermore, there is a significant negative correlation between the parental internet awareness and family values in use of the Internet (*P*<0.01). If the families are aware of the internet, the teens and youth takes more attention to the family values (6, 7). Totally, 17.4% of the students participated in the study, were dependent to the Internet. 29.4% of them have high attention to family values, which is a considerable result for the education system leaders. Because high internet addiction and spending several hours in front of web pages' lead to less attention to the family values. Thus, social networks and virtual space has taken the family positions and values. Meanwhile, being away from the family-friendly atmosphere for students who living in dorms, have led to the overuse of the Internet and creating virtual lifestyles. Finally, it is necessary to create an appropriate training system to fill the student's spare time now.

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Reference