

## The Influence of Attachment Style and Internet Interpersonal Interactions on Internet Addiction

Yi-Cheng Lin   Chen-Hua Wang   Chia-Huei Wu

*Department of Psychology, National Taiwan University*

The literature has indicated that interpersonal interactions on the net play a major role in the process of internet addiction. These interpersonal interactions show a distinctive pattern of disinhibition characterized by high intimacy, high self-disclosure, and high uncertainty. This pattern is most compatible with the internal working model of the ambivalent attachment style. Thus, we predicted that ambivalent people would be induced to display more disinhibitive interpersonal behaviors and in turn, have stronger internet addiction than the other two attachment styles. Two studies were conducted to test these hypotheses. The first study confirmed our hypothesis that ambivalent tendency was more predictive of internet addiction than the other two attachment tendencies. Furthermore, the interpersonal interactions on the net partially mediated the relationship between ambivalent tendency and internet addiction. We refined our categorization of internet interpersonal interactions in study two to improve our measurement. We further developed a new measure

of internet interpersonal perception based on the theory of internal working model. Study two replicated the major findings obtained in study one, that is, ambivalent tendency significantly predicted internet addiction. Moreover, the relationship between ambivalent tendency and internet addiction was completely mediated by internet interpersonal interactions. The results supported our arguments that personality characteristics and internet behaviors reciprocally influence internet addiction, either one only shows a single side of the story. Also, it is important to point out that interpersonal interaction is a major pathway to internet addiction, especially for ambivalent people. Consequently, the therapeutic implication would not be to block them from getting online but rather, to regulate their interpersonal behaviors on the net.

**Keywords:** *internet addiction, attachment style, internet interpersonal interaction*

