

Investigation of attitudes towards sport and internet addiction levels of faculty of sport sciences students in terms of various demographic variables

Seçil Tosun^{1*}, and Alptuğ Soyer²

¹ Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, Sport Science Faculty, Bor/Niğde, Türkiye

² Balıkesir University, Graduate School of Health Sciences, Bigadiç/Balıkesir, Türkiye

Abstract. This study examined the relationship between the attitudes toward sport and internet addiction levels of sport science faculty students according to various demographic variables. In the study, data were collected using the Attitude Toward Sport Scale and Internet Addiction Scale, and the study group of the research consisted of a total of 588 people, 320 of whom were female (54.4%) and 268 of whom were male (45.6%), who were studying at the Faculty of Sport Sciences. The data collected with the Attitude Toward Sport Scale and Internet Addiction Scale were analyzed at the end of the study, considering their normal distribution. When the data were examined because of the analyses, the data were normally distributed and parametric tests; Pearson Correlation Test, and independent samples T-test were applied. As a result of the tests performed; a positive significant relationship was reached between the Attitude Scale towards Sports and the Internet Addiction Scale. In addition, when examined in the context of gender, marital status, department, and class, it was seen that there was no statistically significant difference. In the context of the variables of participation in sports, being an athlete, spending enough time on sports, opportunity to do sports close to residence, and time allocated to daily social media, a statistically significant difference was found.

1 Introduction

Attitudes are affective factors that shape individual behaviors and influence the intensity of these behaviors [1]. Given these characteristics, it becomes evident that individual behaviors play a crucial role in the continuity of life. Attitudes determine how individuals respond to situations, events, or phenomena. Consequently, attitudes may pertain to a variety of subjects, ranging from objects, events, and groups of people to abstract concepts such as happiness, sadness, or values like good and bad [2]. Sports, as a domain, frequently emphasizes values such as appreciation and power, serving as a medium to express societal values and goals. It fosters collaboration and partnership, encourages responsibility, and establishes order in situations necessitating teamwork [3, 4]. Moreover, sports activities enable individuals to integrate with society, safeguard their physical and mental well-being, and provide a structured competitive environment [5].

* Corresponding author: seciltosun87@gmail.com

Participation in sports and physical activities, which is becoming increasingly popular in modern societies, yields physical, mental, and social benefits. In addition to these advantages, such participation cultivates behaviors like sportsmanship, leadership, and teamwork, which in turn enhance communication skills [6].

Addiction can be characterized as a state that leads to negative emotional consequences, such as restlessness and stress when the activity is not performed, but conversely produces feelings of contentment and relaxation when the activity is engaged in. Individuals seek various means to achieve inner happiness; however, when these methods do not yield immediate satisfaction, prolonged intervals between usage may result in recurring restlessness [7]. Addiction is a continuous process, often beginning as a voluntary action, but over time it may erode the individual's autonomy [8]. Addiction is typically categorized into two types: chemical addiction, which induces physical and psychological changes in the body [9], and behavioral addiction, characterized by compulsive engagement in a particular behavior or activity [10].

Internet addiction, which falls under the category of behavioral addiction, is defined as psychological dependence on the Internet, regardless of the specific activity performed online [11]. Despite attempts to reduce or control internet usage, individuals may fail and experience adverse reactions such as psychological stress, restlessness, and dissatisfaction. Young [12] explains that individuals suffering from Internet addiction frequently ruminate on past internet activities. Although internet addiction is often viewed as an individual problem affecting all age groups, it is particularly prevalent among younger male individuals [13]. With the advancement of technology, there has been a noticeable decline in physical activity, especially among students and working professionals, resulting in increasingly sedentary lifestyles. Consequently, it becomes imperative to prevent new generations from adopting harmful habits and to promote healthier behaviors through positive attitudes toward sports, which can be instilled from an early age [14]. Developing a positive attitude towards sports from a young age is essential to ensure children and youth maintain physical, social, and psychological well-being, and avoid harmful behaviors and habits [15, 16]. In this context, the present study aims to raise awareness by examining individuals' attitudes toward sports and their levels of Internet addiction. A review of the relevant literature reveals a range of studies that examine these variables both independently and concerning each other.

2 Method

In this research, a correlational survey model was employed to examine the relationship between university students' attitudes toward sports and their levels of internet addiction, considering various demographic variables. This model, as utilized in the study, aims to reveal the effect or correlation between two quantitative variables through the use of a correlation coefficient [17].

2.1 Study group

The study sample consisted of 588 students enrolled in the Faculty of Sport Sciences at Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University during the 2023-2024 academic year, spanning both the fall and spring semesters. Of these participants, 54.4% ($n = 320$) were female and 45.6% ($n = 268$) were male, with an age range of 18 to 30 years and an average age of 21. The distribution of students across departments was as follows: 46.3% ($n = 272$) in the Sports Management Department, 33.2% ($n = 195$) in the Coaching Department, 20.1% ($n = 118$) in the Physical Education and Sports Teaching Department, and 0.5% ($n = 3$) in the Recreation Department.

2.2 Data Collection Tools

The data were collected using the "Attitude Toward Sport Scale," developed by Koçak [18] to assess individuals' attitudes toward sports, and the "Young Internet Addiction Scale," created by Young [12], to measure levels of internet addiction. Additionally, a personal information form prepared by the researcher was utilized.

2.3 Attitude towards Sport Scale

The scale comprises 22 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale: (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree. The scale is divided into three sub-dimensions: psychosocial development, physical development, and mental development. In this study, item-total correlations were used to establish item validity, while the KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were employed to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Unrotated and principal components analyses with principal axis factoring were used to identify the factor structure, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) provided evidence for the scale's factor validity. To assess the reliability, Cronbach's Alpha and Spearman-Brown coefficients were calculated, yielding values of .891 and .839, respectively. The findings suggest that the scale is a valid and reliable tool for measuring university students' attitudes toward sports.

2.4 Young Internet Addiction Scale

This scale consists of 12 items and is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Very Often). Confirmatory factor analysis indicated a good fit for the model ($\chi^2 = 173.58$, $df = 53$, $CFI = 0.95$, $SRMR = 0.064$, and $RMSEA = 0.079$). The internal consistency reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.85. Based on these results, the Young Internet Addiction Test Short Form was found to be a valid and reliable measure. The scale does not include reverse-scored items, and higher scores indicate higher levels of internet addiction.

2.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study, collected during the autumn and spring semesters of the 2023-2024 academic year, were obtained from students of the Faculty of Sport Sciences who participated voluntarily. For data analysis, IBM SPSS Statistics 29 software was utilized. Descriptive statistical analyses were performed for the demographic variables, the Attitude Toward Sports Scale, and levels of motivation to lead. Given that the Skewness and Kurtosis values fell within the range of +1.5 to -1.5, the data were normally distributed [19]. Due to the normal distribution of the data, parametric tests were applied, including independent samples t-tests, One-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation analysis.

3 Results

In alignment with the main objective and sub-goals of the research, the findings on the attitudes of students from the Faculty of Sport Sciences towards sports and their levels of internet addiction are presented.

Table 1. Mean Scores of Participants' Attitude Towards Sport and Internet Addiction Scales

Scales	N	Min	Max	\bar{x}	SD
Attitude Towards Sport	588	1,00	4,14	1,79	,75
Internet Addiction	588	1,00	6,00	2,28	,95

The mean total score of the participants from the Attitude Towards Sport Scale was ($\bar{x}=1,79$). In addition, the mean total score from the Internet Addiction Scale was determined as ($\bar{x}=2,28$).

Table 2. T-Test Results of Mean Scores of Attitudes Towards Sport Scale and Internet Addiction Scales According to Gender Variable

Scales	Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	p
Attitude Towards Sport	Female	320	1,79	,73	,112	,911
	Male	368	1,79	,78		
Internet Addiction	Female	320	2,22	,89	-1,65	,099
	Male	368	2,36	1,0		

When the mean scores of the participants from the attitude towards sport and internet addiction scales were examined, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference according to the gender variable ($p>0.05$).

Table 3. T-Test Results of Mean Scores of Attitudes Towards Sport Scale and Internet Addiction Scales According to Marital Status Variable

Scales	Marital Status	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	p
Attitude Towards Sport	Single	565	1,78	,74	-,675	,506
	Married	23	1,92	,98		
Internet Addiction	Single	565	2,28	,94	-,686	,410
	Married	23	2,45	1,15		

When the mean scores of the participants' attitude towards sport and internet addiction scales were analyzed, it was found that there was no statistical difference according to the marital status variable ($p>0.05$).

Table 4. One Way Analysis of Variance Comparison Results of the Mean Score of Attitude Towards Sport Scale and Internet Addiction Scales According to Department Variable (One-way ANOVA)

Scales	Department	N	\bar{x}	SD	f	p
Attitude Towards Sport	Sport Management	272	1,77	,71	1,28	,280
	Training Education	195	1,75	,73		
	Physical and Sports Education	118	1,91	,86		
	Recreation	3	1,59	,51		
Internet Addiction	Sport Management	272	2,33	,98	,328	,805
	Training Education	195	2,25	,91		
	Physical and Sports Education	118	2,26	,96		
	Recreation	3	2,16	,40		

When the mean scores of the participants' attitude towards sport and internet addiction scales were analyzed, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference according to the department variable ($p > 0.05$).

Table 5. One Way Analysis of Variance Comparison Results of the Mean Scores of Attitudes Towards Sports Scale and Internet Addiction Scales According to Class Variable (one way-ANOVA)

Scales	Class	N	\bar{x}	SD	f	p
Attitude Towards Sport	1st grade	122	1,68	,73	2,6	,059
	2nd grade	158	1,85	,71		
	3rd grade	120	1,92	,84		
	4th grade	188	1,73	,73		
Internet Addiction	1st grade	122	2,20	,98	1,5	,209
	2nd grade	158	2,20	,81		
	3rd grade	120	2,39	1,0		
	4th grade	188	2,34	,98		

When the mean scores of the participants' attitude towards sports and internet addiction scales were examined, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference according to the class variable ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. T-Test Results of Mean Scores of Attitudes Towards Sport Scale and Internet Addiction Scales According to Sport Participation Variable

Scales	Participation in Sport	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	p
Attitude Towards Sport	Yes	384	1,54	,58	-11,0	,000
	No	203	1,26	,82		
Internet Addiction	Yes	384	2,13	,90	-5,3	,000
	No	203	2,57	,97		

When the mean scores of the participants taken from the attitude towards sport scale were examined, it was determined that there was a significant differentiation in favor of I do ($\bar{x}=1,54, S=,58$) according to the variable of participation in sport ($p<0,05$). When the mean scores of the participants from the internet addiction scale were examined, it was determined that there was a significant differentiation in favor of not doing ($\bar{x}=2,57, S=,97$) according to the variable of sports participation ($p<0,05$).

Table 7. T-Test Results of Mean Scores of Attitudes Towards Sport Scale and Internet Addiction Scales According to the Variable of Time Allocated to Daily Social Media

Scales	Daily Time Allocated to Social Media	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	p
Attitude Towards Sport	0-5 Hours	444	1,67	,64	-6,0	,001
	5-10 Hours	144	2,17	,93		
Internet Addiction	0-5 Hours	444	2,14	,85	-5,7	,001
	5-10 Hours	144	2,73	1,10		

When the mean scores of the participants taken from the attitude towards sport scale were examined, it was determined that there was a statistically significant differentiation in favor of 5-10 hours ($\bar{x} =2,17, S=,93$) according to the variable of time allocated to social media per day ($p<0,05$). When the mean scores of the participants taken from the attitude towards sport scale were examined, it was determined that there was a statistically significant differentiation in favor of 5-10 hours ($\bar{x} =2,17, S=,93$) according to the variable of time allocated to social media per day ($p<0,05$).

Table 8. The Relationship Between Attitude Towards Sport Scale and Internet Addiction Scale (Pearson Correlation)

		Attitude Towards Sport	Internet Addiction
Attitude Towards Sport Scale	r	1	,352**
	p		,000
Young Internet Addiction Scale	r	,352**	1
	p	,000	

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

A significant positive correlation ($r = .352^{**}$) was found between the Young Internet Addiction Scale and the Attitude Towards Sport Scale ($p < 0.01$).

4 Conclusion and Discussion

This research explored the relationship between university students' attitudes toward sports and their levels of internet addiction, considering various demographic variables. The data collected from participants were analyzed within the scope of the current research and compared with similar studies in the literature. When evaluating the scales measuring attitudes toward sports and internet addiction in terms of gender, it was observed that female students had lower levels of internet addiction compared to their male counterparts [20, 21]. This difference could be attributed to the cultural preference for internet cafes being more male-oriented in contemporary Turkish society. Consequently, while female individuals predominantly access the internet from home, male individuals have access in both home and public environments such as internet cafes. In contrast, no significant gender differences were found regarding attitudes toward sports. This could be due to the universal nature of sports, appealing equally to both genders. However, some studies in the literature have reported gender differences in attitudes toward sports. These differences are often explained by societal roles attributed to men and women, which may affect the level of engagement in sports. Studies supporting this view include those by Tomik, Olex-Zarychta, & Mynarski [22], Singh & Devi [23], Smoll & Shutz [24], and Taşğın & Tekin [25].

Students who actively participate in sports were found to have significantly higher attitudes toward sports than those who do not engage in sports activities. Similar findings were reported by Singh and Devi [23], where students participating in sports demonstrated more positive attitudes compared to non-participants. Kangalgil et al. [26] also reported higher attitudes toward sports among university students with athlete licenses compared to those without. A study by Özding [27] suggested that one reason for lower attitudes among students who do not engage in sports is the absence of sports-oriented peers in their social circles. The results of this research showed a significant positive relationship between the Attitude Toward Sports Scale and the Internet Addiction Scale. This may be due to the sports-related content available on internet networks and social media, which serve as platforms for promoting sports.

However, no statistically significant differences were observed when analyzed in the context of gender, marital status, department, or class variables. This could be attributed to the diverse socio-cultural characteristics of the faculty's students. Significant differences were found in relation to variables such as sports participation, being an athlete, the amount of time dedicated to sports, proximity to sports facilities, and time spent on social media. For instance, participants who engaged in sports had significantly higher scores on the Attitude Toward Sports Scale ($\bar{x} = 1.54$, $SD = 0.58$) compared to those who did not ($p < 0.05$). Conversely, those who did not participate in sports had higher scores on the Internet Addiction Scale ($\bar{x} = 2.57$, $SD = 0.97$) ($p < 0.05$). This difference could be explained by the varying access to opportunities for sports among students or the adequacy of such opportunities. No statistically significant differences were found in attitudes toward sports or internet addiction based on department or class year ($p > 0.05$). This could be due to the similarity in age and experiences of students, leading to equivalent attitudes and behaviors across class levels. Additionally, the theoretical and practical differences in the curricula of different departments may account for the lack of significant variation in attitudes across departments. A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.352$, $p < 0.01$) was found between the Young Internet Addiction Scale and the Attitude Toward Sports Scale. This suggests that individuals with higher attitudes toward sports may exhibit lower internet addiction, or that both attitudes toward sports and internet addiction levels increase proportionally, as internet use can encourage engagement in sports. This implies that both scales may influence each other. When examining the time participants dedicated to social media, significant differences were found in favor of those spending 5-10 hours per day ($\bar{x} = 2.17$, $SD = 0.93$) on the Attitude Toward Sports Scale ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, internet addiction levels were significantly higher for those spending 5-10 hours on social media ($\bar{x} = 2.73$, $SD = 1.10$) ($p < 0.05$).

These findings suggest that individuals who spend considerable time on social media exhibit both higher attitudes toward sports and greater levels of internet addiction. This could be due to the use of the internet as a tool to engage with sports or, conversely, the high time spent online as an indication of addiction. Given the detrimental effects of internet addiction, institutions should collaborate with information and technology sectors to reduce internet addiction levels among students by providing necessary training and awareness regarding internet use. It is also essential to help students develop self-regulation skills in this context. Finally, efforts to enhance students' attitudes toward sports should be prioritized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, local administrations, and universities. Such initiatives would contribute to the development of healthy, physically fit, and mentally prepared individuals and communities.

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