



The Relationship Between Duration of Internet Use and Parent-Adolescent Communication in High School

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Abstract. One of the factors contributing to communication problems between parents and adolescents is the duration of internet use. Excessive internet use may negatively affect interpersonal relationships. This study aimed to analyze the relationship between the duration of internet use and parent–adolescent communication among high school students. This study employed an observational analytic design with a cross-sectional approach. The respondents consisted of 308 students from SMAN 5 Malang. The research instruments used were the Modified Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and the Parent–Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS). Data were analyzed using the Spearman rank correlation test with a significance level of 0.05. The results showed that the majority of respondents had an extreme duration of internet use (8–10 hours per day), both on weekdays (291 students; 94.5%) and weekends (290 students; 94.2%). Most respondents reported a moderate level of communication with their parents (190 students; 67.7%). The statistical analysis indicated no significant relationship between the duration of internet use and parent–adolescent communication, with p-values of 0.867 (weekdays) and 0.619 (weekends) ($p > 0.05$). In conclusion, there is no significant relationship between the duration of internet use and parent–adolescent communication among high school students. Therefore, nurses are encouraged to provide education and health counseling for both parents and adolescents regarding appropriate internet use and effective communication strategies.

Keywords: Adolescents, Internet Use Duration, High School Students, Parent–Adolescent Communication.

1 Introduction

Communication between parents and children is a fundamental process involving the exchange of messages, where the information received is expected to align with what is conveyed. When parent–child relationships are characterized by closeness and openness, similar to peer-like interactions, effective communication can be established [1]. However, communication problems may arise due to several factors, including limited

interaction time [2] and excessive internet use, which has been shown to negatively affect interpersonal relationships [3].

Adolescents' internet use is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, high curiosity and ongoing brain development play a significant role in shaping adolescents' behaviour [4]. Externally, factors such as rapid economic growth, widespread availability of digital devices, easy internet access, and the development of engaging online services contribute to increased internet use among adolescents [5]. Therefore, controlling internet use is essential to minimize potential communication problems.

Ineffective parent–child communication may manifest as the use of harsh language, lack of openness [6], and limited duration of interaction [7]. Short communication duration refers to minimal time spent in interaction between parents and children [8]. Excessive internet use may further weaken interpersonal relationships within the family, particularly between parents and adolescents.

In the digital era, the use of information technology has become a significant determinant of adolescent mental health. Globally, approximately 4.66 billion people used the internet in January 2021, with 4.2 billion actively engaged in social media [9]. In Indonesia, internet usage increased from 62.10% in 2021 to 66.48% in 2022 [10], [11]. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) indicate that 63.74% of respondents used the internet for 1–5 hours daily, while others reported usage of 6–10 hours during 2022–2023 [12]. These trends suggest a continuous increase in internet usage, including in East Java and Malang City.

Prolonged internet use may negatively impact interpersonal relationships. Online environments allow adolescents to express themselves more freely; however, this may reduce direct communication with parents and potentially contribute to mental health issues [13]. Adolescents who spend excessive time online tend to experience decreased quality of communication with their parents, which may lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and discomfort [14]. However, previous studies have reported inconsistent findings. A large-scale study using PISA 2018 data found that internet use behavior was positively associated with adolescents' mental health, with self-education expectations and parental support significantly mediating this relationship [15]. Similarly, a study in Vietnam reported that most adolescents perceived stable parent–child relationships following internet use, while some even experienced improved relationships through shared online activities and supportive parental involvement [16]. These inconsistent findings highlight the need for further research to better understand the relationship between internet use, parent–adolescent communication

A preliminary study conducted at SMAN 5 Malang using a Google Form survey aimed to identify patterns of internet use and parent–adolescent communication. Among 15 respondents, all participants (100%) reported using the internet, with 53.3% using it for more than 4 hours per day, and 93.3% living with their parents. These findings indicate that internet use among adolescents in Malang City is relatively high. Based on this phenomenon, further research is needed to examine the relationship between the duration of internet use and parent–adolescent communication among students at SMAN 5 Malang.

2 Methods

This study employed a cross-sectional design using a non-experimental analytical observational approach. The population consisted of 1,113 students aged 15–18 years at SMAN 5 Malang. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula, yielding a minimum of 265 respondents; however, a total of 308 respondents were included during data collection. A non-probability sampling technique with purposive sampling was applied.

Data collection was conducted from July 15 to October 18, 2024, at SMAN 5 Malang, East Java. The duration of internet use was measured using the Modified Internet Addiction Test (IAT), which consists of 12 items assessing average daily internet use on weekdays and weekends. Parent–adolescent communication was measured using the Parent–Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS), consisting of 20 items.

The Modified Internet Addiction Test (IAT) was tested for validity and reliability in this study. All items were found to be valid ($p < 0.05$), and the instrument demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.60$). Meanwhile, the Parent–Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) was adopted from previous studies that have established its validity and reliability [17]. The relationship between internet use duration and parent–adolescent communication was analysed using the Spearman rank correlation test.

3 Results

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents at SMAN 5 Malang

The characteristics of the respondents in this study are presented in Table 1

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Data

Characteristics	Category	(n=308)	%
Age	15 years	12	3.9
	16 years	181	58.8
	17 years	98	31.8
	18 years	17	5.5
Gender	Male	101	32.8
	Female	207	67.2
Parental Marital Status	Married	254	82.5
	Divorced	24	7.8
	Widowed (one parent deceased)	30	9.7
Mother's Education	No formal education	1	0.3
	Elementary school	13	4.2
	Junior high school	21	6.8

	Senior high school	158	51.3
	Higher education (Diploma/Bachelor/Master/Doctorate)	115	37.3
Father's Education	No formal education	1	0.3
	Elementary school	17	5.5
	Junior high school	17	5.5
	Senior high school	152	49.4
	Higher education (Diploma/Bachelor/Master/Doctorate)	121	39.3
Mother's Occupation	Unemployed	20	6.5
	Private employee	79	25.6
	Housewife	172	55.8
	Civil servant	12	3.9
	Self-employed	25	8.1
Father's Occupation	Unemployed	27	8.8
	Private employee	141	45.8
	Civil servant	95	30.8
	Self-employed	43	14.0
	Farmer	2	0.6
Age at First Internet Use	4–6 years	3	1.0
	7–9 years	30	9.7
	10–12 years	72	23.4
	13–15 years	168	54.5
	16–18 years	35	11.4
Student's Device Ownership	Smartphone only	117	38.0
	Smartphone + Computer/Laptop	167	54.2
	Smartphone + Computer/Laptop + Tablet	24	7.8
Mother's Device Ownership	None	15	4.9
	Smartphone only	237	76.9
	Smartphone + Computer/Laptop	51	16.6
	Smartphone + Computer/Laptop + Tablet	5	1.6
Father's Device Ownership	None	11	3.6
	Smartphone only	209	67.9
	Smartphone + Computer/Laptop	79	25.6
	Smartphone + Computer/Laptop + Tablet	9	2.9

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were 16 years old (181 students; 58.8%) and female (207 students; 67.2%). Most respondents were in grade 11 (223 students;

72.4%). The majority of parents were married (254; 82.5%). Regarding parental education, most mothers and fathers had completed senior high school or equivalent (158; 51.3% and 152; 49.4%, respectively). In terms of occupation, most mothers were housewives (172; 55.8%), while most fathers were private employees (141; 45.8%). Most respondents first accessed the internet at the age of 13–15 years (168; 54.5%). In addition, the majority of students used both smartphones and computers/laptops (167; 54.2%). Meanwhile, most mothers and fathers owned smartphones (237; 76.9% and 209; 67.9%, respectively).

3.2 Duration of Internet Usage

The distribution of respondents based on the duration of internet use on weekdays (Monday–Friday) is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Internet Usage Duration Data on Weekdays

Category	(n=308)	%
Light (1–2 hours/day)	0	0.0
Moderate	4	1.3
Heavy	13	4.2
Extreme (8–10 hours/day)	291	94.5
Light (1–2 hours/day)	0	0.0

Table 2 shows that no respondents (0.0%) were in the light category (1–2 hours/day) of internet use on weekdays. The majority of respondents reported an extreme duration of internet use (8–10 hours/day), accounting for 291 students (94.5%).

The distribution of respondents based on the duration of internet use on weekends (Saturday–Sunday) is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Internet Use Duration on Weekends (Saturday–Sunday)

Category	(n=308)	%
Light (1–2 hours/day)	0	0.0
Moderate	4	1.3
Heavy	14	4.5
Extreme (8–10 hours/day)	290	94.2
Light (1–2 hours/day)	0	0.0

Table 3 indicates that none of the respondents (0.0%) were categorized as light internet users on weekends. Similar to weekdays, the majority of respondents reported extreme internet use (8–10 hours/day), with 290 students (94.2%).

3.3 High School Parent-Teen Communication

The distribution of parent–adolescent communication levels among respondents is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. High School Parent-Teen Communication

Category	(n=308)	%
Very low	1	0.3
Low	25	8.1
Moderate	190	61.7
High	86	27.9
Very high	6	1.9

Table 4 shows that only a small proportion of respondents had very low levels of communication with their parents (1; 0.3%). The majority of respondents demonstrated a moderate level of parent–adolescent communication (190; 61.7%).

3.4 Relationship between Duration of Internet Use and Parent-Adolescent Communication in High School

The relationship between the duration of internet use and parent–adolescent communication was analysed using the Spearman rank correlation test. The results are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Relationship between Duration of Internet Use on Weekdays and Parent-Adolescent Communication at SMAN 5 Malang

Parent–Adolescent Communication	Moderate n (%)	Heavy n (%)	Extreme n (%)	Total n (%)
Very low	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
Low	0 (0.0)	2 (0.6)	23 (7.5)	25 (8.1)
Moderate	3 (1.0)	6 (1.9)	181 (58.8)	190 (61.7)
High	1 (0.3)	5 (1.6)	80 (26.0)	86 (27.9)
Very high	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.9)	6 (1.9)
Total	4 (1.3)	13 (4.2)	291 (94.5)	308 (100)
Spearman rank test: $p = 0.867$; $r = -0.10$				

Table 6. Relationship between Duration of Internet Use on Weekends and Parent-Adolescent Communication at SMAN 5 Malang

Parent–Adolescent Communication	Moderate n (%)	Heavy n (%)	Extreme n (%)	Total n (%)
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Very low	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
Low	0 (0.0)	2 (0.6)	23 (7.5)	25 (8.1)
Moderate	2 (0.6)	7 (2.3)	181 (58.8)	190 (61.7)
High	1 (0.3)	6 (1.9)	79 (25.6)	86 (27.9)
Very high	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.9)	6 (1.9)
Total	3 (1.0)	15 (4.9)	290 (94.2)	308 (100)

Spearman rank test: $p = 0.619$; $r = -0.28$

The results in Tables 5 and 6 indicate that there is no significant relationship between the duration of internet use and parent–adolescent communication. The statistical analysis showed p -values of 0.867 for weekdays and 0.619 for weekends ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, the correlation coefficients were -0.10 for weekdays and -0.28 for weekends, indicating a very weak negative correlation between the two variables. This suggests that although there is a slight tendency for higher internet use to be associated with lower levels of communication, the relationship is not statistically significant.

4 Discussion

4.1 Internet Usage Duration among Adolescents at SMAN 5 Malang

The results of this study indicate that the majority of adolescents at SMAN 5 Malang fall into the extreme category of internet use, with a duration of 8–10 hours per day. This finding is consistent with data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association [18] which reports that adolescents aged 13–18 years have the highest level of internet penetration. Similarly, data from [10], [11] show that most individuals aged 16–18 years have actively used the internet in recent months. These findings suggest that high school adolescents represent a group with intensive internet use.

Family background may also influence adolescents' internet use behaviour. In this study, most respondents came from married families, with only a small proportion experiencing parental divorce. Parenting style has been shown to influence how adolescents regulate internet use, including the risk of excessive use. In addition, most mothers were housewives, while most fathers were employed. Previous studies indicate that busy parents may have limited time to supervise their children, which can lead to less controlled internet use [19]. Therefore, parental involvement remains essential in guiding adolescents' internet use.

Most respondents reported first accessing the internet at the age of 13–15 years, which aligns with previous findings indicating that initial exposure commonly occurs during junior high school [20]. At this developmental stage, adolescents begin to form their social identity, making them more likely to engage actively with digital media. Furthermore, most respondents owned smartphones and computers/laptops, while parents predominantly owned smartphones. The widespread availability of digital devices facilitates easy access to the internet and increases usage intensity [21].

4.2 Parent–Adolescent Communication at SMAN 5 Malang

The findings show that most respondents had a moderate level of parent–adolescent communication. This indicates that communication occurs relatively frequently but may lack depth, particularly when discussing sensitive or emotional topics [22]. Similar findings were reported in a study conducted in Bojonegoro, where 70% of adolescents demonstrated moderate communication patterns with their parents [23]. Thus, moderate communication reflects a condition that is functional but not yet optimal.

Several factors may influence communication patterns. In this study, most respondents were 16 years old and female. Previous research suggests that communication between parents and adolescents may decline during adolescence due to developmental changes and increasing autonomy. Therefore, adaptive communication strategies are needed, including openness and mutual understanding, to maintain healthy family relationships. Parental marital status may also play a role. Most respondents in this study came from married families, which tend to provide a more stable environment for open and effective communication [24]. In addition, parental occupation influences communication quality. As most fathers were employed and mothers were housewives, time availability may differ between parents. Previous studies indicate that limited time due to work demands can hinder the development of strong communication between parents and adolescents [25].

4.3 The Relationship between Internet Use Duration and Parent–Adolescent Communication

This study found no significant relationship between the duration of internet use and parent–adolescent communication. These findings suggest that high internet use does not necessarily lead to poor communication between parents and adolescents.

This result is supported by previous research indicating that while problematic internet use may be associated with communication issues, the duration of internet use alone is not always a significant predictor [26]. In fact, active parental involvement, such as discussing internet use with adolescents, may help prevent problematic behaviours without necessarily reducing the duration of use.

However, these findings differ from several previous studies. In 2019, Azizah et al. reported a significant relationship between internet use and the quality of adolescent relationships with parents [27]. Similarly, Restrepo et al. in 2020 found that excessive internet dependence may reduce social interaction and negatively affect psychological well-being [28], ultimately impacting parent–child communication. These inconsistencies suggest that the relationship between internet use and communication is complex and may be influenced by additional factors.

Several factors may explain the non-significant findings of the present study. First, this study assessed only the duration of internet use and did not evaluate the purpose, quality, or type of online activities. Adolescents who spend long periods online for educational purposes or to maintain communication with family and friends may not experience poorer parent-adolescent communication [16], [29]. Second, there was limited

variability in internet use among respondents, as more than 94% were classified as extreme internet users. This homogeneous distribution may have reduced the statistical power to detect a significant association [30].

Parent-adolescent communication is a multidimensional construct influenced by factors beyond internet use, including parenting style, parental involvement, family functioning, and communication patterns. Other contributing factors to communication problems include limited interaction time, adolescents' preference for leisure activities, and parental busyness [31], [32], [33]. Moreover, the use of internet-based communication tools, such as messaging applications and video calls, may facilitate interaction between parents and adolescents even when they spend considerable time online. Therefore, internet use does not necessarily reduce communication; instead, the quality of interaction such as empathy, openness, and active listening plays a more crucial role in determining effective parent-adolescent communication.

Future studies should examine additional dimensions of internet use, such as problematic internet use, the purpose of internet use, and the quality of online interactions. Moreover, family-related variables, including parenting style, parental monitoring, family cohesion, and psychosocial factors, should be investigated as potential mediators or moderators. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to better understand the causal relationship between internet use and parent-adolescent communication over time.

5 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, most respondents reported extreme internet use, with an average duration of 8–10 hours per day, while the majority demonstrated a moderate level of parent-adolescent communication. Statistical analysis showed no significant relationship between internet use duration and parent-adolescent communication among students at SMAN 5 Malang. These findings suggest that the amount of time adolescents spend online alone may not determine the quality of communication with their parents.

Health professionals should provide education and counseling for both parents and adolescents regarding healthy internet use and effective family communication strategies. Parents are encouraged to supervise adolescents' internet use while fostering open communication and balancing online activities with face-to-face interactions.

Future research should investigate broader aspects of internet use, including problematic internet use, the purpose and quality of online activities, and family-related factors such as parenting style, parental monitoring, family functioning, and psychosocial characteristics. Longitudinal studies involving more diverse samples are also recommended to better explain the relationship between internet use and parent-adolescent communication.

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