

Investigating the Relationship Between Rumination and Internet Addiction That May Exist in Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs

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Abstract— The purpose of this research is to examine the relationships between rumination and internet addiction that may exist in parents of children with special educational needs (SEN). In this research, the 'mixed research method' was used. In this study, 'exploratory sequential design', one of the mixed research methods, was preferred by the researchers. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this research. The study group of the quantitative data of the research consists of a total of 586 participants, 350 mothers (59.7%) and 236 fathers (40.3%), reached through the 'purposeful sampling method'. The study group of qualitative data consisted of parents of 6 children with special educational needs, 3 mothers and 3 fathers. The quantitative data collection tools of this research were used: 'Rumination About an Interpersonal Offense Scale ($\alpha=.94$)' and 'Young Internet Addiction Test ($\alpha=.93$)'. The data obtained via qualitative research method were collected through the 'semi-structured interview form' developed by the researchers. In the analysis of quantitative data, parametric tests were used, such as t-test, correlation, and regression statistical techniques. The analysis of qualitative data was analyzed using the 'descriptive analysis method'. According to the findings of this research; 1) Internet addiction scores of parents of children with special educational needs do not differ significantly according to gender ($t_{584}=.318$, $p>.05$), 2) There is a positive, moderately significant relationship between the rumination scores and internet addiction scores of parents of children with SEN ($r=.341$, $p<.01$), 3. As a result of the regression analysis, it was found that the rumination scores of parents of children with SEN significantly predicted their internet addiction scores ($F_{1-584}=76.832$, $R=.34$, $R^2=.17$, $p<.01$), 4) According to the findings of the qualitative data in this research, parents of children with special educational needs stated that they think too much about what they can do for their children so that they can learn self-care skills and act as independent individuals and that these thoughts negatively affect them, 5) It was revealed that they did not spend much time using the internet with their children, 6) they use the internet when they take their children to education centers, particularly while waiting for their children, 7) they spend more time on social media on the internet.

Index Terms— Rumination, internet addiction, child with special educational needs, parents, mixed research method.

Introduction

Children with special educational needs are defined as children who have a diagnosed disability or whose development is at risk [1]. Children with special educational needs necessity special education because they differ developmentally from their peers due to their individual differences [2]. With these individual differences, the birth of children with special educational needs can have a shocking effect on parents. In addition, it does not negatively affect their permanent lives, periods, or negative situations [3]. Parents may have recurring

thoughts about their children with special educational needs that negatively affect parents [4].

They defined rumination from the perspective of traumatic experiences as a repetitive form of thinking that occurs about the experienced event, involving problem-solving, remembering, and expectation [5]. Ruminative thoughts can also occur about the individual herself, her family, her children, the past, present, future, completed, incomplete, or other situations [6]. Rumination is seen as an important concept that is frequently studied in terms of elucidating how negative emotions develop and persist [7]. It is stated that

the rumination of individuals can cause internet addiction [8].

The internet has an important place in individuals' daily lives. While the internet has positive effects on individuals' lives, it can also have negative effects [9]. Increasing internet use and starting to negatively affect daily life can cause

internet addiction, also referred to as behavioral addiction, in individuals [10]. Internet addiction is defined by criteria such as being excessively busy with the Internet, being unable to control Internet use, feeling restless, pessimistic, and stressed when trying to reduce Internet use, and the person's work, social, and family life is negatively affected by Internet use [11]. Parents of Children with special educational needs may have ruminative thoughts about their children and their own lives. Additionally, parents may use the internet extensively for different reasons. Therefore, it is important to know the intensity of parents' ruminative thoughts and the relationship of these thoughts with internet addiction. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between rumination and internet addiction that may exist in parents of children with special educational needs.

Method

Research Model: The current study has an "explanatory sequential design" one of the mixed research methods. This research used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The explanatory sequential design was preferred by researchers to emphasize the beauty phase, followed by the qualitative phase [12].

The advantages of explanatory sequential design are

- 1) suitable to explore a phenomenon and,
- 2) identify themes and relevant variables can be identified easily [12]

Study Group: The study group is composed of 586 parents having children with special educational needs, 350 of whom were mothers (% 59.7, \bar{x} =40.50, ss =4.35) and 236 (% 45.3, \bar{x} =35.40, ss =6.12) of whom were fathers, who were all reached via convenience sampling method. The study group of qualitative data consisted of 6 parents having children with special educational needs, 3 mothers and 3 fathers.

Data Collection Tools

Rumination about Interpersonal Offenses Scale:

This scale was developed by Wade, Vogel, Liao, and Goldman (2008), and adapted into Turkish culture by Oral and Arslan (2017) [13-14]. The scale is composed of 6 items. A high score received on the scale refers to a high level of rumination about interpersonal offenses. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated to be .88. In the current study, we found out that Cronbach alpha was .89.

Young's Internet Addiction Test-Short Form:

Young's Internet Addiction developed by Young (1998) Testi Short Form was adapted to Turkish culture by Kutlu et al., (2016) [15]. The scale is composed of 12 items. A high score received on the scale refers to a high level of internet addiction. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated to be .93. In the current study, we found out that Cronbach alpha was .94.

Semi-structured Interview Form: The qualitative data of the research were obtained with a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. During the interviews, the following questions in the semi-structured interview form were asked of the parents.

1. What ruminative thought do you often think about your children with special educational needs?
2. When you evaluate your daily internet usage level, how does it affect your daily life and your relationship with your special educational needs children?

Data Analysis: To obtain information about the scales and participants, we conducted descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, and simple linear regression analysis in qualitative analyses.

I. FINDINGS

This section includes qualitative and quantitative findings.

Table I.
Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Variables

Scale	N	\bar{x}	ss	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Rumination about Interpersonal Offenses	586	17.47	.29	-.016	-1.029	.89
Internet Addiction	586	25.04	.44	.744	-.345	.94

The scores of Rumination about Interpersonal Offenses and Internet Addiction varied between ± 1.5 , which meant that they had a normal

distribution [16]. We concluded that the scale scores of Rumination about Interpersonal Offenses and Internet Addiction all had Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) values equal to or over .70, which meant they were all reliable [17].

Table II.
t-Test Results Regarding the Internet Addiction Scores of Parents Having Children with Special Educational Needs According to Their Gender

Scale	Parent	N	\bar{x}	ss	t	p
Internet Addiction	Mother	350	25.16	.56	.318	.751
	Father	236	24.86	.74		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

As is seen in Table II, internet addiction scores of parents having children with special educational needs did not differ significantly according to the gender of parents ($t_{584} = .318$, $p > .05$). In other words, the mothers and fathers of children with special

educational needs have similar results from internet addiction scale. There was not meaningful differences between mothers and fathers from the scale scores.

Table III.
The Results of Pearson Correlation among Variables

	Rumination about Interpersonal Offenses
Internet Addiction	.341**

** $p < .05$, * $p < .01$

As is seen in Table III, the participant parents' level of internet addiction and rumination about interpersonal offenses was positively related to a medium level ($r = .341$, $p < .01$). It means that the

relationship between internet addiction and rumination about interpersonal offenses scores have medium level correlation.

Table IV.

Simple Linear Regression Results Regarding the Prediction of Internet Addiction Scores

Predicted Variable	Predictive Variable	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Internet Addiction	Fixed	15.839	1.132		13.995	.000
	Rumination about Interpersonal Offenses	.527	.060	.341	8.765	.000**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ $F_{1-584} = 76.832$, $R = .34$, $R^2 = .17$

As is seen in Table IV, the scores of rumination about interpersonal offenses of parents having children with special educational needs predicted their scores of internet addiction at a statistically significant level ($F_{1-584} = 76.832$, $R = .34$, $R^2 = .17$, $p < .01$). Rumination about interpersonal offenses accounted for 17% of the total variance on internet addiction scores ($R^2 = .17$).

Findings of Qualitative Data

Regarding rumination about interpersonal offenses, all of the parents interviewed (6 (100%)) stated that parents having children with special educational needs think too much about what they can do for their children for their children to gain self-care skills and act as independent individuals and that these thoughts negatively affect them. Below are examples of parents' answers.

"As my child gets older, for example, when he reaches the secondary school level, I worry a lot about whether he will be able to act as an independent individual, and I constantly have negative thoughts about this issue." (Mother 2)

"My child is growing and problems arise as he grows, I do not know how to deal with problems related to my child, and the more I think about this situation, the more worried I become." (Father1)

"I have a hard time teaching my child self-care skills. I have concerns about whether he will acquire these skills. I am afraid that he will not be able to acquire these skills, and constantly making him think that he will not be able to acquire these skills makes me even more worried." (Mother 3)

All 6 (100%) of the parents interviewed about internet addiction stated that they do not spend much time using the internet with their children, that they use the internet when they take their children to education centers. Additionally especially while waiting for their children, that they spend more time on social media on the internet, and that they generally use the internet for longer than they planned. Below are examples of parents' answers.

"I don't deal with the phone too much in front of my child. When I take him to his classes for his education, I look at the phone while waiting for my child. I prefer to use social media more on my phone. I usually use the internet more than I planned. This situation causes my work to be disrupted." (Mother 1)

"Since I work during the day with my child, I spend more time in the evenings. I try not to look at my phone too much around him, but this is not always possible. In the evenings, I use social media on the internet with my phone. "Because I spend too much time on the internet, I pay less attention to my child in the evenings." (Father3)

"I use the internet and social media to obtain information about my child's special needs or to reach experts working in this field. However, while researching on the internet, I can forget the time and spend a very long time on the internet. This both reduces the time I spend with my child and causes disruptions in my work." (Mother3)

II. DISCUSSION

As a result of this research, it was concluded that the internet addiction scores of parents having children with special educational needs do not

differ according to gender. In other words, it appears that internet addiction in parents does not vary by gender. When the literature was examined, no research was found regarding the internet addiction levels of parents having children with special educational needs. Studies conducted on adult individuals [18] and young adult individuals [19-20-21] as different sample groups also show that internet addiction does not differ according to gender.

As a result of this research, a positive relationship was obtained between the rumination about interpersonal offenses levels and internet addictions of parents having children with special educational needs. It was also found that the rumination about interpersonal offenses levels predicted internet addiction. When the literature was examined, no studies were found examining the relationships between the rumination about interpersonal offenses and internet addictions of parents having children with special educational needs. It is seen that similar findings to the findings of this study were obtained in studies conducted on young adult individuals [8-22] as different sample groups. It is stated that ruminative thinking is a risk factor for internet addiction [23].

According to the researchers' experiences, it can be said that the reasons for this similarity are the parents' attitudes and beliefs about having a child with special needs. Although the studies conducted abroad are not on families with special needs, the reasons for similar results in studies conducted with young adult groups may be that the parents have the same thoughts and attitudes [28], which may mean that they have similar cultural characteristics and feelings.

As a result of this research, it was found that parents having children with special educational needs think too much about issues related to their children's acquisition of self-care skills and what they can do for their children so that they can act as independent individuals, and that these thoughts negatively affect them. In addition, it was concluded that they do not spend much time using the internet with their children, that they use the internet especially when they take their children to education centers while waiting for their children, that they spend more time on social media on the

internet, and that the increase in time they spend on the internet negatively affects their daily communication with their children. Considering the quantitative findings of the research; it is seen that the findings obtained from qualitative data that parents having children with special educational needs have high rumination levels and excessive internet use, and that their internet use negatively affects their daily lives, support the quantitative findings of the research.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that research has been conducted on different variables with parents having children with special educational needs. Studies have also found that the stress levels of parents who have children with special needs are high [24-25-26]. It is stated that a lot of ruminative thinking is carried out by parents in order to organize the economic and psychological conditions of their children in order to organize their children's lives, and therefore the stress rate of parents is high [27].

Parents having children with special educational needs may engage in ruminative thinking on issues related to their children. It is also seen that internet use is high and internet use negatively affects their daily lives. It is stated that the increase in internet use and its negative impact on daily life may cause internet addiction in individuals [10]. Ruminative thinking is seen as a risk factor for internet addiction [23]. As a result, parents having children with special educational needs may have intense ruminative thoughts. This situation may cause parents' internet addiction.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this research are listed in items.

1. In this study, it was concluded that the internet addictions of parents having children with special educational needs do not vary according to gender.

2. In this study, it was concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between rumination and internet addiction of parents having children with special educational needs.

3. In this study, it was found that the rumination about interpersonal offenses scores of parents having children with special educational

needs significantly predicted their internet addiction scores.

4. As a result of this research, it was concluded that parents having children with special educational needs think too much about what they can do for their children so that they can gain self-care skills and act as independent individuals, and that these thoughts negatively affect them.

5. As a result of this research, it was concluded that parents having children with special educational needs do not spend much time using the internet with their children, they use the internet when they take their children to education centers, especially while waiting for their children, and they spend more time on social media on the internet.

Recommendations were developed based on the results of this research and are listed below.

1. Educational programs can be organized to inform parents about rumination about interpersonal offenses and internet addiction.

2. In future research, rumination about interpersonal offenses and internet addiction program can be developed. The validity and reliability of the data obtained from the research can be ensured by comparing the data obtained by using qualitative and quantitative research methods regarding the effectiveness of this program.

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