

research snapshot

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Parenting styles impact internet addiction and gambling craving among adolescents in Spain

What this research is about

There are two types of Internet addiction: generalized Internet addiction (i.e., addiction to various activities practiced through the Internet) and specific addiction to the Internet (i.e., addiction to specific behaviours online). Specific Internet addictions include online gaming and online gambling.

Previous research has found that technological addictions are related to specific parenting practices. The classic model of parenting styles proposes four parenting styles: authoritative, indulgent, neglectful, and authoritarian. The authoritative style involves high acceptance/involvement and high strictness/supervision. The indulgent style involves high acceptance/involvement and low strictness/supervision. The neglectful style involves low acceptance/involvement and low strictness/supervision. The authoritarian style involves high strictness/supervision and low acceptance/involvement. This study examined the relationship between parenting styles and internet addiction, including online gambling addiction.

What the researchers did

The researchers recruited 512 young people attending a public high school or university in middle-class neighbourhoods in Spain. Participants were recruited from eight educational centres. These centres were randomly selected from a list of centres in a region in Spain. Participants had to be Spanish and live in nuclear families. The researchers defined nuclear families as families with mother and a primary male caregiver or a female caregiver and father. Participants had to obtain permission from their

What you need to know

Internet addiction can involve addiction to activities practiced through the Internet. This is called generalized Internet addiction. Internet addiction could also involve specific behaviours, such as gambling. Previous research has found that Internet addictions are related to specific parenting practices. This study examined the relationship between the four classical parenting styles, Internet addiction, and online gambling addiction. A total of 512 adolescents in Spain completed a survey. The survey asked about the parenting styles that participants experienced. The survey also asked about internet addiction and online gambling.

Overall, the findings show a relationship between parenting styles and technological addictions. Participants who saw their parents as authoritarian scored higher on all three dimensions of Internet addiction than those who experienced other types of parenting. Participants who experienced authoritarian parenting also scored higher on all three dimensions of gambling craving (anticipation, desire, and relief). The researchers did not find any differences on the effects of parenting styles based on sex and age.

parents to participate. They completed a questionnaire that included the following:

- Parenting styles were measured using the Warmth/Affection Scale and the Parental Control Scale. Higher scores meant a higher degree of acceptance/involvement (warmth) and strictness/imposition (control).

- Internet addiction was measured using the Internet Addiction Test (IAT). This scale captures three dimensions: loss of control, emotional need, and dependence. Loss of control refers to being unable to control use of the Internet and neglect of obligations. Emotional need refers to satisfaction of emotional needs. Dependence refers to being dependent on the Internet (e.g., feeling life would be boring, empty, and joyless without the Internet).
- Online gambling was measured using the Gambling Craving Scale. The Gambling Craving Scale assesses three dimensions: anticipation, desire, and relief. Anticipation refers to an intention to gamble, which is anticipated to be fun. Desire refers to a strong desire to gamble. Relief refers to the expectation that gambling will provide relief from negative experiences.

The researchers categorized the participants by parenting style based on the Warmth/Affection Scale and the Parental Control Scale.

What the researchers found

About 64% of the participants were female. About 36% were male. Participants were between 16 and 21 years old. On average, participants were 19 years old. Participants most often experienced authoritarian parenting (30%) and indulgent parenting (28%). Other participants experienced authoritative (21%) and neglectful (21%) parenting.

The findings show a relationship between parenting styles and technological addictions. Participants who viewed their parents as authoritarian scored higher on all three dimensions of Internet addiction than those who experienced other types of parenting. Participants who experienced authoritarian parenting also scored higher on all three dimensions of gambling craving compared to those who were raised by other parenting styles. Participants who experienced neglectful parenting scored higher on emotional need than those who experienced indulgent parenting.

The researchers did not find any differences on the effects of parenting styles based on sex and age. In general, girls showed lower levels of internet

addiction and gambling craving. Younger adolescents aged 16–18 years old scored lower on emotional need and dependence on internet addiction.

How you can use this research

This research demonstrates a need to consider the family context in the development of technological addictions.

About the researchers

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