

Iva Cernja, PhD student

iva_cernja@yahoo.com

Dr. Lucija Vejmelka, Assistant professor

lucijav@gmail.com

Dr. Miroslav Rajter, Assistant professor

miroslav.rajter@gmail.com

University of Zagreb

Theme chosen of the conference: Connecting practice, theory and research in social work education

ONLINE RISKS BEHAVIOURS OF CROATIAN ADOLESCENTS: CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND EDUCATION

Development of modern technology and its widely use contributes that online communication became common mode of interaction between people, especially among adolescents. Technology brings various benefits in human's life but also holds certain risks. Social work practice is faced with the growth of new risks in virtual environment. Internet addiction and cyberbullying among youth are phenomena that show a significant increase owing to the development of technology and the wide accessibility of the Internet. Despite their significance, these problems have received little attention from researchers in Croatia. Main objective of this study was to examine the patterns of internet use and the involvement in cyber violence among Croatian adolescents. Research objectives are to explore the relationship between Internet addiction and cyberbullying in Croatian adolescents and to explore the differences in the frequency of use of various internet services among groups with different levels of participation in cyber violence.

Standardized measuring instruments Internet addiction test (IAT, Young, 1998) and The European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (ECIPQ, Del Rey et al., 2015) were administered to the randomly selected cluster sample of 352 adolescents in Croatian high schools. The collection method was via online survey with the collaboration of school personnel and all necessary ethical standards were provided: positive ethical board decision, informed consent, informing the parents, anonymity, confidentiality and informing about results.

Adolescents with higher results on the internet addiction scale shows higher results on scale of victimization and perpetration of cyber bullying. The analysis of patterns of internet use and internet addiction among groups of pupils with various levels of involvement in cyber violence was conducted and the results show moderate to high effect size between internet addiction and cyber violence. Detailed results will be further discussed in the presentation.

Participation in online risky behavior may lead to the risk of multiple problems in development of children and youth. In that age online environment is extremely important and online activities can effect on relations and behaviors in real life. The scientific contribution of this work is reflected in a better understanding of risk behaviors among youth on the Internet and in providing answers on actual public problems and implementing the research findings in the social work education. The different patterns of internet use among groups with different levels of participation in cyber violence indicate that more focused approach to the examination of correlates of different forms of internet behavior among adolescents is needed. Research results can contribute in prevention and treatment of online risks by evidence based approach in social work practice but also in providing necessary data for the social work education in this field.