
Effect of internet use on depression, loneliness, aggression and preference for internet communication: a panel study with 10- to 12-year-old children in Japan

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Abstract: We investigated the effect of daily internet use on 10- to 12-year-old Japanese school children (n = 421). Data collected using a two-wave panel study were analysed by Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using a cross-lagged effect model. The analysis indicated that the use of the internet tended to increase depression, aggression and preference for internet communication, but had no effect on loneliness. Examination of the causal relationships in the opposite direction indicated that children who have higher levels of depression, aggression and preference for internet communication, but lower loneliness, tended to use the internet more.

Keywords: internet use; loneliness; depressed mood; decreased interest; anger; hostility; verbal aggression; preference for internet communication; panel study; elementary school children.