

## SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF THE MANIFESTATION OF ADDICTION IN INDIVIDUALS

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**Abstract:** This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-psychological factors influencing the formation and manifestation of addiction in individuals. The psychological mechanisms of addiction are examined within the frameworks of psychoanalytic, individual, cognitive-behavioral, and humanistic approaches. Particular attention is given to modern forms of addiction, especially internet and computer game addiction, and their psychological characteristics. The study highlights the role of internal human needs, defense mechanisms, and the social environment, including family influence, as key determinants in the development of addictive behaviors. Based on the synthesis of various theoretical perspectives, addiction is interpreted as a complex psychological phenomenon resulting from the imbalance in the satisfaction of fundamental psychological needs.

**Keywords:** Addiction, Psychological Factors, Social Environment, Internet Addiction, Virtual Addiction, Psychoanalysis, Cognitive Psychology, Family Influence, Motivation, Behavior

### Introduction

Forms of addiction such as dependence on alcohol, psychoactive substances, or virtual environments are considered among the most pressing socio-psychological problems of modern society. At the same time, there is no single personality structure specific to addiction. Various psychological schools interpret this phenomenon differently, which requires addiction to be considered as a multifactorial and complex process. Among these approaches, depth psychology, individual psychology, cognitive-behavioral theory, and humanistic psychology occupy a special place. Each theory explains addiction from different perspectives, highlighting the interaction between an individual's internal needs, emotional state, and social environment [1-4].

### Materials and Methods

#### Psychoanalytic Approach

One of the most well-known theories explaining addiction is the psychoanalytic approach developed by Sigmund Freud. Freud emphasized that human behavior is rooted in internal psychological processes and divided the structure of personality into three main components: the id, ego, and superego. According to Freud, a healthy individual maintains a balance among these structures. In individuals prone to addiction, however, this balance is disrupted. In particular, if basic needs are not adequately satisfied during early childhood, a person may later seek artificial sources of pleasure and satisfaction. Although this theory has not been fully scientifically proven, it remains one of the important theoretical foundations for understanding addiction. Depth psychology is considered one of the most influential psychological theories and was developed by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). Freud based his theory on the thesis that “all human behavior has an underlying cause.” He regarded sexuality as the primary instinct and divided the structure of personality into three components: the id, ego, and superego. Freud attempted to analyze human behavior through unconscious dreams, slips of the tongue, facial expressions, and gestures. According to his theory, in psychologically healthy individuals the id, ego, and superego remain in balance.

In individuals suffering from addiction, this balance between the id, ego, and superego is disrupted. Freud suggested that individuals who did not experience sufficient satisfaction during the oral stage of early childhood - such as inadequate breastfeeding or thumb-sucking - might later become more prone

to alcoholism and addictive behaviors. Although this theory has not been scientifically confirmed, it was accepted as an influential psychological perspective and produced significant theoretical impact. The thesis that the pursuit of pleasure could liberate individuals from neurosis and addiction gradually led many people into a deeper trap of hedonism. A life philosophy summarized by slogans such as “Break the chains, tear down the walls, feel freedom, and live with pleasure!” spread widely across the world. Freud’s original intention was not to promote hedonism; however, his theories were often interpreted in that way. At the same time, the form of hedonism that encourages alcohol and substance abuse was not directly based on Freud’s actual ideas. Nevertheless, particularly in the United States, certain psychiatric circles promoted such interpretations for several decades, extending even into the recent past. Unfortunately, the consumption of alcohol and psychoactive substances became relatively widespread even among some mental health professionals.

After the discovery in the 1990s of the parts of the human brain responsible for regulating emotions, the idea that true freedom means “being free from uncontrolled sexual and other instinctive drives” became increasingly influential. As a result, educational and psychological approaches aimed at regulating and developing instincts gained greater importance. This perspective, later generalized within the concept of emotional intelligence, placed Freud’s theory under serious criticism and reconsideration. The theory of individual psychology was developed by Alfred Adler (1870–1937). In Adler’s theory, particular attention is given to feelings of inferiority and superiority, as well as the psychological complexes associated with them. According to Adler, individuals who fail to find constructive ways to cope with anxiety and insecurity arising from an inferiority complex may seek ego satisfaction through the use of alcohol or narcotic substances.

From this perspective, addiction is interpreted as a compensatory mechanism aimed at reducing feelings of insecurity and psychological tension. At the same time, this approach does not fully explain cases in which individuals use psychoactive substances primarily for pleasure and enjoyment rather than as a response to anxiety or insecurity.

The cognitive-behavioral approach, which is based on learning theory, explains that both positive and negative behaviors are formed through conditioned reflexes. According to this perspective, if alcohol consumption is repeatedly associated with sexual stimulation or eating, a conditioned response develops over time. As a result, alcohol may gradually begin to substitute basic needs such as food, water, and emotional comfort. However, this approach does not fully explain every form of addiction, since it tends to overlook individuals’ internal dynamics, instincts, impulses, and emotional reactions. On the other hand, Otto Rank emphasized humanity’s unconscious search for the sense of happiness and security experienced in the womb, while Karen Horney and Erich Fromm discussed how individuals develop maladaptive defense mechanisms in order to escape feelings of loneliness, hopelessness, and emotional insecurity.

From the perspective of humanistic psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow, if an individual’s physiological and psychological needs - such as security, love, respect, and self-actualization - are not satisfied through healthy means, the person may attempt to fulfill them through alcohol or psychoactive substances. When the findings of these psychological theories are combined with recent advances in genetic and neuroscientific research, a broader consensus emerges that the human ego naturally seeks satisfaction and pleasure, and that this tendency is closely connected with the functioning of the brain’s reward system.

It can be argued that when mature defense mechanisms such as asceticism (control over pleasure-seeking), altruism (self-sacrifice), anticipation (foresight), sublimation, and suppression (the conscious regulation of desires) do not function effectively, individuals may become more inclined to seek relief from pain, stress, and emotional difficulties through alcohol or psychoactive substances. Individuals who fail to develop psychosocial coping skills and healthy alternative ways of achieving satisfaction often

struggle to regulate their desires and are therefore more vulnerable to alcohol and drug addiction. Although there are various theories regarding the causes and mechanisms of addiction, there is relatively broad agreement concerning treatment approaches. In particular, the development of coping and self-regulation skills through cognitive-behavioral methods continues to be regarded as one of the most effective approaches in addiction treatment.

Computer games, like television, are tools whose effects depend largely on the way they are used. When used appropriately, they may provide certain positive benefits. Scientific studies on the effects of computer games have shown that they can improve attention and concentration in children, adolescents, and adults. Researchers associated with NASA found that computer games may contribute to the enhancement of cognitive focus and attentional abilities. In another scientific study, children's brain waves were measured during gameplay using the Neurobiofeedback method. The findings demonstrated that, while playing video games, the brain produced a greater number of high-frequency waves associated with increased attention and concentration.

In line with these findings, the effects of computer games were particularly evaluated in children with hyperactivity and attention deficit disorders. Studies revealed that when children felt that computer games helped them restore and maintain attention, they gradually learned to improve their concentration skills. As a result, feelings of control and achievement emerged, and the brain became more capable of producing high-frequency waves associated with alertness and focused attention. Children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are often impulsive, impatient, and easily bored; therefore, they tend to avoid tasks that require sustained mental effort. Because they may struggle to concentrate on reading or classroom activities, they often fail to effectively utilize their cognitive abilities. For this reason, various supportive materials and methods are needed for the development of such children, and scientific evidence suggests that computer games can partially fulfill this need.

## **Results**

Computer games may also help calm hyperactive children and stressed adults. Most importantly, they can contribute to the development of the ability to maintain composure under short-term stressful conditions. Acquiring and strengthening this skill has therapeutic significance, particularly for impulsive and hyperactive individuals. In addition, computer programs and games can positively influence memory enhancement, categorization, classification, and problem-solving abilities in children [5].

In addition to all the advantages mentioned above, it is important not to overlook the potential risks associated with computer games. One of the most significant dangers is exposure to violence. Excessive engagement with violent content may lead children to develop distorted judgments, problematic social relationships, and aggressive behavior patterns. To prevent the harmful effects of excessive daily use of computer games and the Internet — while at the same time encouraging their productive and educational use — parents should adopt an approach based on guidance rather than prohibition, and on offering alternatives rather than imposing strict restrictions. Through the constructive use of computers, it is possible to contribute to a child's intellectual development and academic success. It largely depends on adults to help children channel their energy into creativity and personal growth instead of allowing violence to become a behavioral model [6].

When a child becomes deeply engaged in a favorite television program or computer game, telling them "Go do your homework!" may cause the child to perceive studying as something negative or hostile. In such moments, the child is often mentally unprepared to focus on academic tasks. Even if the child sits down to study, they may remain psychologically and emotionally disengaged. Therefore, children should be given appropriate and clearly separated time for school, studying, and play. A child who follows a daily schedule should be allowed to enjoy playtime freely and without unnecessary pressure. When study time arrives, however, the child should complete academic responsibilities willingly and

conscientiously. Establishing rules together and consistently following them every day helps children develop self-control and responsibility [7]. Patience, emotional stability, harmony, consistency, determination, and constructive leadership are extremely important for a child's psychological well-being. The home environment should combine discipline, clear rules, and emotional warmth.

One of the fundamental principles in raising children and adolescents is not merely trying to correct them through constant advice or lectures, but rather guiding them through personal example and supportive interaction. This approach is referred to as the "Handle" method. The process of instilling positive values and behaviors in a child's mind should not rely on sudden or harsh disciplinary measures. Methods based on hidden punishment, excessive criticism, or strict prohibitions often encourage children to develop dishonest behaviors, including lying and concealment.

For example, some children place comic books inside their textbooks to create the impression that they are studying [8]. Such behaviors are often a consequence of excessive pressure and restrictive parenting approaches. Rather than constantly opposing computer games and cartoons, it is more beneficial to consider how these tools can be used constructively in the upbringing and development of children.

In 1997, Kimberly Young introduced a new dimension to the concept of addiction through her presentation on Internet addiction and developed a 20-item questionnaire designed to assess problematic Internet use. This approach was based on the idea that Internet addiction represents a form of impulse-control disorder, similar to pathological gambling [9]. At the same time, the scale also incorporated certain behavioral characteristics commonly observed in alcoholism and substance dependence. Research findings indicated the rapid spread of Internet use worldwide. More than 30% of households had access to high-speed Internet services, and by the end of 2002 this figure had reached approximately 50% in some countries, including France. In addition, around 69% of young people between the ages of 13 and 19 reported spending more than two hours per day playing computer games. In South Korea, where Young's scale was widely applied, a study conducted on a sample of 13,588 users from a major Internet portal revealed an addiction rate of approximately 3.5% [10].

## **Discussion**

The Internet environment enables continuous and large-scale interaction among individuals. For example, it is common for millions of users to be active online simultaneously. This characteristic demonstrates the enormous influence and psychological power of the Internet and computer-based environments. Taking advantage of these features, various virtual platforms have emerged through which users can gain access to psychoactive substances, as well as engage in activities such as online gaming, gambling, cybersex, chat groups, and information-sharing networks [11-13]. The widespread availability of such content has significantly increased the risk of problematic and addictive behaviors in virtual environments. Within this digital space, harmful and manipulative content can also spread rapidly. For instance, studies have reported the existence of hundreds of thousands of websites related to cybersex, with many of them simultaneously connected to online gambling and other addictive activities. The psychological risk factors associated with Internet and computer addiction correspond both to the general mechanisms of addiction discussed earlier and to the specific characteristics unique to virtual environments [14][15].

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study demonstrate that addiction is a complex and multifactorial process occurring within the human psyche, shaped by the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors. Psychoanalytic, individual, cognitive-behavioral, and humanistic approaches explain different aspects of the addiction phenomenon and confirm its close relationship with internal needs, emotional conflicts, and the social environment.

The study further revealed that when an individual's fundamental psychological needs remain unmet, the tendency to compensate for them through artificial means becomes significantly stronger. This tendency may manifest itself in the form of addiction to alcohol, narcotic substances, or virtual environments. In particular, the rapid expansion of the modern digital environment has contributed to the growing prevalence of Internet and computer game addiction, thereby increasing the urgency of this problem. In addition, family environment, parenting styles, and social influences act as important determinants in the development of addiction. Ineffective parenting approaches — such as excessive control, strict prohibitions, and psychological pressure — may intensify resistance and hidden behaviors in children, ultimately increasing the risk of addictive tendencies. Overall, the prevention and treatment of addiction require a comprehensive approach that includes improving psychological literacy, creating a healthy psychological climate within families and educational settings, and strengthening individuals' internal psychological resources.

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