The Dark Side of Internet Use: Two Longitudinal Studies of Excessive Internet Use, Depressive Symptoms, School Burnout and Engagement Among Finnish Early and Late Adolescents

Engl. transl.: The Dark Side of Internet Use: Two Longitudinal Studies of Excessive Internet Use, Depressive Symptoms, School Burnout and Engagement Among Finnish Early and Late Adolescents

# Keywords

* Excessive internet use
* School burnout
* School engagement
* Depressive symptoms
* Adolescence

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## Authors

Salmela-Aro K.;Upadyaya K.;Hakkarainen K.;Lonka K.;Alho K.

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## Topics

* Social mediation
* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Wellbeing

## Sample

Millennium target population (born in 2000) comprised all the 6th public grade elementary school students in the City of Helsinki. The sample contained 1 702 elementary school students from 33 schools (Males = 720, Females = 906, information about gender was missing for 76 students).

## Implications For Educators About

Other

# Abstract

Recent research shows an increased concern with well-being at school and potential problems associated with students’ use of socio-digital technologies, i.e., the mobile devices, computers, social media, and the Internet. Simultaneously with supporting creative social activities, socio-digital participation may also lead to compulsive and addictive behavioral patterns affecting both general and school-related mental health problems. Using two longitudinal data waves gathered among 1702 (53 % female) early (age 12–14) and 1636 (64 % female)
late (age 16–18) Finnish adolescents, we examined crosslagged paths between excessive internet use, school
engagement and burnout, and depressive symptoms. Structural equation modeling revealed reciprocal crosslagged paths between excessive internet use and school burnout among both adolescent groups: school burnout
predicted later excessive internet use and excessive internet use predicted later school burnout. Reciprocal paths
between school burnout and depressive symptoms were also found. Girls typically suffered more than boys from
depressive symptoms and, in late adolescence, school burnout. Boys, in turn, more typically suffered from
excessive internet use. These results show that, among adolescents, excessive internet use can be a cause of school burnout that can later spill over to depressive symptoms.

# Outcome

School burnout predicted later excessive internet use and excessive internet use predicted later school burnout. Reciprocal paths between school burnout and depressive symptoms were also found. Girls typically suffered more than boys from depressive symptoms and, in late adolescence, school burnout. Boys, in turn, more typically suffered from
excessive internet use.