

## Insecure Attachment and Loneliness of Students in Internet Addiction as Mediation

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### ABSTRACT

*Insecure Attachment* is one of two common attachment types that occur in individuals. Individuals who experience this model's attachment tend to become closed and cause most of them to experience loneliness. Loneliness is defined as a state in which individuals feel alienated from their social environment because of their inability to interact in the environment. In early adulthood, environmental changes further strengthen this state, especially when the individual is also experiencing the behavior of Internet addiction. This will further improve the state of loneliness experienced. The purpose of this study was to see the effect of internet addiction as mediation on insecure attachment and loneliness. The study was conducted on 110 active students who use internet at least 6 hours per day and overseas. The results show that there is a positive influence between insecure attachment positively affect the loneliness experienced by students who are mediated by Internet addiction ( $\beta = .3823$ ;  $p < .05$ ). This influence found that internet addiction as a partial mediation ( $R1 < R2$ ,  $.392 < .433$ ).

**Keywords:** *Insecure Attachment, Lonely, Early Adulthood, Internet Addiction, Partial Mediation*

One of individuals' needs in the hold of life is the social interaction with people around them. The least interaction done by the individual will result in his experiencing feelings of loneliness (Rico-uribe et al., 2018). Today, loneliness is one of those situations that unknowingly happens to the individual. Loneliness is also regarded as a situation when alone and or without communication and interaction with others (Karapetsas, Karapetsas, Zygoris, & Fotis, 2015). Loneliness can be characterized by a change of facial expression without expression or sad, gloomy, and mistrustful expression in initiating communication.

Loneliness causes someone feeling empty, alone and undesirable (Bhardwaj & Ashok, 2015). Basically, humans do not want to experience those feelings and want to make social contact with others, but the behavior shown is the exact opposite. Loneliness is regarded as a psychological problem that can happen to anyone, feelings of loneliness experienced by

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everyone is different. Mandasari (2014) reveals that the feelings of loneliness experienced between men and women are different, men tend to mask their feelings of loneliness rather than women due to cultural stereotypes about emotional expression for men (Mandasari, 2014, Rico-uribe et al. 2018). Not just by sex, loneliness can also be felt by various age groups, one of which is a student who was in early adulthood.

The inability to form relationships and interactions with others will exacerbate individual developmental stages. Several studies have shown that loneliness can be a risk to individual depression (Demir & Kutlu, 2016). Loneliness can also result in the behavior of alcohol addiction, sleeping difficulties, even a psychological disorder that will destroy every generation that will come.

Loneliness can be prevented or overcome by the presence of individual attachment to a person so as to maintain interaction and social relationships. Individuals, who are in early adulthood, began entering the stage of continuing education to college. Individuals, who are in early adulthood, began entering the stage of continuing education to college. Life separated from parents and forming new social relationships can trigger anxiety and self-indulgence for the individual if the parent-built attachment is too much, even if the friendship relationship is uncomfortable. The results explain that the attachment the good will shape the individual psychic to be better where there is *self-esteem* to overcome the challenges that existed during his life (Ma'rifah & Budiani, 2012).

The attachment will affect the loneliness or absence of students in the new environment where they live, Erozkhan's research (2011) suggests that attachment significantly affects individual loneliness behavior (Erozkhan, 2011). It is also supported by Goosens (1998) that attachment styles *secure* will help individuals to overcome their feelings of loneliness so that they do not feel the loneliness, whereas attachment *insecure* will make the individual feel deeper loneliness (Goossens, Marcoen, Hees, & Woestijne, 1998).

Bogaerts (2006) who put forward some views where mentions that the relationship between loneliness with individual attachment style is significantly weak. The findings explain the attachment of peers to significant negative loneliness (0.07, -2.48) and between attachment of peers and parents to loneliness is very weak and insignificant (-0.04, -0.89) (Bogaerts, Vanheule, & Desmet, 2006). Based on the results of these studies, researchers want to find out what can strengthen the influence of *insecure attachment* with the loneliness experienced. Along with the rapidly of the digital world's growth that make individuals feel able to easily establish communication, one with the use of the *internet*. Individuals who feel themselves lonely will use the internet as one of *coping* in everyday life. However, excessive use of the internet from normal limits can be bad and is said to be addicted to the internet. Karapetsas (2015) mentions that significantly the use of the internet gives effect to individual loneliness level (Karapetsas et al., 2015). Internet addiction accounts for 3.6% of feelings of loneliness experienced by individuals, regardless of other factors that predict individual loneliness (Subagio & Hidayati, 2017). Young (2013) mentions that there are several causes of the formation of addiction to individuals, one of which is a social problem, where low communication skills such as self-esteem and loneliness (Young, 2013).

Internet addiction has also been linked to the presence of insecure attachment of the individual to the parent and the social environment. Individuals who feel *insecure* will form an addictive behavior and dependence on a particular object (Borhani, 2013). Menif (2016) reveals that individuals with attachment are *anxious* comfortable with internet use activities

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which leads them to higher Internet addiction, as do individuals with attachment *fearfully* (Menif, Medini, Derouiche, & Melki, 2016).

Based on the research referred, researchers want to see whether Internet addiction can be a mediation in the increased *insecure attachment* of individuals to the loneliness experienced. Hopefully later this research will be useful to add insight in the realm of social psychology and family so as to reduce aspects that can increase the feelings of loneliness experienced by individuals.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Sample

The sampling technique uses in this research is the *quota sampling technique*, where its use to determines the sample of the population randomly according to the predetermined criteria to meet the quota. The quota is determined by 110 active students from various regions in Indonesia such as, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Aceh, Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Central Java, Kalimantan, and Makassar which have been adjusted to the desired criteria in this study. Independent variable in this research is *insecure attachment* and the dependent is lonely, while the mediation in this research is internet addiction.

#### Instruments

The data retrieval technique in this study used a closed questionnaire adapted from *attachment style* scale, internet addiction scale, and lonely scale to be provided through application *Google form*. The questionnaire consisted of 5 choices that the subject responded by choosing one of five choices directly, ie Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, and Always. The validity of the instrument seen from the item that has a  $r_{\text{count}} > 0.3$  with significant level of 5% (Sugiyono, 2016).

The research scale consists of 3 scales adapted from several studies ever undertaken in Indonesia so that the reliability outcome has been resolved with the individuals residing in the area:

- Attachment style adult scale* adaptation from Collin, reliability in obtaining a value of 0.915.
- Internet Addiction scale* adaptation of Young, reliability in getting the value of 0.826.
- Loneliness scale* adaptation from Russel, reliability in getting value of 0.918.

#### Procedure

This study begins with the preparation of instruments used as a measuring tool of research. After that, the researchers spread the entire instrument to participants through application *Google form* to facilitate the spread in covering various locations. After getting the whole data, the researcher performs the data and analysis using SPSS application with method that has been adapted to the research. Analysis techniques used for mediation are mediation regression analysis from Hayes, where this technique is a test of three indirectly criterium variables (Winarsunu, 2002) through SPSS 23 *for windows* (Hayes, 2013).

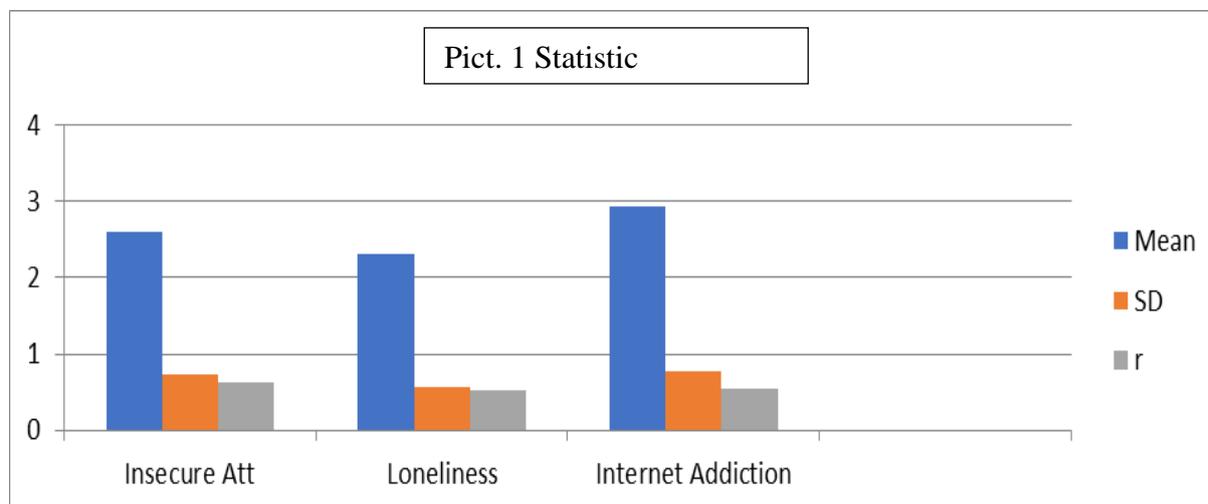
### RESULTS

Table 1. Data Description subject

CATEGORIES	DWELLING			AGE			TIME OF USE	
	Family	Kos	20-25	26-30	31-40	6-8	> 8	
FREQUENCY	24	86	95	11	4	51	59	
PERCENTAGE	22%	78%	86%	10%	4%	46%	54%	

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Total subjects in this study were 110 students consisting of the 24 students live with distant relatives (22%) and 86 others live boarding house (78%). Based on age in the early adult category, subjects were divided into three, ie 20-25 years, 95 (86%), 26-30 years old, 11 (20%), and 31-40 years, 4 (4%). Judging from the time spent using the internet, seen as many as 51 people (46%) use the internet for 6-8 hours per day and as many as 59 people (54%) use the internet for more than 8 hours per day.



Based on Figure 1 it can be seen that all variables have a positive influence based on the mean, standard deviation and inter-correlation that have been tested. The result of the analysis shows that there is positive influence between *insecure attachment* and *loneliness* ( $r = .626, p < 0.05$ ), so the hypothesis is accepted. The result of analysis also shows that there is positive influence on *insecure attachment* and *internet addiction* ( $r = .552, p < 0.05$ ) and between *loneliness* and *internet addiction* ( $r = .515, p < 0.05$ ) so the hypothesis is also accepted.

Through regression analysis conducted, *internet addiction* is suspected as a mediator between *insecure attachment* and *loneliness*. Based on the results of the analysis shows that *insecure attachment* positively affects the loneliness experienced by students who are mediated by Internet addiction ( $\beta = .3823; p < .05$ ), which means the last hypothesis of this study is also acceptable in which, the higher sense of *insecure* a person's will increase loneliness mediated by internet addiction, with a value of  $R^2 = .4333$ .

### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.626 <sup>a</sup>	.423	.431						.392	.386
		<sup>b</sup> .041	.041				1	107	.433	.433
		7,799.006							69,638	108
									.000	.000

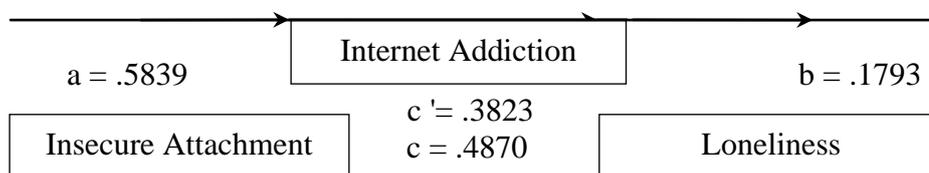
a. Predictors: (Constant), R.In3

b. Predictors: (Constant), R.In3, R.IA3

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Furthermore, to determine the mediation variables, the results showed indirect influence  $.0214 < .2087$  means internet addiction is a partial mediation, which increases the influence of a variable. This is especially emphasized on the test results of *Sobel test* which can be on indirect effect ( $Z = 2.5647$ ;  $p = .0103 < 1.96$ ).

Figure 2. The regression-based path coefficients of the internet addiction mediation analysis are in the relationship between *insecure attachment* and *loneliness*



The results show that there is an indirect relationship and can be concluded if internet addiction can improve the relationship between *insecure attachment of a person* to feeling lonely. Where, when not followed by Internet addiction, the insecure attachment relationship will not have a major effect on loneliness. So Internet addiction gives a positive contribution in increasing the loneliness. When students do not experience *insecure* or internet addiction, then the level of loneliness is also low. Conversely, when students experience *insecure* and internet addiction, then the level of loneliness will also be high.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of hypothesis testing conducted in this study through Hayes, it is known that the proposed hypothesis is accepted. Where the results of mediation used in this study is a partial mediation that occurs when after incorporated internet addiction as mediation it remains a significant but decreased value in the regression coefficient (Wijaya, 2015). This study proves if it turns out Internet addiction will give an indirect effect on individuals who experience *insecure attachment* is too high and affect the loneliness he felt. This is in line with previous research, when a person experiences feelings *insecure* he will tend to look for other objects to overcome them (Kozan, Kesici, Buyukbayraktar, & Yalcin, 2016).

*Insecure attachment* also shows that a new environment that is less comfortable for the individual will increase other maladaptive behavior, such as playing gadget or internet (Kozan et al., 2016). Their research says that *insecure attachment* yields a .06 value; -.07 to student internet addiction variable or 13%. Other studies have also suggested that *insecure attachment* causes a more severe addiction to Internet use ( $\chi^2 [1] = 11.98$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) (Eichenberg, Dyba, & Schott, 2017).

This study also proves that individuals who use the internet excessively to cause addiction will feel loneliness. The last research suggests that a person may feel loneliness and create new behaviors, such as finding a break with spending time playing the internet (Ren, Yang, & Liu, 2017). Another study that supports this hypothesis also mentions that addiction to internet play causes one less to socialize directly and lead to feelings of loneliness in the real world (Yao & Zhong, 2014).

Other experts point out that social support for perceived individuals is inadequate resulting in loneliness and internet addiction increasingly and unresolved (Çevik & Yildiz, 2017). It is clearly increasingly supportive of mediation in this research that internet addiction will increase the sense of loneliness experienced. That is, individuals who use the Internet

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excessively in terms of use of time to cause addiction will begin to indirectly alienate to the surrounding environment and feel lonely (Koyuncu, Unsal, & Arslantas, 2014).

The next hypothesis proved in this study is a very significant relationship when individuals experience *insecure* then tend to feel lonely. That is, the more individuals have an *insecure attachment* on him, the higher the feeling of loneliness he feels. This research is supported by research from Kiralp & Serin (2017) which reveals if attachment with parents early on will greatly determine how adult life later when to be separated from parents, and maybe this is also inseparable from the culture that follow (Kiralp & Serin, 2017). The same thing is also evidenced by Akdogan (2017) that significantly individuals who experience *insecure attachment* will feel lonely in the social environment (Akdoğan, 2017).

There are several things that may predict the strength of loneliness in individuals with *insecure* attachments. *Anxiety attachment* and *avoid attachment* are thought to increase the height of individual loneliness (Akdoğan, 2017). Therefore, an increase in the state of *insecure* in the individual will cause him to experience loneliness and will be further compounded when the transfer object taken in the form of maladaptive behavior of Internet addiction.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of hypothesis testing conducted in this study it can be concluded that there is a significant positive effect between *insecure attachment* and loneliness, there is a significant positive influence between *insecure attachment* and internet addiction, there is a significant positive influence between internet addiction and loneliness, positively significant Internet addiction (indirectly) to *insecure attachment* and loneliness. Especially on students who are away from his family.

### IMPLICATIONS

This study has implications for the field of social and family psychology, in which clinicians can know the effect of *insecure attachment* and Internet addiction to individual loneliness. This research is also beneficial for the family and the subject itself so as to reduce and equally overcome the addiction and loneliness experienced to avoid any other disorders that follow the current disorders experienced. For further research it is desirable to investigate further on what factors can decrease the loneliness itself even if the individual is *insecure attachment*.

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***Conflict of Interest***

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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