The role of family functioning and generation gap in the relationship between parental controls style and addiction to social networks

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of present study is investigation the role of family functioning and generation gap in the relationship between parental controls style and addiction to social networks. **Methodology**: The present study is a descriptive one. Theoretical bases of the study were collected by reputable sites, books and related articles. The information and data for hypothesis testing were gathered by standard and a researcher-made questionnaire. Statistical society was all of male and female student of the second year of high schools in district 5 of Tehran (140 persons). After data collection, data analysis was performed using SPSS and PLS. In this study, Validity and reliability of the questionnaire was approved. Validity of the questionnaire was accepted by expert opinion of university and reliability of that was calculated by Cronbach's alpha and the value of that was 0.82. **Findings**: Results showed that family functioning and generation gap have significant roles in the relationship between parental controls style and addiction to social networks. **Discussion:** Therefore, it can be concluded that by improving family functioning and reducing the generation gap, better control of addiction to social networks can be created.

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1. Introduction

Individuals with different characterize have different Internet use (Mckenna & Bargh, 2000). Research shows that people who has problematic internet use have characterized such as loneliness and shyness (Kaplan, 2002) low self-confidence (Kim, 2000; Yun, 2007), poorer social skill and neurotic and depression (Ceyhan, Ceyhan,2007). Also researcher show relationship between deficient social support, neurotic and gender with problematic internet use (Tsai et al, 2007). Internet communication and the range use of it negatively is related with teenager's understanding from quality of relationship with relatives and family (Mesh. 2002). Parents' attitude, the kind of family relationships and violence in family can cause addiction to the internet (Yang, 2008).

Family functioning, understood as a process in which members interact with each other to meet basic needs, make decisions, establish rules, and define goals, contributes simultaneously to individual and family development. Thus, according to the Multi-theoretical model of Hertlein (2012), the introduction of ICTs in the family context (ecological influence) can change (the structure and the process of) family dynamics, leading to (re)adaptations to the arrival of this new element Generation gap is defined as a difference in the attitude or behavior of young people and older people. Many studies have shown that children tend to be more willing to communicate with parents if their parents engage in make-believe play in their early ages. However, with the trend that hildren of today belong to the 'Technology Generation' (Jukes & Dosaj, 2006; Robinson & Stubberud, 2012). Information technology becomes a part of their life even when they are very young and has a deep influence during the growth years (Chou, 2012b; Wood, 2005; Yeh et al., 2011; Yu, 2009).

2. literature Review

The flip side of the growing ubiquity of the Internet in people's lives over the past couple of decades is the emergence of behavioral patterns suggesting psychological dependency on the Internet, often called Internet addiction (Gamito et al, 2016).Information and communication technologies (ICTs) include hardware (e.g., computers, smartphones, game consoles) and software(e.g., email, videoconferencing, online social networks) that sustain the digital culture (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012), have progressively become part of our everyday lives (Aponte, 2009; Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Blinn-Pike, 2009;Correa, Hinsley, & Zúñiga, 2010; Igartua & Moral, 2012; Lanigan,2009; Stern & Messer, 2009; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012; Zhong,2013).

Related research indicates that control over children in relation to the Internet, warmth towards children during this period (Eastin et al., 2006), and restrictive actions towards children's Internet usage are not related to children's Internet usage (Lee & Chae, 2007). Research has noted that parental control is not effective in reducing Internet risks (Law et al., 2010; Liau et al., 2005; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). However, in some other studies, it was stated that parenting styles may prevent children from coming across negative or inappropriate websites (Cho & Cheon, 2005; Fleming et al., 2006; Heim, Brandtzaeg, Hertzberg, & Endstad, 2007; Leung & Lee, 2012; Valcke et al., 2007) and that children can understand the risks of the Internet and adapt to the right way of using it (Eastin et al., 2006). In another study, conducted by Lwin et al. (2008), it was found that parental control causes a decrease in the Internet-usage levels of young children. However, it is stated that although parents' control and supervision of their children's

Internet usage may prevent children's exposure to online risks, strict rules and restrictions may impede children's opportunities to learn and their online communication (Cankaya & Odabasi, 2009; Duerager & Livingstone, 2012).

In recent years, as a result of technological advances and the growing number of ICTs users, there has been an exponential increase in the connections and interactions established between network users (Stafford & Hillyer, 2012). The interconnectedness facilitated by mobile services and the dissemination of social networking sites (SNSs; Ellison & boyd, 2013) made the emergence of new patterns of technology use possible (Haythornthwaite,2005; Houghton & Joinson, 2010; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012; Zhong,2013). There seem to be differences between the traditional patterns of communication (e.g., face-to-face) and the new patterns, served by ICTs and characterized by the use of a plurality of media technology and the increased risk of addiction to it (Stern &Messer, 2009). Media multitasking, multicommunication, media multiplicity and perpetual connectivity are examples of these new ICTs patterns and represent revolutions in the modes of human relationships (Stafford & Hillyer, 2012). Whereas media multitasking describes the activity of performing multiple online media tasks during a specified time period (e.g., working or studying online, chatting with friends online, reading news; Zhong,2013), multicommunication refers to interacting with multiple individuals simultaneously (e.g., managing a chat conversation while simultaneously updating a tweet on Twitter), and media multiplicity (Haythornthwaite, 2005) focuses on the diversity of means to interact with the same individual (e.g., a couple using mobile phones, videoconference and email to organize a weekend together). Multicommunication and media multiplicity both contribute to another phenomenon of the modern world: perpetual connectivity. This new pattern is related to the constant need to be contactable, it ''is no longer a matter of going online, but being online'' (Williams & Merten, 2011, p. 150), visible for example in the incessant checking of one's email inbox or in the permanent status updating in social networking sites (SNSs).

According to Brandtzæg (2010), it is very difficult to understand user behavior because media usage is often dynamic and complex. Thus, rapid media evolution, the increasing access to a variety of new media, individual preferences and different lifestyles adopted are becoming important variables to take into consideration. In this context, the author suggested a unified Media-User Typology(MUT) which defines types by media behavior (e.g., non-users, socializers, advanced user) according to the level of frequency, the variety of use, the content/activity preferences and the media platform used. As an example, a socializer is characterized by amedium frequency and variety of use, with socializing activities, using SNSs, keeping in touch with friends, family and connecting with new acquaintances, in a less organized, spontaneous and flexible way.

Family functioning, understood as a process in which members interact with each other to meet basic needs, make decisions, establish rules, and define goals, contributes simultaneously to individual and family development (Lanigan, 2009). Thus, according to the Multitheoretical model of Hertlein (2012), the introduction of ICTs in the family context (ecological influence) can change (the structure and the process of) family dynamics, leading to (re)adaptations to the arrival of this new element (Sotero, Cunha, & Relvas, 2011). Focusing family functioning variables due to the ICTs use in light of the uses and gratifications theory may help in understanding some the reasons behind ICTs use and the control that individuals and families have in manage them, rather than being passive users. Research focused on this topic has highlighted particular aspects of family functioning such as communication, cohesion, roles, rules, intergenerational

conflicts and boundaries. Thus, the main studies associated with these variables are presented next. Due to the proliferation of new technologies the number of ways in which it is possible to communicate has undergone exponential growth in recent years (Stern & Messer, 2009). Traditional forms of communication such as face-to-face or using landlines, have today assumed new technological formats to include email and cell phones (Coyne, Busby et al., 2012; Stern & Messer,2009), for example. The daily management of family activities in real time through mobile devices (Devitt & Roker, 2009; Hertlein,2012; Lanigan, 2009; Stern & Messer, 2009; Watt & White, 1999), such as paying bills online or changing appointments by phone, tends to induce feelings of safety for those who have these technologies (Devitt & Roker, 2009). Furthermore, ICTs release the family from time constraints and allow, through a wide range of devices (Stern & Messer, 2009; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012), the maintenance of family relations. Not only have ICTs contributed decisively to the maintenance of these relations (Aponte, 2009; Bacigalupe,2011; Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Senyürekl & Detzner, 2009; Stafford & Hillyer, 2012), but they have also made possible thedevelopment of new communication patterns, worldwide, in real-time and at a relatively low cost of use (Lanigan, 2009; Stern &Messer, 2009). As an example, we can see the positive impact that ICTs have had on transnational families: changing from expensive forms of communication to adopt new, low cost technologies, which have enabled the maintenance and (re)creation of family bonds, despite geographical distance (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011), and in effective co-parenting relationships after divorce, making easier for parents to plan and make conjoint decisions about their children (Ganong, Coleman, Feistman, Jamison, & Markham, 2012).

3. Methodology

The present study is a descriptive one. Theoretical bases of the study were collected by reputable sites, books and related articles. The information and data for hypothesis testing were gathered by standard and a researcher-made questionnaire. Statistical society was all of male and female student of the second year of high schools in district 5 of Tehran (140 persons). After data collection, data analysis was performed using SPSS and PLS. In this study, Validity and reliability of the questionnaire was approved. Validity of the researcher-made questionnaire was accepted by expert opinion of university and reliability of that was calculated by Cronbach's alpha and the value of that was 0.82. Before completing the questionnaire by the participants, basic description of the study and its objectives as well as additional details about the questions presented to them. Enough time to complete the questionnaire was provided to participants. Write the name and characteristics of participants for the questionnaire was not compulsory, so they can fully express their opinions. After gathering information from the questionnaires, the data were analyzed and results are discussed with the findings of previous studies. All of data were analyzed by SPSS software.

4. Findings

In order to better define the characteristics of the variables under study and summarize the findings, descriptive results such as demographic variables frequency, mean and standard deviation tables are provided for the main variables under study.

Table 1. Gender distribution within study sample

	Frequency	**%**
Female	70	50
Male	70	50
All	140	100

According to this table, 50% of the sample population is composed of female participants and another 50% is composed of male participants.

Table 2. Age distribution within study sample

	Frequency	%
15 years old	64	45.72
16 years old	76	54.28
All	740	100

According to the table, 45.72% of the sample consists of 15 years old teenagers and 54.28 of the sample consists of 16 years old teenagers. Therefore, 16 years old teenagers do occupy the most part of study sample.

Table 3. descriptive statistics for generation gap sub-indices

	Number	**Average**	**Standard deviation**	**Minimum**	**maximum**
Parental affiliation	140	3.15	0.818	1.50	5
Duration of interaction	140	3.20	0.717	1.25	4.75
Place	140	3.12	0.779	1.25	4.50
Decision making	140	3.09	0.773	1	4.50
Emotional connection	140	3.29	1.03	1	5
Marital relationship	140	3.08	0.857	1	5
Parent and child relationship	140	3.09	0.768	1.50	4.75

The information showed that within generation gap variable, the mean for its indices is as follows: 3.15 for correlation to parents' index, 3.20 for interaction duration index, 3.12 for location index, 3.09 for decision-making index, 3.29 for affective relationship, 3.08 for sexual relationship index and 3.09 for the relationship between parents and children index. It can be seen that affective relationship index has the highest mean among all the relevant indices.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for family function sub-indices

	Number	Average	Standard deviation	Minimum	maximum
Problem solving	140	2.87	0.518	1.67	3.83
Relationships	140	2.93	0.524	1.71	4
Roles	140	2.74	0.460	1.67	3.67
Effective responses	140	2.79	0.515	1.29	3.67
Effective involvement	140	2.77	0.486	1.75	4
Behavioral control	140	2.82	0.441	1.80	3.60
Overall function	140	2.84	0.489	1.54	3.69

As the table shows, the mean for family function variable indices is as follows: 2.87 for problem solving index, 2.93 for relationship index, 2.74 for roles index, 2.79 for effective responsiveness, 2.77 for effective intervention, 2.87 for behavior control index, 2.84 for general function index. It can be seen that relationships index has the highest mean among all these sub-indices. In this section and by suing proper statistical tests, we will attempt to test the hypotheses. In what follows, the results of these tests are reported.

Table 5. the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Variable	Number	Test statistic	Significance level
Generation gap	140	1.13	0.153
Family function	140	1.09	0.180
Addiction to social networks	140	0.916	0.371
Parental control style	140	1.06	0.203

In Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the hypotheses are defined like this: 1) Observations follow a normal distribution 2) Observations don't follow a normal distribution. Therefore, considering the fact that the significance level of this test is more than 0.05 for all variables, the normality of observation hypothesis is not rejected (i.e. null hypothesis). Thus, parametric tests are used in order to test the hypotheses of this study. Family function will moderate the relationship between various monitoring styles and addiction to social networks.
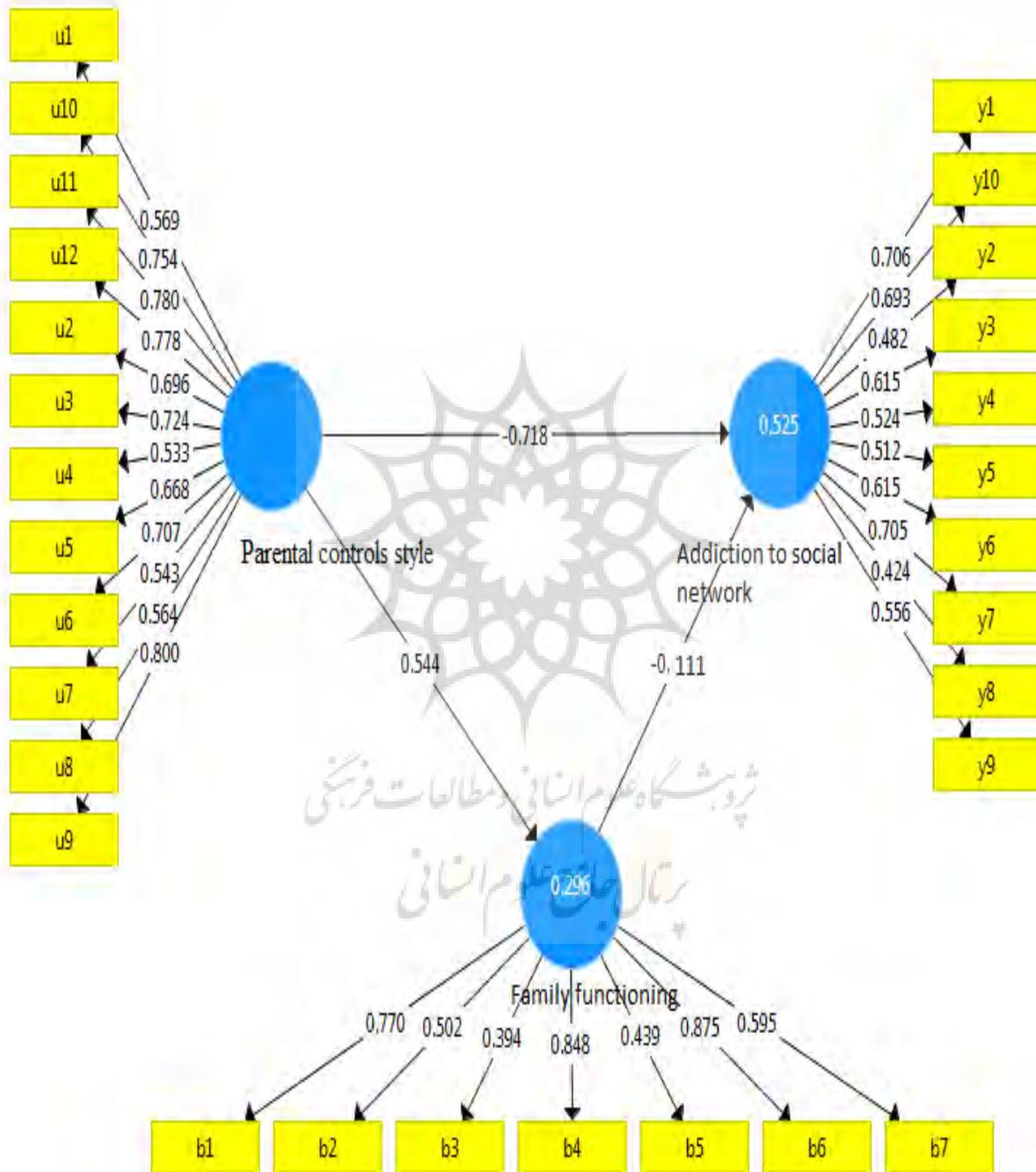
Figure 1. Path coefficient and factorial load
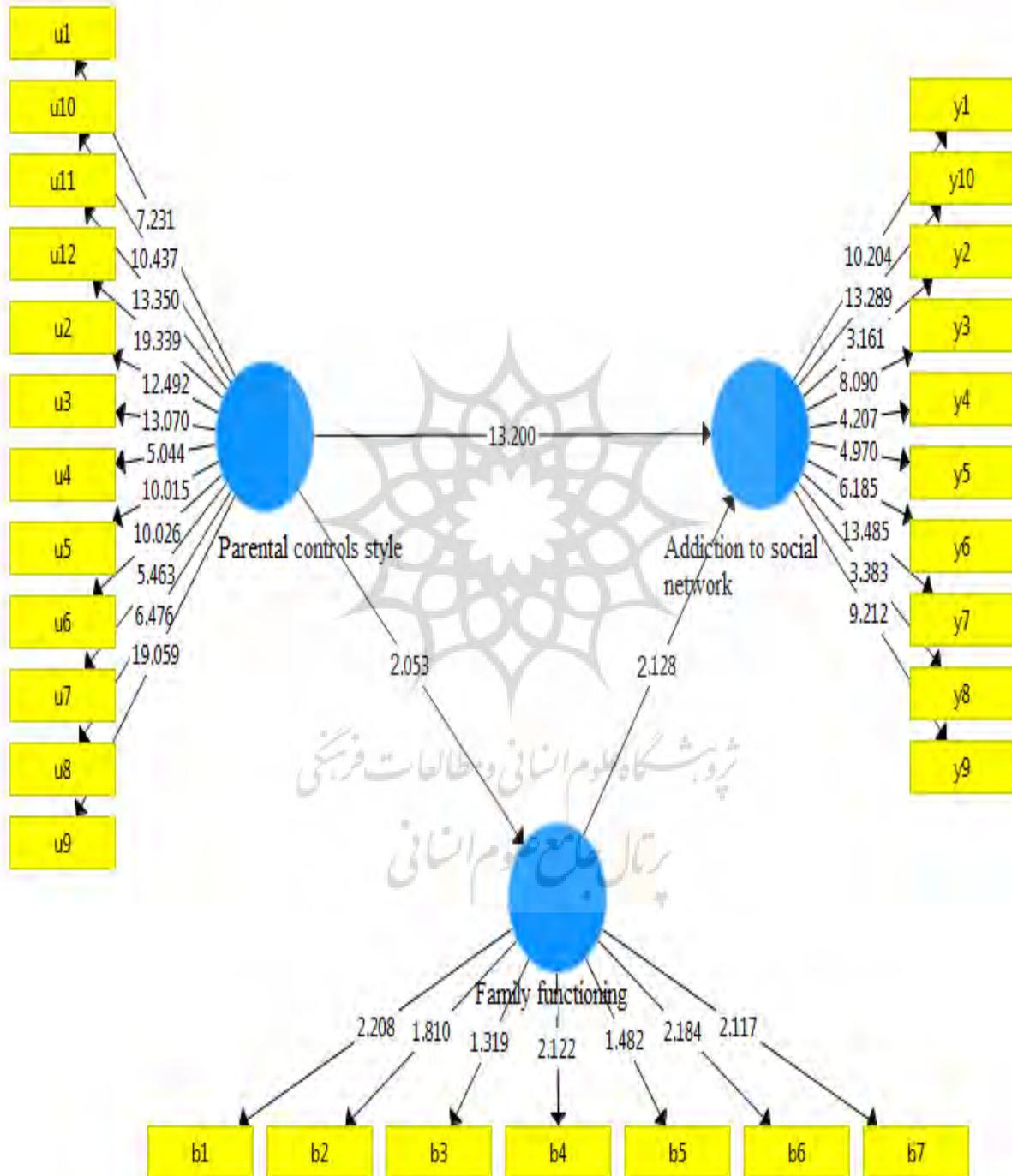
Figure 2. T-test results

Table 6. analysis results

Variables	Path coefficient	T-ALUE	significance level	Result
Control styles → Family function	0.544	2.053	0.001	Confirmed
Family function ← Social networking addiction	-0.111	2.128	0.001	Confirmed
Control Styles ← Family Function → Addiction to social networks	-0.718	-	-	Confirmed

According to the results illustrated in the above table, monitoring styles have a direct impact within 95% confidence interval through family functions (p<0.05) and the intensity of this impact is equal to 0.544. Moreover, the mediating variable of family function has a direct impact on addiction to social networks within 95% confidence interval (p<0.05) and the intensity of this impact is equal to -0.111. Thus, considering the possibility of the two conditions mentioned above, monitoring styles are influential over addiction to social networks through mediating role of family function variables and the intensity of this impact is equal to -0. 718.Generation gap mediates the relationship between monitoring styles and addiction to social networks.
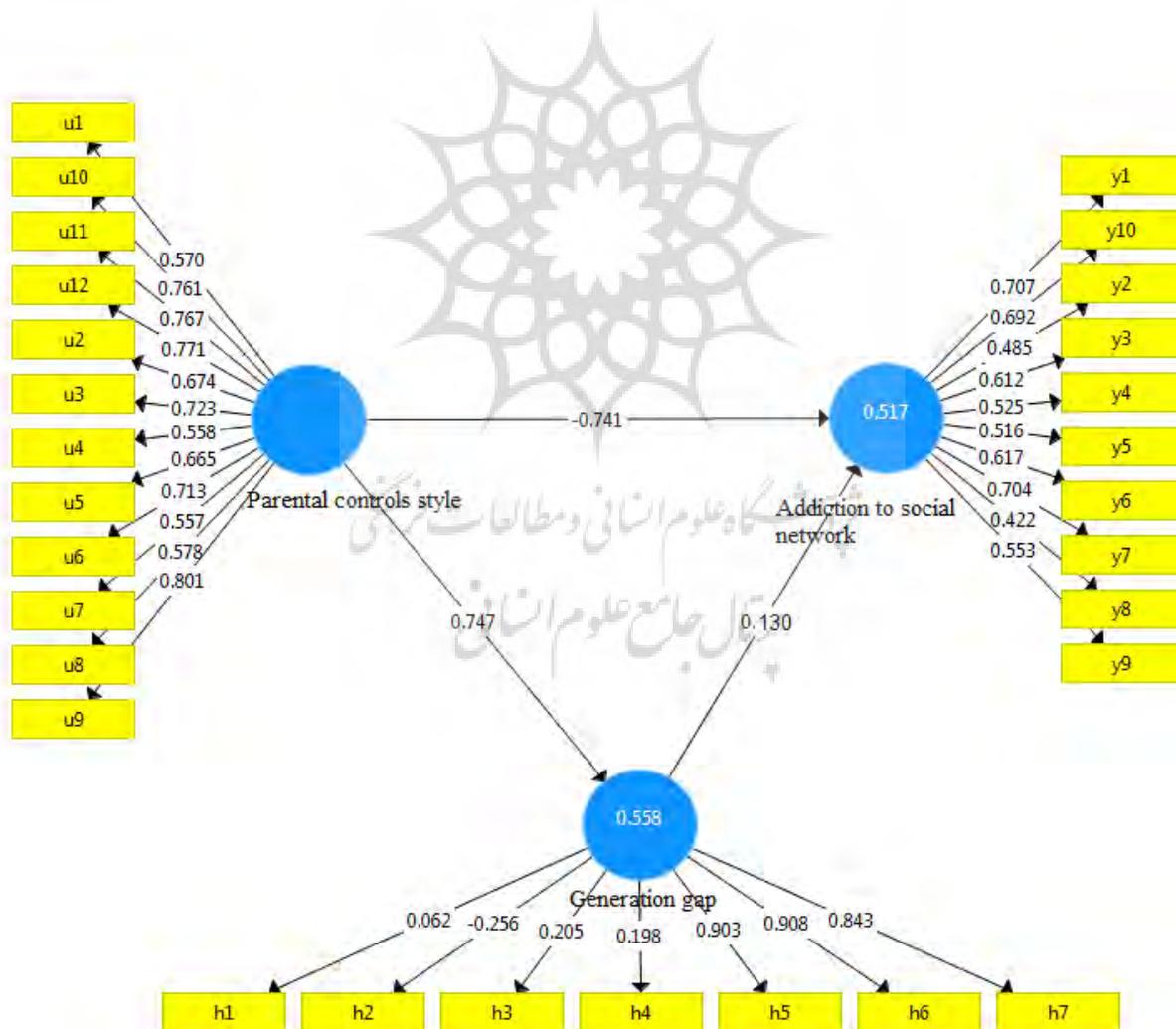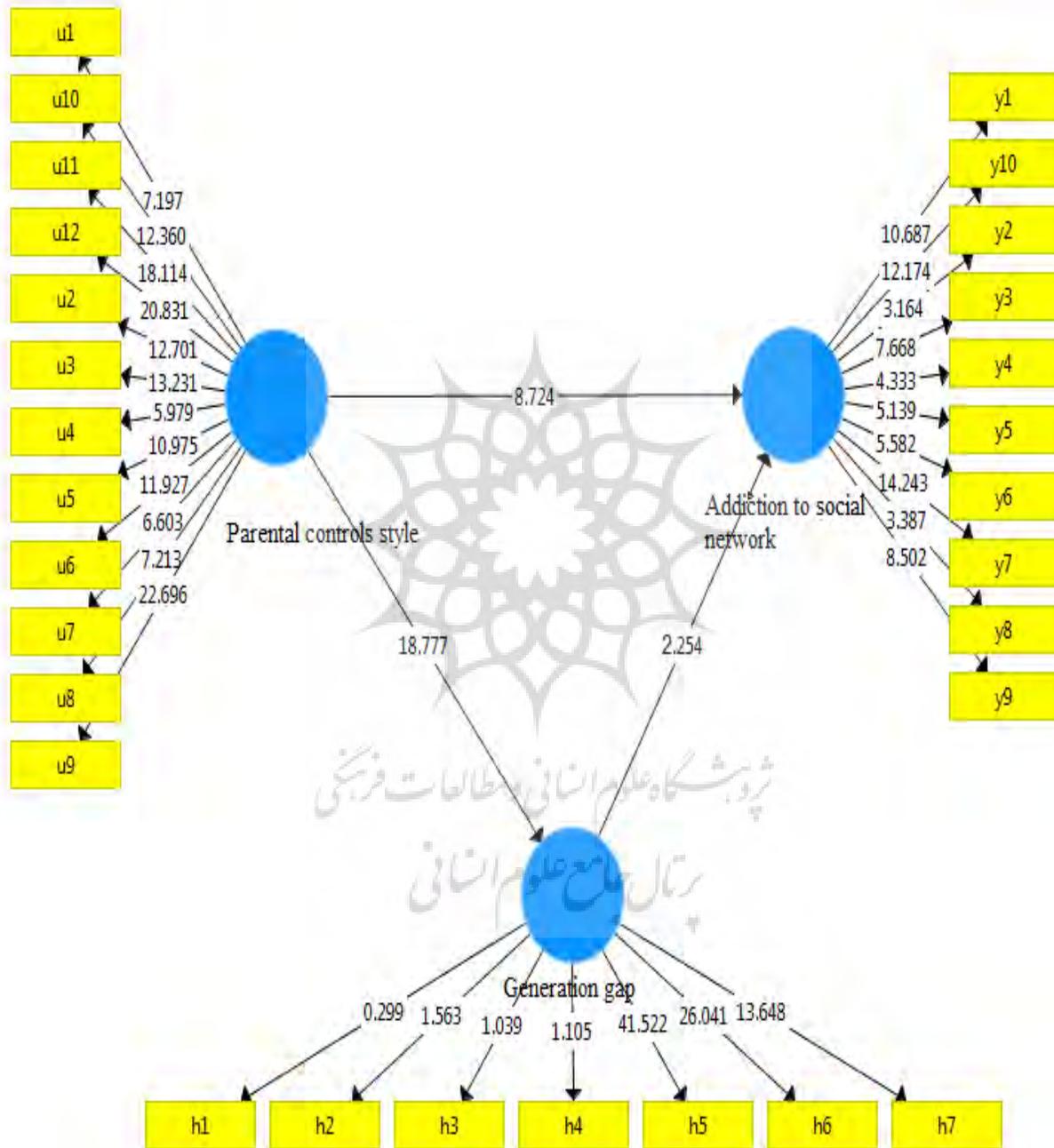

Figure 3. path coefficient and factorial load

Figure 4. The results of T-test

Table 7. analysis results

Variables	Path coefficient	T-VALUE	significance level	Result
Control Styles → Generation Gap	0.747	18.77	0.001	Confirmed
Generation gap → Social networking addiction	0.130	2.25	0.001	Confirmed
Control Styles → Generation Gap → Social Networking Addiction	-0.741	–	–	Confirmed

According to this table, monitoring styles do have positive impact in 95% confidence interval through generation gap variable ($p<0.05$) and the intensity of this impact is equal to 0.747. moreover, generation gap variable, as a mediating factor, has a positive impact on addiction to social networks in 95% confidence interval ($p<0.05$) and the intensity of this impact is equal to 0. 130.Ttherefore, considering the possibility of the above mentioned conditions, monitoring styles have a positive impact on addiction to social networks, through mediation of generation gap variable and the intensity of this impact is equal to -0.741.

5. Discussion

According to the results, monitoring styles do have a direct influence through family functioning within 95% confidence interval ($p< 0.05$) and the intensity for this impact is equal to 0.544. furthermore, as a mediating variable, family function has a negative impact within 95% confidence interval ($p<0.05$) and the intensity for this impact is equal to -0.111. therefore, considering the possibility of the above mentioned conditions, the mediating impact of family function on addiction to social networks is proved and the intensity of this impact is equal to -0. 718.From the systemic approach to parental functioning family functioning and patterns that exist in it cannot be discussed from outside, which implies that the functional family systems create conditions for adequate parental functioning. Parental style relies on patterns of family functioning and together with them creates a specific unit. A functional family structure is needed in order to fulfill the tasks of family in supporting individuation while providing a sense of belonging and togetherness.

With advancements in information technology, modern day children's family environments are equipped with devices such as computers, cameras, multimedia equipment, voice recorders, conferencing instruments, Internet connection, cell phone, iPad, iPhone and so on. Information Technology Integrated into Family brings so much convenience in modern life. An important aspect to understand while using integrated information technology for early childhood learning is to ensuring that it gets carried out with a "developmentally appropriate practice" (Dina,2009; Kneas & Perry, 2011; Howard, Amanda, & Craig, 2010). Therefore, it allows parents to adjust the orientation and teaching theories and further, to stress on children' learning, rather than on the applications of information technology itself (Ou, 2009). As per the research done by Snider and Hirschy (2009) human beings have a genetic disposition, which indicate the preference towards information that is presented them in a visually stimulating or interactive manner. This genetic disposition is present right from the birth and hence, it is noticed that children learn more effectively through these mediums (Snider &Hirschy, 2009).

During early childhood, children are curious and they are receptive to the interactive information given to them.During the life cycle of the families with adolescents, parents have to deal with very important tasks the understanding of which can lead to their solution and to an adequate family functioning. The tasks in this phase of the life cycle mostly refer to an increased flexibility of the parents in relation to a higher children's

independence where the parents need to maintain their authority and the highest place in the family hierarchy but also to negotiate with the children about their new needs. Adolescents demand more freedom and independence and the family' role is to follow, give support, to give directions and corrects aberrance of certain rules and norms which are socially determined. Question of family functionality is very significant in this phase of life because a functional family creates conditions, in order for adolescence as a critical period in the process of personality development, to pass without any dramatically conflicts between the parents and the children and to allow the family to offer adequate support to the development and maturation. Successful parenting demands high flexibility and ability to recognize tasks which can change according to the age and the developmental status of the child. Developmental and social needs of teens provoke parental norms, which can easily increase the pressure on the parenting skills. There are very difficult tasks in front of the parents: they have to maintain a balance between the discipline of the child for inadequate behavior and giving permission to the extent where teenagers can explore their own world. In the period of early adolescence when the family relationships are reorganized and redefined, the conflicts between the parents and the children reach highest point because then the attitudes of the children differ from the parents' the most (Place et al, 2007).

According to the results, monitoring styles using generation gap within 95% confidence interval do have a direct influence on variables ($p<0.05$) and the intensity of this impact is equal to 0.74. in addition, the intermediate variable for generation gap has a direct influence over addiction to social network variable within 95% confidence interval($p<0.05$) and the intensity for this impact is equal to 0.130. Therefore, considering these two conditions of monitoring styles, the mediation of generation gap is influential over addiction to social networks and this intensity is equal to -0.741. The daily life of children in industrialized countries today, compared to that of the past generations, is characterized by the massive presence of the so called new technologies (Computers, Internet, Mobile, IPad, IPod and others), resulting in a generation gap between the previous generation and the current one, so clear that today we talk of age divide (Pattaro, 2006).

The digital culture has come upon us so suddenly that researchers are scrambling to understand its nature and its impact on young people. It is sometimes hard for parents to keep up with their children - or to keep pace with technology - but parents have to remember that, in spite of their children's protests, children need the adults in their lives to help them navigate this wide open territory safely and wisely. They need guidance in keeping a healthy balance between the online and offline aspects of their lives. The so-called generation gap indicates strong differences in terms of cultural norms between the young and elderly. The word was used for the first time in Western countries to explain and describe the cultural differences between parents and offspring in 1960s. The concept of generational difference, or gap, in the same category distinctions and differences between experimental and stable cross between the two treatments etc. is defined. First Dualistic distinctions that shaped the political oppositions - of social will, and the other is a social structure, culture and its particular history revealed (The gap between tradition and modernity, the generation gap, the gap between different clusters in society, etc.). To explain the feature differences, different and even contradictory experiences of their generation units together, a whole culture - a particular society and the bigger alliance with a specific structure interaction (consensus or conflict) with each turn. Families as the center of gravity of the conflicts and differences are the most striking scene of the battle between the understandings of the previous generation (parents) understanding the new generation (the children) are

living. The above battlefield includes two interactive generations, in the sense that new forms of interaction within the families are with interaction conflicts and, unlike the past when communication was completely obedient.

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