

The influence of parental and romantic attachment in Internet use

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The present study investigated the influence of parental and romantic attachment in Internet use among a sample of 367 Portuguese university students. It is particularly intended to understand the way in which attachment styles to parents and to romantic partners (classified according to Kim Bartholomew (1990) bi-dimensional model in secure, preoccupied, fearful and dismissing) affect late adolescents' Internet use. Research found significant influences of parental and romantic attachment in the way participants use www, e-mail and chat, and in the reasons chosen for Internet use. Attachment insecurity is associated with higher Internet dependency and with a tendency to prefer Internet communication to face-to-face interaction. These differences have different patterns concerning parental and romantic attachment. In romantic attachment, fearful and preoccupied individuals are more addicted to Internet use and prefer to communicate online; in parental attachment, fearful and dismissing individuals are the ones who score higher in Internet dependency and who prefer Internet communication. Limitations of these findings and the potential benefits of Internet use to each attachment style are discussed.