

**Social Policy for users of Information Technology:**

**Young people and Internet addiction in Korea**

**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Internet has conferred many benefits, but it also has negative effects including addiction patterns termed “Internet addiction”. Many studies have been inclined to focus on discovering psychological symptoms. However, they have not usually considered young people’s relationships, which can themselves lead to Internet addiction. This study gathers the life experiences of young people with an ‘Internet addiction pattern’ in order to understand better their relationships and circumstances. South Korea was chosen as the main focus of this study.

From the Foucauldian perspective, the relationships produce power in new ways, wherever they meet and whenever they talk, with knowledge through their abilities, topics or information. This knowledge may categorise peers according to status and ability to use the Internet. These factors activate a ‘power network’ in ‘their own world’. As a result, Internet addiction situation is interpreted as a loss of balance in using the Internet and the research findings demonstrate how this process is influenced by the development of a set of power relations between young people within ‘their own world’. The recommendations are included, mainly ways to participate in the young people’s concerns and to relate to their lives so as to understand the real situation and reduce the problems.

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The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

**(PROVERBS 1:7)**

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

APA	The American Psychological Association
CIPC	The Centre for Internet Addiction Prevention & Counselling
CYP	The Commission on Youth Protection
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
IT	Information Technology
KMRB	The Korean Media Rating Board
MCT	The Ministry of Culture and Tourism
MEHRD	The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
MIC	The Ministry of Information and Communication
NGO	Non Government Organization
RCKY	The Research Centre for Korean Youth
RPG	Role Play Game
SMOE	The Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education
WCG	World Cyber Games

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## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

This research is focussed on the-experiences of using the Internet among South Korean young people. Since the Internet's recent appearance as a popular tool for mass and personal communication, many governments have supported and fostered its use, for educational as well as commercial purposes.

The catalyst for this research was my concern about the lack of positive attitudes on the part of the government towards solving the problems of the fallout from using the Internet (what is called in the thesis its “side effects”), even though these problems are expected to increase among young people in step with the wide and rapid spread of the Internet. Further motivation came from my experience as a civil servant for over 25 years, for much of which my ~~main~~ job involved dealing with policy related to both fostering and protecting young people from harmful influences. Through my job and experience, I have been motivated by an awareness of these side effects, notably the Internet addiction situations which have emerged among young people in recent years. For example, the subject of my master’s degree related to the problems in the processing of transitions, such as decisions by young people in orphanages about the future direction of their lives. Through this study, I grew more interested in young people as they prepare for these decisions. Young people are likely to be influenced by others such as their peers or seniors in the process of deciding and these influences may or may not be desirable. In addition, during my army service, I worked as a cryptogram interpreter in the communications department, where communication tools are convenient for passing on messages or opinions. However, if the tools are not suitably

protected, they cause us to reveal our private or secret lives. What is more, if the tools are used too much for individual purposes, they may interfere with the main job.

In this context, I have acquired an interest in patterns of behaviour among young people who use the Internet as a communication tool. Through the communication tools of the Internet, young people may make new relationships in their lives. These relationships may influence young people's lives in positive as well as negative ways and with peers or seniors they may be exercised as power relationships, which influence the life patterns of the young people. It seems that the use of the Internet offers examples of life patterns influenced by others.

This recognition was my starting point in understanding young people's Internet addiction situations. The side effects of such Internet addiction situations may relate to such influences as power relationships with peers, family and so on. However, I was unable to find any research on approaches to understanding young people's patterns of use of the Internet in their various relationships. Most of the research has focused on discovering the symptoms of addiction to the Internet. In addition, there should be a suitable policy of addressing the cause of the problems without bias from the influence of vested interests. As a civil servant, I am concerned about whether the approach of governments has been one capable of solving the problems of Internet addiction. They should develop their understanding of the real situation by collecting users' experiences regarding the problems. This is why young people's stories and their experiences as users were essential for this research.

Recently, Internet users have attended more voluntary social activities, such as political movements or debating social issues through the Internet. For instance, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2002, the Presidential Election Day revealed the sheer power of the Internet within South Korea when Roh Moo-hyun was elected president. One of the main reasons why Roh won the election was the support from the Nosamo Group ('*No*: ' in Korean is easy to pronounce and can be used instead of 'Roh'). This group approved and supported Roh Moo-hyun as a Presidential candidate. The Nosamo Group, consisting of about 70,000 volunteers, used their enormous power through the Internet to promote him. They collected not only favourable opinions for his future policies but also funds for the election volunteered through the Internet (Hangyore Daily New, 22nd Dec, 2002).

The Internet, then, is no longer a simple tool for personal use. Nobody can say with certainty what use, good or bad, will be made of the Internet in the future. The direction taken by its users may have a huge influence, according to their response to events. Also, the power of the Internet suggests that the processes of preparing policy for solving problems created by Internet use need to pay attention to the users themselves. Any policies regarding the Internet will have various possibilities for leading the users, according to the intentions and attitudes of government.

The aim of this research is to understand Internet addiction situations among young people and to make some suggestions for policies to alleviate these situations. This research begins by the sense of interpretivism which is interpreted, understood or experienced in young people's lives during their use of the Internet. Thus, the research

process looks for the meaning of relationships involving young people. These relationships may have a bearing on power as it affects young people.

This thesis is laid out as follows: an introduction (Chapter 1), literature review and theory (Chapters 2, 3 and 4), a description of the methodology (Chapter 5), analysis (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) and a discussion and conclusion (Chapters 9).

Before embarking on this research, I considered making comparisons between Internet addiction situations among young people in Korea and other countries for the sake of a wider understanding. However, through the preliminary survey which I undertook in June 2002, I realised that there were very different circumstances – for example, the availability of broadband systems – in different countries. Moreover, because the short history of Internet addiction situations, the extent of addiction to the Internet is not measured in standardised ways. For example, the measuring tools for Internet addiction use various criteria, according to the researchers. Hence, the main aim of the present research was to concentrate on and understand the actual situations of Korean young people and not to compare them with others as a sample case, because Internet use in Korea is unusually widespread and the country has the fastest system in the world.

In the chapters containing the literature review and theory, the main concepts discussed in this research are arranged in order of their emergence and some historical background is given. Chapter 2 deals with the emergence of the concept of Internet addiction and the discussions which have ensued since then. The background of the



discussions has been that of a series of psychological approaches. The discussions have generally concluded that Internet addiction situations can lead to the disturbance of normal life. But the causes and consequences of Internet addiction based on a study of the psychological symptoms may not coincide. There are some limitations to explaining Internet addiction situations by comparing them with the other sorts of addiction such as drug abuse. Thus, Wang (2001) suggests that the understanding of Internet addiction situations needs to include descriptions of social/cultural background, such as family and society; he does not find any meaningful link between emotional status and Internet addiction.

Accordingly, Chapter 3 discusses young people and the environment of Internet addiction from the perspective of social/cultural background. Firstly, for the objectives of this research, the definition of 'young people' was restricted to middle school and high school students (usually 13-15 and 16-18 years old respectively). This was determined according to a number of scholarly definitions of young people, from Mead (1928) in her research up to recent debates and from the definitions in various government Acts in Korea, such as the Children's Welfare Act and the Juvenile Protection Act in Korea. There are also various environmental factors for young people regarding their use of the Internet, such as peer relationships, family and socio-economic and cultural influences. Peer relationships can refer to anything from traditional relationships to new relationships formed through the mediation of the Internet. These relationships include negative as well as positive effects. Through the young people's status and popularity in peer relationships, influencing factors such as power may be discerned. The family relationships discussed are mainly those in

parenting and the influence of these on young people's behaviour. This includes authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglectful styles, as Baumrind classifies them in his study (1968) (see also Maccoby and Martin (1983)). However, the study of the various socio-economic and cultural factors deals only with Korea as a sample case. Korea's culture and its family relationships derive from the doctrine of Confucius, which include a hierarchical social structure. That is to say, young people are surrounded by power structures which distinguish between persons of higher and lower status.

In this context, Chapter 4 focuses mainly on Foucault's perspective of power. To understand the situation of the Korean young people we may use the metaphor of the colour of power. In that case, Foucault's perspective uses spectacles of the same colour. Surveillance situations to create 'obedient persons', according to Foucault (1977), are similar to the surveillance of Korean young peoples by teachers and parents. Foucault understands that power is ubiquitous and flows continuously and is produced and exercised in relationships. This perspective has been adopted to understand and describe the lives of these young people in using the Internet.

In the methodology chapter, Chapter 5, the data collections are considered to inform the perspective of power relationships as sequential processes such as preliminary surveys, the pilot study and the main research. The main method was to use qualitative procedures such as interviews with young people, parents, company workers and policy makers. Within the mainstream of the qualitative methods, some quantitative research, such as surveys of the young people, both off-line and on-line, is included in order to

understand the relationships of parenting and the intricacies of game item trading (the pieces of equipment used in on-line games) and their relevance to Internet addiction situations. In addition, several methods of collecting data are utilised, such as observation, case study and searching daily newspapers to understand more closely the social reality of Internet addiction.

In the analysis chapters, Chapter 6 describes the symptoms suggesting Internet addiction among the young interviewees. Some of them cannot stop themselves from using the Internet. Some feel at ease only when connected to the Internet. Accordingly, the young interviewees have experienced or are experiencing a disruption of their normal lives. However, their situation of addiction to the Internet is not fixed but flexible and changes according to external conditions, such as peer pressure or parents' roles. Moreover, their realisation that they must prepare themselves for the future contributes to strike a balance in their use of the Internet. Chapter 7 concerns the power relationships which lead to addiction situations. Korean young people have been repressed in several directions, such as the competitive nature of their education which have resulted in 'pushing' by their parents. They need a 'safety valve' from dominant social demands. The Internet provides a chance to use this 'safety valve' since they can meet their friends online and enjoy themselves. However, the pursuit of knowledge about the Internet forms another power structure among young people through 'their own world'. Young people enjoy themselves and produce and exercise power in 'their own world', which consists of a new hierarchical structure in which they are placed according to their skills, such as their dexterity in playing games and the amount of knowledge obtained through the Internet. Parents had already coerced their children to become computer literate at an early stage. Recently, some of them have subsequently

compelled their children to stop using the Internet so as not to hinder their progress in school. This coercive parenting is a further exercise of power which makes young people try to conceal the truth about their patterns of use of the Internet and may lead to dangerous situations. Chapter 8 moves on to consider the attitudes of the companies, which are geared to making profits without consideration for young people's immaturity and the risks they may run. Their attractive services and strategies make young people inclined to create new power relationships, such as level or ranks forming new hierarchical structures in their turn. Also, this chapter examines the government's policies which placed emphasis on supplying Information Technology (IT). However, the government has neglected the prevention of side effects associated with the rapid and widespread provision of IT. Through this process of neglect there may be identified another power perspective, which is the failure to make decisions, or to make them soon enough.

In the discussion and conclusion chapters, through links with the analysis chapters, power relationships which lead to Internet addiction situations are discussed. The Internet addiction situation is interpreted as a process involving a loss of balance in using the Internet. The suggested direction is that policies need to be formulated which prevent the problems of Internet addiction by maintaining a balance or recovering a balance. It is necessary to work with young people as users so as to reduce the problems.

## **Chapter 2. Conceptualising of Internet addiction**

### **2.1. Background**

The origins of the Internet can be traced back to 1969, when the U.S. Department of Defence began funding the U.S. Advanced Research Project Agency in developing technology for exchanging information through its various networks. However, the Internet as we know it today, using the Transaction Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), started in 1983. In 1992 the WWW (World Wide Web) graphics-based software arrived and since then it has spread very swiftly (Gattiker, 2001:10-11). As a comparatively recent innovation, the emergence of the Internet as an essential communication tool throughout the world has a relatively short history. Although it has only existed since the early 1990s, the Internet has quickly become an exciting new concept which brings a special character and convenience to our lives. With the Internet it sometimes appears that anything might be possible. Thus, the number of Internet users has increased rapidly.

For example, Kate and his colleagues (2001:408) showed in October 1995 that only 8% of people (from a sample of 2,500 adults in the US) were using the Internet. However, they found that by March 2000 65% of people (based on a sample of 1,305 adults in the US) were using it. Such a rapid increase may be presumed to bring increased side effects. The emergence of these side effects again has a short history. However, this problem is also expected to grow rapidly as the number of Internet users increase.

The study of Internet addiction, a fallout effect of the Internet, seems until now to have been mainly undertaken through psychological approaches. This chapter shows the

processes in the recognition of Internet addiction and some opinions of psychologists who initially studied it as a concept. Understandably, their studies do not have a long history, yet this is an area which requires continuous study. That is to say, at present the study of Internet addiction may be too limited. For young people in Internet addiction situations, other addiction theories, relating, for example, to drugs, which have a longer history, need to be explored in order to understand the factors in their environment. This chapter discusses the studies of Internet addiction which have been made so far. In addition, some other addiction theories are explored in order to understand more closely the Internet addiction situation and the way in which it is related to the environment of young people.

## **2.2. What is Internet addiction?**

### **2.2.1. Emergence of the problems with the use of the Internet**

Every night, he'd come home from work at 6 p.m. and head straight for the computer. No kiss hello, no help with dinner, or the dishes, or the laundry. At 10 p.m., he'd still be on-line when she'd call him to come to bed. "Be right there," he'd say. Four or five hours later, he'd finally log off and stumble into bed (Young, 1998:1).

This was the complaint of a woman in the United States about her husband. Even in the middle of the 1990s, the use of the Internet was causing trouble in this relationship. Finally, the woman left her husband. She could not endure the situation of her husband's using the Internet all night, every night. Young, a psychologist, mentioned that this case aroused her professional curiosity as to whether people really become addicted to the Internet and this led her to become interested in Internet addiction, a new clinical

disorder pattern (Young, 1998). The man described above spent so much time on the Internet when he came home from work that he neglected his family relationships and his domestic duties. In other words, his problem seems to have been neglecting his basic life pattern vis-à-vis his family, because of his continuous use of the Internet. However, the account given above does not give sufficient information to understand the degree of his addiction. For example, it is necessary to find what kinds of Internet activities absorbed him and why the use of the Internet made him neglect even his relationship with his wife. These types of question seem to provide researchers, in particular, psychologists influenced by Young's research, with the motivation to discuss 'Internet addiction situations'.

In August 1996, at the 104<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the American Psychological Association (APA), Young gave a lecture with the title 'Internet addiction: the emergence of a new clinical disorder' (Young, 1996). This seems to have been the first attempt to show the results of empirical research into Internet addiction (American Psychological Association, 1996). Young's research was carried out over a three-month period from November 1994 in order to find whether the use of the Internet might lead to an addiction situation and to understand the extent of problems misuse of the Internet (Young 1998: 4, Young 1996). Among 496 respondents, 396 people were classified as having an addicted pattern (on the Internet) and 100 were classed as having a normal use pattern (non-dependency) (Young 1998:5). These were the two sample groups.

This was shocking news and alerted the public to possible dangers in using the Internet, when it was thought that logging on was simply a pleasurable activity and nothing more. Since then, some psychologists and psychiatrists have begun to regard this pattern as an addiction situation, like that of drug or alcohol addiction. They have

used the term ‘addiction’ for a pattern of using the Internet continuously and neglecting their regular work (Young, 1996; 1997; 1999; Griffiths, 2000; Beard and Wolf, 2001; Pratarelli and Browne, 2002; Whang et al, 2003; Nalwa and Anand, 2003). This pattern has been given various names according to the researchers’ interests, such as Internet addiction, cyber addiction, technology addiction, computer addiction, Internet dependence, pathological Internet use, problematic Internet use, heavy Internet use and dangerous Internet use. If this pattern of behaviour is exaggerated, it is a ‘situation which disrupts normal lives’. Many scholars agree that using the Internet is not without risk (Armstrong et al, 2000; Morahan-Martin and Schumacher; 2000; Wang 2001). The pattern may reveal such symptoms as addiction, dependence and pathological situations. This study uses the term ‘Internet addiction’ to describe this disturbed pattern of Internet use.

### **2.2.2. The symptoms of Internet addiction**

#### **Various criteria for measuring Internet addiction**

To define the problems in using the Internet, generally agreed criteria are needed to recognise and measure the extent of the problems among users. However, no criteria of Internet addiction as a new addiction pattern were formed until the beginning of Young’s research. Young (1996) found that the problematic use of the Internet resembled the symptoms of other clinical disorders, such as pathological gambling. For example, pathological gambling is a kind of impulse-control disorder; unlike an



addiction which involves substance-taking (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). To distinguish addictive users from normal users of the Internet, Young (1996) adopted the workable set of criteria applied to the Pathological Gambling diagnosis of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV). The criteria for Young's research formed the basis of an eight-item questionnaire (Appendix 1) which modified the pathological gambling criteria of a ten-item questionnaire. People who answered 'yes' in the research to five or more of the questions were regarded as addicted Internet users. Others were classified as normal Internet users.

However, when Young (1996) created the criteria, she was at the start of her research and may not have recognised the more widespread problems of Internet addiction patterns. These criteria were later developed from an eight-item questionnaire into a 20-item questionnaire in 1998, when Young had had more experience in dealing with Internet addiction patterns (Young, 1998). To clarify in more detail Young has now determined three groups, namely, a significant problem user group, a frequent problem user group and an average on-line user group. Other researchers have also used specific criteria to classify patterns, namely, Young's criteria themselves, other modified criteria, or other unmodified addiction criteria. For example, Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000:17) used their own questions to set up three groups, namely, 'pathological Internet use', 'limited symptoms' and 'no symptoms'. Wang (2001:936) used his own questions to set up three groups, namely, an 'Internet addiction group', a 'light Internet addiction group' and a 'non Internet addiction group'.

Accordingly, it is difficult to compare different studies of Internet addiction because they all use different measuring tools

## **Addicted users: disrupted lives**

These different results of research into the Internet addiction may reveal what causes the problems in the first place. In any case, researchers more or less agree that being a problematic Internet user disrupts one's life. For example, people addicted to the Internet experienced negative consequences, including disrupted sleep patterns and excessive fatigue (Young 1996). Predictably, these accompanied impaired work for adults or serious academic problems for students, such as difficulty finishing homework and studying for exams due to surfing various web sites or using chat lines (Wang 2001). Moreover, they may reveal problems in relating to other people, due to spending too little time with real people off-line (Young 1999). Excessive Internet users are even inclined to restrict their relationships to on-line friends. In addition, negative consequences included being 'accompanied by guilt', cravings and attempts to conceal or lie about the time spent on the Internet (Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, 2000). In other words, addicted users are inclined to hide or lie about their time on-line. They may increase the time that they spend on the Internet in the process of becoming an addict. Some addicted users cannot control the time they spend on the Internet.

In Young's research (1996), which compared the time spent by different people on the Internet, addicted users spent on average 38.5 hours per week. Non-addicted users spent an average of 4.9 hours per week. Moreover, addicted users gradually increased their hours on the Internet. Young (1997) suggested that this symptom may be similar to the tolerance levels of alcohol addiction. This pattern seems to be a feature of becoming addicted to the Internet.

However, the pattern of spending so much time on the Internet cannot in itself be

regarded as misuse in itself. For example, computer programmers and game company workers must spend comparable time in this way for the sake of their jobs.

### **The psychological approach**

Psychologists have described Internet addiction as a serious situation with pathological symptoms. It can be defined as use of the Internet which creates psychological, social, school and work difficulties in a person's life (Beard and Wolf, 2001). In particular, the studies of Internet addiction have mostly been made by psychologists and psychiatrists. Several symptoms of Internet addiction may be expressed in the terms accumulated by their knowledge and experience.

Moreover, users judged by means of psychological knowledge to have pathological symptoms in using the Internet were classified as non-normal Internet users (Young 1996). This makes it plain that 'addicted Internet users' exhibit a non-normal pattern. In particular, some researchers have described pathologic symptoms of Internet addiction as if they had already established a truth rather than being in the process of finding or forming a truth.

For example, Kraut and his colleagues (1998) mention that Internet users spend a great amount of time using the Internet, leading to an increased level of loneliness, because they do not have enough time to form real relationships off-line. In addition, spending so much time on the Internet was associated with an increase in depression. Also, they point out that social support and stress were also consistently negative when people used the Internet for a greater time (Kraut et al, 1998). Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) also show in their research that addicted Internet users may be lonelier than others. Addicted Internet users were more likely to access the Internet to

relax, talk and find support. They are inclined to be more friendly and open during their use of the Internet. The loneliness symptom was recognised as the result of the addicted Internet use.

This seemed to be a matter of indisputable psychological knowledge until their results revealed contrary or at least differing opinions. The results of such psychologists as Kraut and his colleagues and Morahan-Martin and Schumacher have led other researchers to focus on the psychological negative effects of using the Internet. However, later, these negative effects were found to be at variance with the results attained by certain other researchers.

For example, Shaw and Gant (2002:168) insisted that Kraut's opinions about the negative effects of Internet use, such as loneliness, stress and depression, were not supported in their research. Participants who chatted anonymously showed that the extent of their loneliness and depression reduced conspicuously. Shaw and Gant accomplished a longitudinal study to observe these effects among university students in the United States. In particular, they pointed out that anonymity is a factor in disclosing more personal information more quickly than in face-to-face interactions. People may want to be anonymous on-line. Online anonymity encourages people to express and experiment with their feelings rather than suppressing them.

Also, pervasive harmful effects such as the psychological factors noted above were not supported by other research. Internet use was not acknowledged as a cause of psychological difficulties. In other words, some Internet users may have the opportunity of becoming more heavily dependent on the Internet due to psychological or psychiatric difficulties which were already apparent (Modayil, et al, 2003). For example, Modayil and her colleagues noted that users with psychiatric symptoms such as stress had had these

symptoms before using the Internet. Accordingly, individuals who are unskilful with social relationships may gravitate toward the Internet, which provides the users with various degrees of intimacy through interactive relationships and with safety due to anonymity.

They showed that the previous research results were in some ways ambiguous as to whether psychological problems are a cause or consequence of Internet addiction. Until now, rich psychological approaches to Internet addiction are apt to focus on individual symptoms only, with a view to increasing their knowledge, ignoring the individual's environment, such as his/her peer and family relationships.

### **2.3. Who is likely to be addicted to the Internet?**

The negative as well as positive effects of using the Internet are not obvious in all cases. The process and background to the problems may be as different as the individual characters themselves, who are of all ages and both genders. Young (1996) mentions that women may be more addicted than men; women are more likely to talk about emotional issues or problems than men. In contrast, Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) claim that males are more likely than females to be addicted users (12.2% vs. 3.2%). Wang's research also shows that males are more represented in Internet addiction disorder (IAD) groups than females (Wang, 2001). Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) explain that males are more likely to use applications, for example, games, net sex and gambling through the Internet. These applications may foster people's compulsive use of the Internet.

Young's research and other researchers' findings differ in terms of addicted users' ages and gender. For example, in Young's research, addicted males' mean age was 29;

addicted females' mean age was 43, whereas, non addicted males' mean age was 25 and non addicted females' mean age was 28. Young's research reveals the warning that women in their 40s may in particular be addicted to the Internet, notably spending much time in chat rooms. As Young's (1996) research respondents participated voluntarily (by means of her on-line survey on Internet addiction), their age group may be wider than those in other studies.

Morahan-Martin and Schumacher surveyed undergraduate Internet users in the United States. Because college students have access to the Internet at their schools, they are more likely to be Internet users than other population groups. These researchers claimed that young males, such as those of university student age, are more likely to be addicted than young females (Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, 2000). Young males seem to encounter more situations in which they can easily become addicted, such as on-line games or sexual sites. For example, males tend to be more visual with related sexual fantasies whereas females prefer to be verbally oriented (Partarelli and Browne, 2002).

Young (1996) shows that a total of 83% of addicted users had been online for less than one full year. She finds that an Internet addiction pattern may form in the earlier stages when people's technical mastery and navigational ability is improving rapidly. However, Wang's evidence (2000) suggests that the addicted user group (31.7 months) had a longer history of using the Internet than the non addicted user group (22.8 months). A user's ability to access the Internet may increase with time. Recently, use of the Internet has become more popular among people than it was in the mid-1990s when Young (1996) presented her research results. People using the Internet tend to be much younger and the time taken to learn how to use the Internet is less. People's capacity to

use the Internet has also increased as computer systems have developed. The period of use of the Internet which is most closely related to addiction may be influenced by the period when people's initial difficulties are gradually being overcome. This period may differ according to people's ability and also to environmental factors, such as the availability of fast broadband systems. Relatively, older people seem to spend more time than young people in overcoming the initial difficulties of a new technology.

People with flexible time environments may access the Internet more easily. Some individuals may encounter serious disruption of their lives, but they may also derive benefit from being easily able to adapt their own circumstances to using the Internet. For example, college students who have flexible time schedules can take great advantage of the Internet; but they also face a higher risk of problematic behaviour in using the Internet (Nalwa and Anand, 2003; Morahan-Martin and Schumacher 2000). Recently, college students have been asked to use the Internet to produce their school work and this may make them more likely to use it more often.

In addition, teenagers also have increased their use of the Internet at school with a view to improving their academic achievement. They too may be at higher risk of addiction to the Internet (Kraut et al, 1998). Young (1997; 1999) emphasises that addicted users were influenced by their negative emotional status. They were led into spending more time on the Internet and thus aggravating their situation. According to the results of Morahan-Martin and Schumacher's research and Wang's research, addicted young people of university age revealed outstandingly their desire to pursue relationships through the Internet. When young people felt depressed or isolated from others, they might spend excessive time or even misuse the Internet to alter their mood. This pattern may lead to Internet addiction as pathological Internet use (Morahan-

Martin and Schumacher 2000).

The Internet users most vulnerable to becoming addicted are as described in these studies as follows:

- . Women in their 40s who spent much time in chat rooms
- . Males preferring to use applications such as games, net sex and gambling
- . People with improved technical mastery and navigational ability
- . People with a flexible time environment who can easily access the Internet
- . Young people who are asked to use the Internet to produce their school work
- . Users who were influenced by their negative emotional status

#### **2.4. Causes of Internet addiction**

Researchers have recognised that addicted users of the Internet experience negative impacts on their normal lives due to spending excessive time on Internet activities and relationships. Among the research results, there are also differences as to what causes Internet addiction, even though researchers have these similar criteria for recognising problems disrupting normal life. To understand the cause of Internet addiction, firstly it is necessary to describe what factors leading to addiction are specific to the Internet itself. Secondly, another description is also required of the way in which 'the causes discussed in relation to Internet addiction' are related to the causes of general addiction such as drugs and alcohol.



#### **2.4.1. The attraction of the Internet itself**

Many people think the Internet is an essential tool in the maintenance and enjoyment of our lives. Every day people access the Internet to meet not only someone familiar but also someone anonymous. However, the purpose and scope of using the Internet may be different for addicted users and non-addicted users. Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) suggest that addicted users are more likely to go on-line to talk with others about common interests and to find support and relaxation. Wang (2001) shows that addicted users prefer discussion forums, interactive games and e-mail. However, the communication function of the Internet is common, as well as being an attraction in itself.

In particular, addicted users have significantly different reasons from non addicted users for using the Internet, as follows: the former spend much time for meeting new people, using adults-only resources, emotional support, talking to others who share the same interests, playing games, recreation and relaxation, gambling, wasting time or staying abreast of new developments, according to Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000). In addition, addicted users of the Internet tend to spend time on relationships through the Internet. Making relationships seems to be a special feature of on-line mediation, such as chat rooms or on-line games (Young 1996, Wang 2001).

The power of the Internet to allow people to communicate with other people may easily lead users to spend more time on line. In addition, these functions may lead to an addiction situation. However, as this becomes more common and familiar to every user, another factor seems to require additional explanation with regard to addiction.

Using the Internet may give users with more social liberty to meet people easily through anonymous meetings and make for a friendly and open mind. A distinguishing characteristic of the Internet is that it provides users with anonymity in attending any meeting if they so want (Greenfield, 1999: 29). This anonymous relationship may allow users to talk more freely and feel safer in talking about topics of their choice (Shaw and Gant, 2002:169; Young 1997). In particular, isolated people may increase their social participation and psychological wellbeing through using the Internet (Kraut et al, 1999). In other words, even though they tell no-one their names, they may receive help from others as they talk without inhibition on the Internet. However, anonymity may lead to misbehaviour among users, such as surfing or cybersex. These behaviours may also cause addiction (Greenfield, 1999)

#### **2.4.2. Internet addiction and theories of addiction**

##### **The perspective of neuro-scientific theories**

According to the *Dictionary of Social Work* (Thomas and Pierson, 1995), addiction is defined as occurring when an individual uses a substance regularly and has developed a dependence upon it. There are some uncertainties with regard to Internet addiction and its resemblance to other addictions such as drug addiction: for example, whether people can become addicted without a chemical basis.

Neuro-scientific theories need to take account of the effects of drugs on the brain. There are two main pathways, namely, the dopamine reward system and the endogenous opioid system (Nutt, 1997). Dopamine is related to the reinforcing effect of alcohol or similar drugs. For example, the function of alcohol stimulates dopamine directly and increases dopamine levels indirectly. Altman and his colleagues (1996) illustrate the dopamine reward system as follows:

Psychomotor stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines have primary reinforcing effects through their actions on dopamine neurons... (Altman et al, 1996: 307-308).

For the endogenous opioid system, Nutt (1997) states that:

The brain's endogenous opioid system contains peptides such as endorphins and enkephalins that may be reinforcing in themselves (Nutt 1997:s54).

The endogenous opioid function is one of the important factors in causing tolerance and dependence when people use such substances as heroin, morphine and codeine (Brick and Erickson, 1998).

Accordingly, it is a matter of debate among researchers studying Internet addiction as to whether addiction is possible without any chemical basis. Using the Internet is not similar to being able to take or swallow a drug. For example, in Shotton's (1989) study on computer addiction, she prefers 'computer dependency' to 'computer addiction' because she believes that all other definitions and uses of the term 'addiction' in the psychological literature use this term only with reference to substances ingested by the body. Also, some psychologists have debated whether the use of the term 'addiction' is suitable (Davis, 2001:187). The word 'addiction' may in itself be related to serious

problems associated with drug addiction or alcohol addiction. Internet addiction patterns may be as serious as or similar in some ways to the symptoms of drugs or alcohol dependency. However, they also may be different from the symptoms and causes of addiction to drugs or alcohol because these have a chemical basis.

Yet some psychologists have used the term 'addiction' to refer to the problematic Internet use. For example, Griffiths (1995) gives examples of technological addictions, non-chemical types of addiction, including behavioural addictions involving human-machine interactions such as addictions to games or computer. Young (1998) explains that even though there is no clear chemical addiction as there is with drugs or alcohol, the Internet user has entered an addiction situation based on the feelings and experiences they have obtained. Greenfield (1999) believes that computer or Internet addiction is an emerging disorder suffered by people who find the virtual reality on computer screens more attractive than everyday reality. He uses virtual addiction to describe problematic Internet use. He also points out that, like other addictions, it has a negative affect on other people, such as family, friends and co-workers.

Symptoms of Internet addiction have been discussed and found to be similar to addictions to other things, such as drugs or alcohol, in the view of some psychologists and psychiatrists, despite its not being the result of ingesting substances. Internet addiction seems not to have the dopamine reward system nor the endogenous opioid system which addictions based on chemical materials have. However, until now, the study of Internet addiction has been mainly focused on the symptoms of the addicted person's psychological background. For example, Internet addiction has not yet been studied in relation to neuro-scientific theories.

## **The perspective of psychological theories**

In 1969 the World Health Organization provided the following working definition which included distinctive behaviours, such as compulsion and tolerance:

Drug-dependence is a state, psychic and sometimes also physical, resulting from the interaction between a living organism and a drug, characterized by behavioural and other responses that always include a compulsion to take the drugs on a continuous or periodic basis in order to experience its psychic effects and sometimes to avoid the discomfort of its absence. Tolerance may or may not be present. A person may be dependent on more than one drug (Willis, 1973:3).

Psychological theory relates that people with drug addictions reveal compulsive or impulsive behaviours. For example, this behaviour is expressed as obsessive-compulsive disorder or gambling. Even though people know of the problems to expect in using the drugs, they cannot stop using them; they must continue with the drugs (Teesson et al, 2002). Among the psychological approaches to drug addiction, Internet addiction may be explained by, for example, behavioural models based on learning and conditioning, cognitive theories and models of rational choice.

### ***Behavioural approach to Internet addiction***

Since the mid-1990s, the term 'Internet addiction' has been used mainly for excessive use or abuse of the Internet. Young (1999) induced 'Internet addiction' on the basis of certain triggers or cues associated with past alcohol, drug or food addiction. In

explaining addiction, behavioural history is an important factor. All behaviour is related to historical antecedents. The individual's response to the immediate environment depends on the effects of previous experiences as well as current environmental conditions (Barret and Witkin, 1986:196-197). The 'cue' has been an important influence in the development and maintenance of addiction behaviour. For example, cues make people who have experienced drugs more likely to encourage the use of addictive drugs (Drummons et al, 1995).

Young (1999) emphasises the similarity between Internet addiction and other addictions such as drugs or alcohol. For example, when people feel depressed, hopeless and pessimistic about the future, they may drink frequently to escape these feelings. When people feel lonely or unattractive, they may binge on various types of food. Depression or low self-esteem may lead people to binge in other behavioural ways to escape or avoid these negative situations. In this context, Young explains that Internet addiction may start from binge behaviour intended to escape negative factors.

For example, the Internet may supply people having problems in their real lives with emotional relief, mental escape and a way to avoid some of these problems. Some Internet users with problems may forget their problems while using the Internet for things such as news groups, interactive games, chat rooms and surfing data. Recently, users have enjoyed various functions through the Internet, not only interactive activity games or chatting but also entertainment, such as movies or music. It seems that factors such as interactive activity and entertainment may also play the part of a 'cue'. In using the Internet, the 'cue' may operate as a cause of addiction.

But at the same time, the 'cue' may supply Internet users with some forms of positive

social interaction through the experience of participating in common topics or helping others (Modayil et al, 2003).

### ***Cognitive-behavioural approach to Internet addiction***

Davis (2001) suggests that Internet addiction is related with cognitive behaviour.

According to Beck (1976), cognitive therapy suggests that

The individual's problems are derived largely from certain distortions of reality based on erroneous premises and assumptions. They regard his or her disturbance as being related to the kinds of misunderstandings experienced numerous times during their life (Beck, 1976:3).

The misunderstood thoughts or cognitions tended to rise quickly and automatically and were noticed not to be under conscious control. Addictive behaviour was revealed to be due to erroneous cognition, such as excessive reliance on external structures. They may need substances such as drugs to maintain their physical and psychological balance (Teesson et al, 2002). Davis (2001) classifies two types of Internet addiction related to people's engaged behaviour before using the Internet. Internet addiction is divided into two pathological types, namely 'specific pathological Internet use' and 'generalized pathological Internet use'.

'Specific pathological Internet use' is related to those people who are dependent on a specific function of the Internet, such as the overuse of online sexual material/services, online auction services, online stock trading and online gambling. Such functions would exist even in the absence of the Internet. Davis (2001) asserts that people with specific pathological Internet use patterns regard the Internet only as a tool for the use of the

function. The Internet itself is not the thing which causes the addiction. However, it seems that the Internet allows them to access the function more easily. In other words, the Internet may foster an addiction to specific services.

In contrast, generalised pathological Internet use is related to a general, comprehensive overuse of the Internet. There are some behaviours, such as wasting time online without a clear objective, or chatting, or e-mails, which are social aspects of the Internet. The social contact and support lead users to stay on line for an excessive time in a virtual social life and may lead to Internet addiction.

In particular, Davis (2001:189) feels that the Internet is a distal contributory cause of the addiction pattern. The term 'distal contributory cause' is derived from abnormal behaviour, a result of inclined diathesis and stress. For example, when people first experience using pornography, stock trading services or chatting services through the Internet, they may increase their pattern by their exposure to the new technology. Also, Davis (2001:191) mentions the function of the Internet for proximal contributory causes to addiction. For example, when people have cognition distortions, such as self-doubt, low self-efficacy and negative self-appraisal, they retain them when they use the Internet. As a result, they develop thoughts such as 'they are only good on the Internet', or 'they are worthless off-line'. These patterns may in themselves lead to addiction situations. With this model it appears that the Internet addiction pattern is explained with a more varied psychological background (Caplan, 2002).

### ***Rational choice theories***

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (Onions, 1933) defines an 'addict' as "one who



is addicted to the habitual and excessive use of a drug or the like”. The Oxford English Reference Dictionary (Pearsall and Trumble (eds.), 1995) expresses ‘addiction’ as ‘a condition of taking a drug habitually and being unable to give it up without incurring adverse effects’. It seems that the possibilities of Internet addiction include features of the dictionary definitions, such as excessive use and being unable to control the habit. The main factor of being addicted to drugs is the individual’s incapability to exercise control over their use of the substance. That is to say, even though addicted persons wish to reduce their use of the drug or stop using it altogether, they may use it continuously or increasingly (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Addicted users of the Internet are also related to the pattern by which they do not have the ability to control their use of the Internet even though they want to stop using it or reduce the time spent on it (Wang 2001). How long they use it continuously and how much time they spend in a day are also aspects of addiction to the Internet (Nalwa and Anand, 2003). In addition, the excessive time spent on the Internet in the addiction shows how such addiction disrupts normal life (Young, 1996; Davis, 2001).

### **Social and environment factors**

The addiction pattern is related to various social and environmental factors which are also used with a substance or a substance disorder. Anti-social behaviour results from addiction. In other words, addicted people are vulnerable to behaving badly. In particular, children’s anti-social behaviour may be linked to adults’ bad behaviour. The peer environment influences the drug taking behaviour of individuals. It is easy to share the habit of taking drugs (Fergusson and Horwood, 1997). In particular, peers who use

drugs are more likely to spend time with the same peer group which also uses drugs. Accordingly, these peer relationships may be influential in developing Internet addiction patterns. Peer relationships are among the main factors in addiction patterns relating to drugs and alcohol. This could be particularly important in understanding Internet addiction, which develops through peer relationships among young people.

Family relationships are also a key factor leading to drug addiction (Nurco et al, 1998). For example, parents' drug use may be related to the initiation and frequency of their children's drug use. Similarly, if parents demonstrate to their children a permissive attitude towards using drugs according to parenting style classified by Baumrind (1968), the children may be more likely to use drugs. In cases where there is discord in family relationships or low levels of confidence, the risk of drug use is higher than in others (Hawkins et al, 1992:82-83). Individuals who later become drug addicts may have been influenced by unsuitable parental attitudes, such as poor parental monitoring and supervision, or parental absence (Hawkins et al, 1992; Nurco et al, 1998).

In this context, Internet addiction may also be related to aspects of family relationships, such as parenting style or unsuitable parenting. However, psychologically designed research studies have not yet dealt with these factors significantly, even though there are some researchers who have found that substance addiction may be related to unhealthy family relationships.

### **Limitations of the psychological approaches to Internet addiction**

When people become new on-line users, they may use the Internet in the expectation of

obtaining various benefits and with no knowledge of negative effects. Their usage pattern changes according to their particular interests and they generally choose preferred ways of using the Internet, as, for example, a source of information, marketing or entertainment. Developing and increasing the sources which the Internet can supply may lead people into spending more time on-line and may occasionally have the potential for overuse. This overuse pattern is described as compulsive or even addictive by some psychologists and psychiatrists. Until now, however, the definitions of Internet addiction or dependence may not have been clear and universal, unlike those of drug and alcohol addiction.

Over recent years, several scholars have reported cases of Internet addiction. Their studies have mostly depended on psychology and psychiatry to prove the existence of the disorder and to identify particular personality types. Since the mid-1990s, psychologists and psychiatrists have produced several Internet addiction symptoms, namely, obsessive thoughts about the Internet, tolerance, inability to stop using the Internet and withdrawal, which have been cited as characterising the unhealthy use of the Internet (Young, 1996; Morhan-Martin and Schmacher 2000; Shapira et al, 2000; Paratarelli and Browne 2002; Whang et al, 2003).

Most psychologists' investigations have focused on the symptoms of Internet addiction to show psychological problems such as loneliness, depression or stress. However, their opinions still do not coincide with some of the areas mentioned above. In particular, Wang (2001) mentions that he did not find any meaningful link between emotional status and Internet addiction tendency. He also did not support a link between Internet addiction behaviour and the personality characteristics of general self-efficacy and psychosocial maturity. He suggests that the psychodynamic model of addiction

alone is not enough to account for Internet addiction behaviours. Sociocultural explanations, including family and society, are needed to understand this phenomenon of the Internet addiction situation.

Currently, the negative effects of using the Internet cannot be avoided. This may be not enough the prevention of ill effects, using only the psychological approach. Kraut, a psychologist, also suggested the importance of studying the implications for policy and design, in addition to adopting a psychological approach to study the current situation of widespread and continuous Internet use (Kraut et al, 1998). There has been some recognition that people form addictions to many things, such as drugs, alcohol and gambling. However, the idea that people can form an addiction to the Internet is relatively unfamiliar; even though the term 'Internet addiction' has been used widely in recent years, not only by psychologists and psychiatrists but even by government policy makers, the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) by American Psychiatric Association did not register the term (American Psychiatric Association 1994; 2000).

Grohol (1999), in particular, makes the point that 'Internet addiction' is difficult to define. Until now, reports on Internet addiction have given rise to confusion between cause and effect and have included logical mistakes. For example, some people spend too much time reading and ignore family, friendships and social activities. But a reading addiction was not suggested as being a legitimate mental disorder in the same category as schizophrenia and depression. Grohol points out that a pathological Internet use pattern is a process which goes from enchantment (obsession) by way of disillusionment (avoidance) back to balance (normal) after someone begins to use the

Internet and then to overuse it to pursue new online activities. This process may be experienced not only by new on-line users but also by existing users.

## **2.5. Summary**

As regards a problematic heavy Internet use, psychologists and psychiatrists since the mid-1990s, have regarded this pattern as an addiction, calling it 'Internet addiction'. However, their research has not yet explained the cause of Internet addiction. So far psychological approaches to Internet addiction have been apt to focus on individual symptoms.

However, many scholars agree that there is a problem for some Internet users. For example, they refer to a pattern of using the Internet continuously to the neglect of the user's regular jobs. The present study uses the term 'Internet addiction' to describe this disturbed pattern of Internet use.

Psychological approaches to Internet addiction are inclined to neglect the individual's environment, such as peer and family relationships, but it seems that these peer relationships are influential in forming Internet addiction patterns. Peer relationships are among the main factors in many addiction patterns, such as drugs and alcohol. Also, parents' attitudes may be an influence on Internet addiction, just as they are an influence on individuals' becoming addicted to drugs. An approach which includes environmental factors such as relationships with peers and family may be helpful for understanding Internet addiction, in particular among young people. It may be necessary for

psychologists to construct a psychological theory through identifying individual symptoms of Internet addiction. However, it seems that discussions of Internet addiction patterns will contribute to an understanding of the underlying pattern, including environmental factors, which may help to reduce present and future problems. The main discussions of Internet addiction in this chapter are set out in Table 2-4-1.

**Table 2-4-1) Comparisons of the concept for Internet addiction**

Name	Young	Wang	Davis	Grohol
Use of term	Internet addiction	Internet addiction disorder	Pathological Internet use	Pathological Internet use
Main dangerous group for addiction	Women	Young men	People who misunderstand their thoughts (cognition)	-
Cause	Negative emotional status (depression, hopelessness, stress, loneliness, pessimism), Making relationships	Making relationships, Socio-cultural factors	Self-doubt, low self-efficacy, negative self-appraisal	Unbalanced use (finding a new attractive activity)
Consequences	Disruption of normal life, Obsessive thoughts, Tolerance, Inability to cease, withdrawal	Disruption of normal life	Disruption of normal life	Disruption of normal life
Criteria for addiction	8-item questionnaire(1996) 20-item questionnaire(1998)	10-item questionnaire	-	-
Classification (process)	(Non-normal pattern) Significant problem user group, Frequent problem user group (normal pattern) Average on-line user group	Internet addiction group, light Internet addiction group, non Internet addiction group	Special pathological Internet use (e.g., for sexual, gambling, stock trading, auction purposes) Generalised pathological Internet use (comprehensive overuse)	Enhancement (obsession) of use  Disillusionment (avoidance)  Balance (normal)

## **Chapter 3 Young people and the Environment of Internet addiction**

### **3.1. Introduction**

Among social scientists, the social group of 'young people' have sometimes been characterised as risk-taking troublemakers (Miles, 2000; Muncie, 1999). They are faced with negative as well as positive factors in a new environment when seen through various mediators, such as the mass media or peers with deviant behaviour.

Internet addiction is regarded as one of the new troublesome, risk-taking behaviours among young people. The causes of their Internet addiction can be explored through seeing their environment from several perspectives. As mentioned in Chapter 2 above, in recent years, researchers studying the problems of Internet use have tried to find the causes mainly through considering the psychological symptoms of Internet addiction. One reason for this approach appears to be that it takes no longer to discuss these problems than it does to discuss other addiction problems.

In order to reduce or prevent harmful effects, only far-reaching policies will combat the existence of the above causes. Even though psychological approaches to Internet addiction may be less focused on environmental factors and more focused on explaining individual symptoms, the cause of Internet addiction seems to be related to environmental factors, as other addictions are. According to Plant and Plant (1992: 9-10), the environmental factors which lead to drug or alcohol misuse among young people can be illustrated variously, for example, peer relationships, family influences, socio-economic status, ideology/religion, education disturbance, and crime. These



factors may be linked to others, rather than functioning independently. In particular, young people's problems with substance abuse are prone to be triggered by peer pressure (Boys et al, 1999; Friedman and Glassman 2000; Urberg et al, 2003). In addition, family circumstances are also significant in conjunction with peer relationships (Plant and Plant 1992; Buysse, 1997).

In this context, the influence of peer/friend relationships and family relationships with young people may currently be more common factors worldwide than the other factors mentioned by Plant and Plant (1992). This chapter mainly describes these factors of peer/friend relationships and parenting as one aspect of family relationships. Recently, in Korea, parents have endeavoured to take control of their children's use of the Internet. Parenting styles may influence young people's patterns in using the Internet. For example, Cho et al (2002) point out that parents' authoritarian intrusiveness and patterns of neglect pattern may cause negative results for young people, such as problematic Internet use. Seong (2000) shows that permissive parents and their children tend to maintain good communication over children's use of the Internet.

However, the influence of such other factors as socio-economic status or culture may vary in different countries. Countries have their own peculiar historical, cultural and political background. Thus, these factors are described as sample cases rather than individual cases. These factors are described in terms of the Korean situation mainly as an example and as related to young people's problems in using the Internet; this is because Internet use in Korea is widespread and the country has with the fastest systems in the world (Paltridge, 2001).

### **3.2. Defining young people as the objective of this research**

In his dictionary of social welfare (1982), Timms uses the term ‘youth’ to refer to young people as a distinct social category. According to the Oxford Dictionary (Simpson and Weiner (eds), 1989) ‘youth’ describes young people collectively (6<sup>th</sup> definition) and, sometimes more widely, as the period between boyhood and mature age (7<sup>th</sup> definition).

Thomas and Pierson (1995:401-402), in their dictionary of social work define a young person as follows:

... a person between the ages of 14 and 17, that is the four years before a person reaches the age of majority. The definition by age is found in the largely repealed Children and Young Persons Act 1969, which also defines a child as under 14. However, the important CHILDRENS ACT has dropped this distinction and refers to all people aged under 18 as ‘children’.

According to Mead (1928), youth is a term used for those who are just passing through the transition to puberty. She investigated a group of ‘girls between 10 and 20 on the Samoan island of Tau’ (1928:109). Her research, from the 1920s, is an early example of a systematic ethnographic focus on youth. She also uses the term ‘adolescence’ to represent the time of life when there is ‘an orderly developing of a set of slowly maturing interests and activities’ (1928:129). In this context, social scientists often use the term ‘youth’ as a set of related ‘transitions’, a sequent set which young people pass through (Cole, 2001:243; Lindon, 1996:17). Schlegel and Barry (1991: 1-2) use the term ‘adolescence’ in an ethnographic survey of people between the ages of 11 and 17. However, they also mention that the term adolescence is related to dependency status rather than to age. They conceive ‘young people’ as socially midway between

childhood and adulthood. According to Amit (2001), the distinction between adolescence and youth as separate social stages is not common in the anthropological literature. Jones and Wallace (1992:3) state that the term 'youth' is linked with adolescence. Adolescence may be defined as the period of transition from dependent childhood to independent adulthood. Muncie (1999: 40) mentions that the concepts of 'youth' and 'adolescence' can be deconstructed using the same approach. Sometimes, the term 'young people' is used with the same meaning as 'children', when the term is used to mean 'sons or daughters' in relation to parents.

This background to 'youth' suggests a status and situation of negotiation and renegotiation in the process of solving the problems between young people and their parents and peers (Jones and Wallace, 1992:4). In Britain, for example, children and young people have to be educated and attend school until 16 and are under the supervision of parents or guardians. Children cannot make legal contracts or own property until a specific age – 18 years in England and Wales and 16 years in Scotland. They have to be protected by parents or guardians when they want to make binding decisions or perform legal acts. In other words, they are regarded as dependent upon an adult society (Coles, 1995).

The rights and responsibilities of young people, according to the law, are different from those of adults. In England and Wales, young people have certain responsibilities: for example, at the age of 10, they can be held responsible for a crime, may take part-time employment after the age of 13, are obliged to attend full-time education until the age of 16, and may vote, be sent to an adult prison and marry without their parents' permission at the age of 18. People under the age of 25 who are unemployed receive less in social

security payments than an adult (Muncie, 1999, Coles, 1995). Usually, the teenage years of 13-19 are regarded as synonymous with youth. However, the period of being a young person appears more or less to have expanded since the 1970s (Muncie 1999). As young people are a barometer of social change, many of the problems of society may be addressed through young people (Miles, 2000:2).

The rights and responsibilities of adults may be different for young people, according to different socio-economic conditions or the different state institutions. The legal definitions of youth may be change as social conditions change. For example, in Korea, which is the main object of the present research, the Act which protects young people from harmful circumstances reveals the range of activities expected at different ages.

Fostering policy is managed by MCT on the basis of the 'Framework Act on Juveniles'. Chapter 3 of this Act defines 'young people' as people between 9 and 24 years old. This range shows the symbolic meaning of the term in relation to fostering young people rather than indicating the details of the support for them. In the most relevant part of the Act, young people are mostly defined as being up to 18 years old. For example, the Children's Welfare Act refers to everyone under 18 as 'children' (Kim, S-A, 1999). Another important law, the 'Records, Video Products and Games Software Act', managed by MCT on the basis of the 'Framework Act on Juveniles', defines 'young people' as being below 18 years old. Even the high school students over 18 years old are included within the scope of young people in this act (Korean Game Institute, 2003). However, the 'Juvenile Protection Act' (1999), managed and revised by the Prime Minister's Commission for Youth Protection, which controls the youth policy for all

ministries , defines young people as below 19 years old (Hong and Nam, 2000:420).

The definition of young people in the Act is covered by a text which excludes people only after 1<sup>st</sup> January of the year when they become 19 years old. This is confusing. In other words, the purpose for young people is that they should be protected during the period between their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and the last day of the year in which this birthday occurs, even though they are over 18. This specifically relates to those in the third grade of high school. That is to say, the government undertakes to protect high school students, even though some of them are above 18. In this context, teenage middle school and high school students, effectively ‘young people’, were chosen as the objective of the present research. This is Muncie’s (1999) considered suggestion, despite the different opinions and definitions mentioned above. As targets for protection from harmful circumstances, they are Korean middle school and high school students (usually 13-15 and 16-18 years old respectively).

### **3.3. Young people’s peer and family relationships**

#### **3.3.1. Peer relations among young people**

##### **Peer relationships and Internet**

Friend and peer relationships exist widely from infancy through youth and through to adulthood (Erwin, 1993). People grow up with relationships involving friends and peers who meet frequently at school and in communities. In these relationships, young people may feel more sensitive and affective than with other age groups.

Conventionally, peer relationships are derived from children’s relationships. The term

‘peer’ means ‘of equal standing’. Peer relationships are recognised as a state of equivalence between individuals and their friends (Hartup 1983:106). Even though peers are of equal standing, their conditions are basically not the same, for example, through their differing levels of intelligence, physical strength and even external features. Recently, Hawley (2002:173) has shown through his research, the objects of which were preschool children, that peer groups have also a ‘social rank structure’ based on dominance status. Some group members may dominate the hierarchy. He points out that social dominance status most probably reflects ‘children’s relative competitive ability’ in their group. Recently, the Internet may have emerged among children as a new factor of social dominance status. For example, as children have increased their use of the Internet, they show differences in their capacity to use the computer/Internet according to different factors such as parental concern (Holloway and Valentine, 2003: 27) or individual enthusiasm (2003:51).

Rapidly increasing use of the Internet makes parents recognise the need to control their children to protect them from its darker side (Aftab, 2000: 59). For example, Oravec (2000) suggests that young people’s access to pornography was linked to their parents’ control. Young people may be sensitive to the negative effects as well as the positive effects of the Internet in their relationships. Some scholars point out that the nature of young people’s relationships with their parents’ changes. At first parents have a central position, but as children grow up this is taken over by the children’s peers (Furman and Buhrmester 1992; Buysse, 1997). In other words, with age, young people’s peer groups may enlarge and weaken the effectiveness of parents’ supervision. Greenberg and his colleagues (1983) mention that the quality of the relationships

between parents and their children may endure longer than those with peers, according to the extent of the attachment involved. Young people also need maternal support. Thus, continuous support for their children and appropriate controls to protect them from the dangers of negative affects at the hands of their peers are essential elements for parenting.

Sometimes, the peer group can become a 'clique' in which everyone is known to the rest and interactive relationships form between the young people. These groups mould their various relationships outside the home (Gifford-Smith and Brownell, 2003:236) and become spending more time their peers as the children grow older. The peer groups may exercise pressure on members to follow their norms or standards. They may influence their members in various ways, such as in school achievements or in social behaviours (Hallinan, 1980:322). In recent years, the context of peer interaction may develop rapidly without control by parents. For example, peer relationships have been built online, by such means as virtue communities and chat rooms. Tapscott (1998) illustrates the variety of young people's relationships in the cyberworld through chat rooms as follows:

Chat rooms are not free from assertions of power or hierarchy – every exchange presents a drama in group relations; alliances, attacks, acts of diplomacy and bullying (1998:62).

In response to the new cyber relationships, the parents' function of being the most prominent provider of support may shrink as young people grow older. In contrast, peers may emerge as more and more important sources of support, as mentioned above by Furman and Buhrmester (1992) and Buysse (1997). Young people can access the

Internet to meet their peers without interruptions from parents. They may form new interactive relationships mediated through the Internet in cyber space, as well as in real life. Young people's interactive relationships develop into differentiated social interaction and social reciprocities (Wolak et al, 2003). They may become closer because of spending so much time talking about various topics.

Traditionally, the interactive relationship of children and young people through their relationships in real life, contributes to individual growth through learning and training in social values (Erwin 1993). In other words, peers' socialisation may develop through exchange patterns such as that of give and take. Recently, the method of exchange has adapted the Internet as a new kind of mediation. For example, Holloway and Valentine (2003) discover learning patterns among peers through ICT (Information Communication Technology) as follows:

... children found ICT lessons more relaxed than other classes despite the fact that many would eventually gain an educational qualification in the subject. This is because of the level of autonomy children have in relation to their learning...The techno boys, as we call them, are generally highly technologically literate... Their interest in ICT is an important influence on their social networks because they choose to 'hang out' with other boys who share their interests (Holloway and Valentine, 2003:49-50).

Through the Internet young people engage in social interaction such as social networks. Social interaction may be different according to relationships of acquaintance and friendship (Hartup, 1983:124). Social interaction is expressed as social influence through the impact of the environment involving peer relationships and friendships. Social influence can take several forms, with positive as well as negative reinforcement



(Bear, 1993:113). In the negative aspect, these relationships may also supply the opportunity to learn misbehaviour. In particular, young people have many opportunities to encounter both positive and negative influences in places such as schools and the community. These opportunities may become more varied by way of increasing the time spent on meetings through the Internet, as Greenfield (1999) notes:

Children also use the Internet for their social meeting place to talk, gossip and just 'hang out' (Greenfield, 1999:199).

Recently, young people have found it easy to develop their activities in groups through the Internet (Tapscott, 1998). Their relationships in their peer groups may be affected by various factors. Hartup (1983:124) points out that an individual's popularity and status are the main factors in peer relationships. Popularity is expressed as likeability, in that other people seek a congenial individual to associate with. Also, status among young people may mean that other people recognise an individual's worthiness to be a member of the group. Moreover, popularity and status may be related to leadership, social power and the prestige of individuals among their peers. Gifford-Smith and Brownell (2003:237) refer to the situation whereby popular people are those generally liked by their peers and rarely disliked.

Peer acceptance may be influenced by relationships such as popularity and status. Young people give the highest status to peers who are positively preferred by others. These can influence others to follow their example. Young people tend to use the Internet as a tool for building their popularity and maintaining their status. For example, Holloway and Valentine (2003:51-52) mention that young people like 'techno boys' who 'take the lead' in using ICT in the marginal social groups such as their school.

These young people are central to the lives of the peers who like using ICT as an element in their friendships.

Accordingly, with the recent spread of Internet use, the Internet itself may create a situation in which a young person can become a leader through an his/her ability, such as technological literacy.

### **Peer pressure and harmful influence**

In the peer group, young people may have different status according to their likeability or social acceptability. One of the most meaningful factors in forming peer groups is similarity among peers. This similarity contributes to making friendships and moulding peer groups on the basis of sharing with each other (Gifford-Smith and Brownell, 2003:266). So as to easily exchange members' experiences or abilities, a peer group is apt to form in conditions of close location and immediate social environment, such as in the same class (George and Hartmann, 1996:2302). Peer group characteristics tend to change as time goes on. Members may be required not only to make an effort to cooperate, compete and maintain morale but also to conform and to maintain the stability of the group. Young people who are excluded or dropped from the clique of a peer group may feel isolated (Hallinan, 1980:322). Isolation from peers, due, for example, to lack of experience with common topics or contravening the standards of the group, can result in a situation whereby the young person is left with no choices either positive or negative (Erwin, 1993).

A peer's impact is revealed not only through positive but also negative factors (Bear, 1993). Young people can choose among them at will. Unlike adults, in the process of

choosing, young people may prefer their peers' attentions rather than significant considerations of positive and negative factors. For example, young people are shown to obey peer pressure as the norm, even with regard to substance abuse. Young people are highly vulnerable to being influenced within their social environment (Boys et al, 1999).

Even though people are the same age, they do not have the same abilities or status, as mentioned above. Acceptance among peers is often mainly related to an individual's ability. Young people are therefore required to learn and develop their abilities and status in order to make good interactive relationships; it is of course useful for them to be continuously improving their intelligence and social skills.

However, this tendency may also be harmful, as it can lead to misbehaviour, such as the development of drug-taking because they accept this habit on the part of their close peers (Hofler, et al, 1999). The tendency is the more pronounced because young people may spend more time in peer interaction as they grow from children to teenagers. As they are growing up, they want to have fun through relationships (Erwin, 1993; Lindon, 1996:141-142).

Young people who enjoy high quality relationships with their friends may be more likely to change their behaviour to please their friends. Thus, they may easily adopt the habits of their friends in the peer group (Bukowski et al, 1996). Friendships are special and voluntary close relationships in peers. Hartup (1983:137) points out that friendships are dyadic with specific attachment, but vulnerable. Through all ages, reciprocity is important in the friendships. Children and young people regard cooperation and

intimacy as the elements of friendship. Similarity, and in particular, behavioural similarities, are determinant elements for selecting relationships among young people (143). With regard to making friends, young people's differences may also, by exchanging different experiences, influence the interaction within friendships. Young people choose their friends on the basis of their reputation for having similar qualities to their own. Factors determining the quality of the friendship include intimacy, care and support (Hartup, 1996:5-7).

This reciprocal influence may develop the relationship. Young people regard their friends' similarities of behaviours, attitudes and personality as important factors in making and becoming friends (Lindon 1996; Urberg et al, 2003). They want to find some similarity or common factor in their friends. These similarities may exist before making friends, or emerge afterwards through the social relationship (Rugkasa et al, 2001). Thus, similarities may also be a motivation for making friends. Making friends can depend on proximity factors such as frequent contact through the same classmates or neighbours (Lindon, 1996; Urberg et al, 2003).

Sometimes, young people using substances may influence other friends to use them. The similarities between friends can cause harmful results (Hofler et al, 1999). For example, a non substance-using young person may have a friend who uses substances. In such cases the non-users may unintentionally come into contact with similar substances to their friends'. Through this process, alcohol and cigarette use may even become widespread among young people (Lindon, 1996:176-177). In particular, the drinking of alcohol can be predicted as influenced by peers (Bear, 1993). Moreover,

friends can link negative peer affiliations through this pattern and begin to use substances (Fergusson and Horewood, 1997).

Young people enjoy their friendships through trusting each other and receiving pleasure from them. Unlike parent relationships, however, such friendships cannot guarantee protection or legal safeguards. Young people are sometimes encouraged by peer pressure to take up peer behaviours, even though those behaviours may be harmful.

However, not all young people are influenced to adopt harmful behaviour by their peers. If they do not obey peer pressure, some of them may become isolated from their peer group altogether. Or their relationships may change and become less close. Sometimes, peer groups may victimise a member who reluctantly follows the group. Victimisation of students among peers is an important issue in young people's relationships (Smith et al, 1993; Cowie and Berdondini 2001).

This system of peer pressure may be expected in young people's choice of important factors in life. Their preferences may include negative as well as positive factors. Peers may equally have similar good habits, such as studying, as well as bad habits. Recently, the presence of the Internet has increased the factor of proximity. It may be possible for peers to lead the way in using the same Internet communities or playing the same games. Their influence may be found in real life as well as cyber life. These environments seem to spread with the development of technology, particularly given the quality and speed of computers.

### **3.3.2. Parenting and young people's behaviour**

Young people may be exposed to harmful influences from others in situations where they are without the control or the full control from parents or teachers. Most parents try to carry out suitable parenting so as to control their children and prevent them from learning such misbehaviours from others.

The main difficulty in parenting is finding ways to support and control one's children's behaviour and choices (Noller and Callan, 1991:1). Parenting styles have been studied as the main focus in the relationship between parents and children. Parenting style is generally conceptualised according to two dimensions, namely, control, which is expressed by parental demands, and warmth, which concerns the parental response. In these areas, Diana Baumrind is one of the most active contributors (Wolfradt et al 2003; Cho et al., 1999). Baumrind (1967:59) mentions that the expected effects of parenting are related to parents' control and demands for their children as well as to their nurturance and communication with children. Baumrind's work (1968; 1971) considers two major dimensions for parent-child relationships, parental control and parental acceptance. She uses these dimensions of control and acceptance to classify parenting styles, employing terms such as 'authoritarian', 'authoritative' and 'permissive'.

Whilst children may reveal two types of response to their parents' appeal or submission, parents are seen as having a tendency to dominance or nurturance (Hartup 1983: 108). To a parent with a dominant attitude, rules should be enforced strictly, with low levels of acceptance by the child. Baumrind (1968) describes the tendency as follows:

The authoritarian parent... attempts to shape, control, and evaluate the behaviour and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of

conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority ...values obedience as a virtue and favours punitive, forceful measures to curb their will at points where the child's actions or beliefs conflict with what they think is right conduct ...believes in inculcating such instrumental values as respect for authority, respect for work and respect for the preservation of order and traditional structure. ...does not encourage verbal give or take, believing that the children should accept their word for what is right (Baumrind, 1968: 261).

If their parents have a dominant attitude, young people may increasingly be in conflict with them parents as they grow older (Furman and Buhrmester, 1992; Buysse1997). Coercive parent-child relationships may lead to child aggression and antisocial behaviour (Kim et al, 1999). Thus, Kim and her colleagues (1999) mention that young people with strict and coercive parents tend to be more deviant than young people with democratic and autonomous parents. Noller and Callan (1991) point out that young people with authoritarian and coercive parents may be influenced in some negative ways, as follows:

They are more likely to engage in exploring identity alternatives, to adopt external, rather than internalised moral standards, to have lower self-confidence and self-esteem, and to have problems in using their own judgement as a guide to behaviour (Noller and Callan, 1991:17).

Since the early 1970s, Baumrind's main theory of parenting, with its authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parents, has contributed to the study of parenting styles. The authoritative model in particular is recognised as the desirable one for parenting, being associated with supportive behaviour and strong academic performance. This style is recognised by raised levels of acceptance and control (Shucksmith et al, 1995; Mantzicopoulos and Oh-Hwang, 1998). Baumrind (1968) describes the authoritative

parenting style as follows:

The authoritative parent... attempts to direct the child's activities but in a rational, issue-oriented manner. ...encourages verbal give and take, and shares with the child the reasoning behind their policy ...values both expressive and instrumental attributes, both autonomous self will and disciplined conformity ... exerts firm control at points of parent-child divergence, but does not hem the child in with restrictions ... recognizes her own special rights as an adult, but also the child's individual interests and special ways (Baumrind, 1968: 261).

Parents have distinct roles as supporters (Nollar and Callan, 1991). A young person's relationships with parents and peers include both support and conflict. Generally, low support from parents leads to behavioural problems in young people. The absence of family support may lead young people to risk negative influence from peers (Lindon, 1996; Buysse, 1997). Also, a high level of conflict with parents may be related to misbehaviours. It may bring out weaknesses in their family bonding (Kim et al., 1999). In contrast, the authoritative parent uses reasoned control as well as support and concern. In other words, even though such a parent sets firm limits, s/he demonstrates acceptance with explanations of the background of parental opinions and understanding between parent and child.

Authoritative parents may not only affirm the child's present qualities, but also set standards for future conduct. They use reason as well as power to achieve their objectives (Baumrind, 1968). Under coercive and authoritarian parenting, young people may have problems with autonomy and the formation of identity, due to too little willingness to explore questions of identity (Noller and Callan, 1991). Baumrind's study of the effects of the three styles found that children with authoritative parents were the



most autonomous, as well having high levels of self-esteem. Children with permissive parents, however, appeared to be less well developed. The children with authoritarian parents were midway between those who had authoritative and those who had permissive parents (Baumrind 1967; 1968). When young people feel that they are receiving love, support and autonomy, together with the rational interest of their parents, they are more positive themselves and more confident in their work (Steinberg et al., 1992). In contrast, the lack of social bonding with parents may lead to delinquent behaviour under peer influence. Through their deviant peers, young people are apt to learn similar misbehaviours, including the use of addictive substances (Urberg et al., 2003). Instead of parents' support, the social support of their peer groups may include negative effects. Thus the social support of a deviant peer group may lead and influence young people towards deviant behaviour (Buysse, 1997). When parent-child attachment and the bond between parent and child is healthy and close, these factors can come into play, protecting the child against negative effects (Friedman and Glassman, 2000).

The permissive parent case is linked to low levels of control. According to Baumrind (1968: 256), the tendency of the permissive parent can be described as follows:

...attempts to behave in a non-punitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner toward the children's impulses, desires, and actions. ...consults with children about policy decisions and give explanations for family rules ...allows the child to regulate children's own activities as much as possible, avoids the exercise of control, and does not encourage children to obey externally defined standards. ...attempts to use reason but not overt power to accomplish their ends.

This permissive style is divided by Maccoby and Martin (1983:44-45) into two kinds, an indulgent-permissive pattern and an indifferent-uninvolved pattern. Basically,

permissive parents reveal a tolerant and warm attitude which accepts their children's desires. However, in their later work, they find that many permissive parents also reveal cool or uninvolved attitudes. These parents include not only indulgent ones but also indifferent-neglecting cases. For example, indulgent cases are associated with the acceptance as appropriate of children's behaviour and attitudes. Indifferent-neglecting cases (the indifferent-uninvolved pattern) involve low levels of control but also a low level of acceptance of their children's behaviour and attitudes. In this context, Maccoby and Marin classify four parenting styles, namely, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive (indulgent), and indifferent (neglectful).

According to Shucksmith et al. (1995), the most common parenting style for Scottish young people in early middle adolescence is either permissive or authoritative. As less common parenting styles, Shucksmith and colleagues refer to the authoritarian and neglectful styles. They indicate that parenting style is related to children's age. For example, the parents of younger adolescents tend to show more authoritative and authoritarian styles, whereas the parents of older adolescents exhibit permissive and neglectful styles. This result is parallel to the research results of Paulson and Sputa (1996), which find a change in parenting styles according to the age of their children. They summarise these four parenting styles in the following patterns:

- a) authoritative style – high demand and high responsiveness
- b) authoritarian style – high demand and low responsiveness ,
- c) permissive style – low demand and high responsiveness,
- d) Indifferent or neglectful style is low demand and low responsiveness.

Through their research with ninth grade and twelfth grade young people in the U.S.,

they suggest that young people in the twelfth grade and their parents were less responsive and demanding than young people in the ninth grade and their parents.

Shucksmith et al. (1995) propose that parenting styles are linked to children's school disaffection and psychological health. The children of authoritative parents have a more positive assessment than those of other parents. The research of Steinberg et al. (1992) also points out that, in the 14-18 age group in the U.S., the children of authoritative parents have better school achievements than the children of other parents. They also suggested that authoritative parents who were warm, firm and democratic contributed to the academic success of their children.

Within some social cultures, the authoritarian style may be dominant, or even universal. For example, the Korean father may seem to be an aloof and lonely figure of authority, although more recently the pattern can be seen to be gradually changing to something more democratic (You et al., 2000). The practice of traditional parents within Korea seems to be near to the authoritarian model. In Mantzicopoulos and Oh-Hwang's (1998) research, comparing Korean with American high school students, they point out that authoritative parents' children are linked with more mature psychosocial functions, such as self-reliance and work-orientation. In contrast, authoritarian and neglecting styles are linked with less mature psychosocial functions. In addition, they suggest that Korean young people had less mature psychosocial functions than their American equivalents, which in their view was caused by Korean culture. That is to say, the definition of psychosocial maturity was de-emphasised and dealt with as being inappropriate or impolite in the dominant culture of Korea. According to Vinden (2001), who studied the relationship between maternal parenting attitudes and children's

understanding, in a comparison of Korean American and Anglo-American families, Korean mothers' authoritarian parenting style is more demanding than that of American mothers. For example, Korean children must strictly obey their parents. However, for Korean mothers, these attitudes were linked with an emphasis on excelling in school and were in addition combined warmth and the enforcement of strict obedience.

Even authoritarian Korean parents can reveal elements of warmth, resembling that of authoritative parents. Even though Korean culture is basically dominant in its traditional background, parents do not always have one fixed parenting style such as authoritarian. In particular, with the new circumstances of widespread Internet use, what parents need is appropriate and considered parenting if their children are to be protected from harmful influences (Seong, 2000).

In summary, parenting styles can be related to attitudes towards children which are communicated to them and determine the emotional climate in which parents' behaviour is expressed. Usually, parent influence precedes peer relationships. Making and continuing good relationships between parents and children may make less deviant under peer influence. Children need to form relationships having internalised their parents' healthy attitudes (Freidman and Glassman, 2000). In contrast, coercive parenting and lack of monitoring may both lead to antisocial behaviours, as well as increased risk from deviant peers. One particular reason for this is that recently the time spent in conversation between parents and children has not only declined but has also made it more difficult to establish integration, and there is an increasing generation gap. For instance, the spread of other sorts of communication, including the Internet, reduces the time for families to relax at home together and makes conversation more difficult

because the young generation are used to information technology whilst their parents often find it difficult to access the Internet (Kim 1999). In Lee and Park's study (2001) of the influence of parenting and peer relationships on the development of children's self-reliance, they suggest that the influence of parents declines, while peer influence increases, as the age of the children rises. For instance, they illustrate that the influence of the parent at 10 years of age is higher than this influence at 16 years of age, while peer group influence at 16 years of age is higher than it was at 10 years of age. Nevertheless, both parents and peers continue to exert a certain level of influence from childhood to adolescence.

### **3.4. Historical, cultural, and socio-economical environment factors: South Korea**

#### **3.4.1. Confucianism and Korean parenting**

##### **Confucianism and Family background**

It is generally accepted that Korea is the most Confucian country in all of East Asia (Koh, 1996: 191). Confucianism still dominates the emotional basis of Koreans, in particular in family relationships. All subsequent Korean lives have been dominated by Confucian systems and values. The ethical-moral system originated by Confucius (551-479 BC) influences all relationships in the work place and the state as well as the family. The specific factor of Confucian doctrine is the hierarchical structure, which is the relationship between superiors and subordinates (Kim 1996:204-205; Kim et al, 1997:185-186; Hyun 2001: 205).

Respect for others according to seniority is a pillar of Korea's Confucian tradition

(Lee, 2002: 228; Choi, 1999b: 118-119). In the historical Silla dynasty (BC 57-AD 935), the education of young members of the elite – the way of the Flower Youth – was considered important, in accordance with the Confucian virtues of humaneness, righteousness, propriety, filial piety and loyalty, (*Hwarangdo*). Since then, Confucianism has become the basis of education through the Dynasties and the Confucian code of conduct prescribes the principles of personal relationships. For example, it has emphasised the relationships between ruler and minister, parent and child, older and younger brother and husband and wife. In Korea, rulers, parents, older brothers and husbands are regarded as possessing wisdom, responsibility and benevolence. In response, government ministers, children, younger brothers and wives should possess the virtues of obedience, loyalty and respect. This principle has underlain the whole hierarchical social structure (Kim Y-C, 2001, Hyun 2001, Yao, 2000:116; Shin 1999:218).

Among Koreans, the ideal family seems to be a complete community and to stand for a typically well-ordered society. This family principle is widespread not only in the workplace but also in government organisations and systems (Choi, 1999 a: 11, Hyun 2001). The family is also recognised as the ideal model of a political community. That is to say, for Koreans the family has traditionally been the explicit example of the state (Shin 1999; Park, 2001).

Unlike the present generation of young people, the older generation has had a conservative attitude towards adjusting to change. Moreover, some parents have to ask their children to acknowledge their authority, which a previous generation would have taken for granted. Traditionally, individuals achieve identity solely through family membership and due to their family background. They try to honour the obligation of

adhering to the collective will of their family rather than following their individual will. Against this background, children must respect their parents not only during their lives but also after their death, for the sake of maintaining Confucian traditions (Shin and Shaw 2003:337; Lee et al, 1999).

For example, the Confucian tradition of ancestor worship involves worship both through one's sense of lineage and also by the sense of biological descent. This family communitarianism has established family life as the most estimable form of human existence. This includes some characteristics, which distinguish it from state communitarianism, as found in the West (Shin 1999; Park 2001; Min, 2002). The father is basically in charge of the household. Traditionally, the Korean leader-father is seen as an aloof, authoritarian figure, who can deal by himself with all the problems related to the family. (You et al, 2000). Traditional Korean family values consist of family orientation, interdependency, an authoritarian structure and family loyalty, in contrast with Western values, which are an individual orientation, independence, a democratic structure and autonomy (Kim, et al 1997). However, as Korean society became industrialised and urbanised, traditional values have become diluted and Westernised (Shin, 1999).

### **Changes in Family Structure**

The size of the average family has declined from 5.2 in 1970 to 4.5 in 1980, 3.7 in 1990 and 3.1 in 2000 (Korea National Statistical Office, 2001). The changes to family culture have moved in the direction of the nuclear family and away from the extended family, while individualism, rather than communitarianism, has grown in strength (You et al,

2000). Young people experience radical changes, including physical and psychological ones, compared with other age groups. If they are not supported by suitable parenting and other factors, they may run the risk of developing problems, resulting, perhaps, in some form of crime or emotional disturbance (Kim 1999).

These deviations may relate to changes in the concept of the family, such as the weakening of its cultural and traditional structure. Moreover, such changes are linked to changes in Korean society which developed from a traditionally agricultural one (Cho, 2002) to an industrialised system. During the processes of urbanisation and industrialism, Korean families have changed in function and in scale, from the traditional family to the nuclear family (Shin 1999).

Accordingly, the merits of the traditional family system have been devalued, namely, cooperation with brothers or relatives and respect for old people. However, the traditional Confucian culture has stayed in the mindset not only of adults but also among young people (Lee et al, 1999). In future, it seems that young people will find it difficult to learn unity and continue with traditional virtues as the nuclear family increases further.

### **3.4.2. Historical and cultural background**

Korea, located on the north-eastern side of the Asian continent between China, Russia and Japan, has historical and geographic circumstances which have seen it compete with, fight or be compromised by its surrounding countries since its inception in 108 BC. Korea continued as a kingdom until 1910 when it was overpowered by Japan (Park E-K, 1994). The Wang Dynasty (918-1392) had encouraged Buddhism as a central ideology,



in order to develop and defend the country at a time when national divisions needed to unite through a religion. However, the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910) had previously emphasised the Confucian ideal, which focused on loyalty to the king and filial duty to parents, as a way of strengthen the position of the king and secure its legitimacy at a time of dynastic change. At this time, people were usually placed in an hereditary and hierarchical system not only by age but also by social status. For instance, during the Yi Dynasty, people were divided into *Yangban*, the higher level empowered to rule the common people, and *Pyongmin*, the lower level which had to obey the *Yangban*. Government officials, controlled by the King, consisted of *Yangban*. Because of this social placing, government officials used their power to dominate rather than take care of those whom they ruled (Oh, 1977:129-130, Kang 2001:5-9).

Between 1910 and 1945, the end of the Second World War, Korea was occupied by Japan, which also had a Confucian culture. The Korean people obeyed government officials who were controlled by Japan (Kim et al, 1997; Park E-K, 1994). After the Japanese surrender in 1945, the United States influenced the building of a democratic society in South Korea. In 1948 the Southern area of the Republic of Korea was established as a democratic government. The Northern end of the peninsula was ruled by Russian communism. The Korean War between the South and the North, which was incited by communists and lasted between 1950 and 1953, ruined the economy. After the war, South Korea struggled with a difficult economic situation and political confusion. The democratic government could not control the various demands by its people or improve the economic situation (Shin, 1996).

As a result, in 1961, a coup changed the government to a military regime. Thereafter Korea was ruled until 1987 by a series of military governments which carried out a policy of rigorous economic growth. During this period, the government asked for obedience, as Confucian Yi Dynasty had. These politicians were more accustomed to carrying out their own policies than to sharing ideas with citizens (Chung, 1993, Han, 1998). The newly elected democratic governments since the military regime have striven to find what people want instead of keeping the country under a dictatorship. However, the culture of the government, effectively bureaucratic, remains that of a group prepared to drive economic development, as previous regime did (Goh, 1999).

### **3.4.3. Economic policy driven by government**

#### **Fast and driven policy**

In 1961, South Korea changed from a democracy with political confusion to a dictatorship by President Park, who was a military general. Most of the government policy focused on developing the economy, even though the process of achieving this was inconvenient for people. The government enforced the meeting of targets as soon as possible in order to bring the country out of poverty (Chung, 1993). For instance, the government not only took comprehensive steps to encourage exports, namely tax exemptions, but also provided an indirect social capital establishment for roads and harbours. At the same time, the government encouraged the inflow of foreign capital (Yun, 2003: 85). The government developed the economy very powerfully through its '5-year plans for economic development' since 1962. Most of the country's major plans were led by the government, who compelled obedience under the ideas of traditional

Confucianism (Chung, 1993, Goh 1999). As a result, during the 1960s the main emphasis of industrialisation was on light industries such as garments and textiles, as well as the agriculture. In the 1970s the focus moved to heavy industry such as steel, industrial chemistry, and construction. In the 1980s the focus changed again to the manufacture of automobiles, electrical appliances and shipbuilding, while in the 1990s the main industries promoted information and communication technology (Lee K-Y, 2002).

As the '5-year economic development plans' have continued too succeed one another, the economic situation has improved, from a GNI per capita of US\$79 in 1960, to US\$249 in 1970, US\$1,598 in 1980, US\$5,886 in 1990; and to US\$11,385 in 1996 (Korean National Statistical Office, 2003).

### **The Economic Crisis and the Information Technology industry**

In 1997, Korea experienced an economic crisis caused by a shortage of foreign currency in the global economy; it was caused by a mistaken policy on the part of the government, even though there was some conjecture of a conspiracy by American investors seeking the future control of the Asian economy. One example of the government's mistaken policy was the moral hazard brought by the growth-oriented policies to financial affairs, in the mistaken belief that they would improve Korea's competitive position vis-à-vis other countries. This situation made it possible to borrow and invest excessively in several sectors (Lee, 1998).

However, in a few years, the economic situation recovered from the crisis, with per capita GNI rising to US\$10,013 in 2002 from US\$6,744 in 1998 (Korean National Statistical Office 2003). The economic situation recovered for a short period because

information technology firms had invested for a long time in a policy to overcome the economic crisis (Song and Kim, 2002). For instance, exports from 1997 to 2000 relating to the recovery situation of various IT products, such as semi conductors, have increased continuously as follows: US\$29,585 million in 1996; US\$31,249 million in 1997; US\$30,525 million in 1999; US\$39,958 million in 1999; and US\$51,199 million in 2000 (The Ministry of Information and Communication, 2003 a: 49).

### **3.5. Summary**

Young people are described as passing through a set of related ‘transitions’ toward adulthood when they can make decisions by themselves without the protection of their parents. In view of the need to protect young people, they are regarded as dependent upon an adult society. Those who are to be protected and fostered are usually below 19 years old, although the range has more or less expanded since the 1970s. The object of the present research is people of the middle and high school age-range within the group needing protection.

One of the peculiarities of the generation growing up is that the influence of their peer groups has escalated. In contrast, their parents’ supervision and control have weakened. Young people have given and taken skills and information from what they have learnt in their relationships outside the family. Their popularity and status may be related to their relations with the leaders among their peers. Sometimes, their behaviour may influence that of their friends to bad effect as well as to good effect. Young people are concerned about the isolation which results from not following their peer’s norms or suggestions. However, families which maintain inappropriate control may be putting their children at risk from peer pressure. The parents’ attitudes in such families may lead

to the children's not being monitored enough to understand their own situation, because they are not in fact spending enough time under the direct supervision of their parents. Alternatively, in cases where parents exercise too much control and oppression over their children, those children are apt to respond with deviant behaviour.

Under the new situation of widespread Internet use, young people can influence each other not only beneficially but also in disadvantageous ways. For example, Korean young people can access high quality Internet services which are supplied by a development-driven government policy. They are in a situation where obedience, loyalty and respect for adults are basic virtues. In the prevailing circumstances, peer relationships may contribute to young people's spending more and more time online.

## **Chapter 4. Perspectives of power**

Young people experience negative as well as positive pressures among peers and friends. In family relationships, their decisions are sometimes influenced by their parents. They may not be able to avoid being influenced by the relationships which exert power over their lives. Korean society seems under the influence of Confucian culture to surround young people with power structures which distinguish between persons of higher and lower status. This chapter seeks to describe why there is a need for power perspectives and what the concepts of power are.

### **4.1. Why is a power perspective needed?**

In general, people know what the word ‘power’ means. It is a basic aspect of people’s everyday experience. However, defining ‘power’ precisely for the purposes of research is not a simple task. According to Lukes (1978:633), there are several contentious perspectives from which to focus, such as what ‘property’ and ‘relationship’ are ‘possessed’ or ‘exercised’ in power. In the present research, the Internet addiction pattern among young people may be influenced by factors in their experience. These factors may relate to the power used by someone or some people among all those who surround the young people.

Lukes points out that power refers to the notion of ‘the bringing about of consequences with no restriction on what the consequences might be or what brings them about’ (1978:634-635). This power is recognized as a feature of all human actions in the

generic sense of power relating to 'cause' (Scott 1994). Power may be exercised through some relationship with a young person, as well as the circumstances surrounding young people.

Young people in Korea seem to have been trained in stringent power relationships as exercised by adults in the country's hierarchical society (Shin 1999). For example, whenever young people leave the house to go to school or come back home, they have been taught to bow to their parents as a courtesy. In school, from the pupils' earliest days to the end of high school, before the start and close of each lecture they have to bow to the teacher (Byun, 1994). In each case it is an expression of respect. Such patterns are derived from the Confucian tradition in which they have been disciplined to respect their elders (Choi, 1999b). These customs have trained young people to be 'obedient children' in the dominant culture through their relationship with adults, and in Korea they are seen as virtuous (Byun, 1994:51-52). It is worth noting that the customs at school are directed by a member of the class who has been elected its president of the class and who also has other duties (see below p68).

According to Foucault's (1977) 'Discipline and Punishment', people needed delegated supervision in order to discipline them to meet surveillance at school as well as in the factory and the army. As in the example above, some students are chosen as presidents of the class. Foucault similarly describes the grading of surveillance power. It employed a sense of light punishments, as follows:

The workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (latenesses, absence, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech

(idle chatter, insolence), of the body ('incorrect' attitude, irregular gesture, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency). At the same time, by way of punishment, a whole series of subtle procedures was used, from light physical punishment to minor deprivations and petty humiliations (Foucault, 1977:178).

Foucault (1977) insists that the aim of the web of discipline is to make and generalise the obedient attitudes which become recognised as 'normal' behaviour:

The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenises, excludes. In short, it normalises (Foucault 1977:183).

In the process of making 'obedient persons', it seems that the class presidents take on a role which helps the teachers. Among Korean young people, the presidents have the responsibility of controlling their classmates to help them study (Byun, 1994). For example, the president can make them work quietly or can put a stop to idle chat during the study period, as well as in lectures. In addition, there are some criteria for the election of class presidents among young people, such as popularity and school achievement (Lee, J-G 2003:4-5). Accordingly, through their popularity and school achievements, young people may exercise an influence over their peers. It may be a factor in building the social hierarchy that young people are used to the exercise of power over one another, as well as through their relationships with adults. They seem to be familiar with the nature of the hierarchy. In addition, this seems to produce power through relationships, on the basis of their popularity and also through their ability, such as their academic achievement. These relations may be linked to the power which they produce and exercised over other young people.



According to Dahl (1957), power is expressed as follows:

Power is defined in terms of a relation between people, and is expressed in simple symbolic notation. From this definition is developed a statement of power comparability, or the relative degree of power held by two or more persons (Dahl, 1957:201).

That is to say, the relations affected by someone may be expressed as their power. The present research is focused on understanding those experiences and relationships which lead to Internet addiction among young people. The relationships may be derived from the domination structures and enclosures of young people formed both by adults and by themselves. Foucault (1994: 228) mentions that power is a 'total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult'. Hence, the Internet addiction pattern needs to explore this total structure of the power exercised around young people. In this context, Foucault's power theory is adapted as a main framework.

## **4.2. Theoretical perspectives**

### **4.2.1. Power in Marxism**

As regards force and relationships, Marx (1993:88) points out that:

Individual consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social force of production and the relations of production.

In Marxism, power is stressed primarily as a class structure in economic production. This power already not only pervades all aspects of society but also makes social classes for the exercise of power. Thus, an economic-based power model produces various kinds of institutions for society, such as economic, political, military, cultural and so on (Poulantzas 1968, Poulantzas 1986). This is caused by people's patterns of production, which they must use as goods and services in their lives through various modes of production. Society has always been dominated by the mode of economic production. Accordingly, the people who control this mode in capitalist social relationships have to decide how to utilise technology to distribute the limited resources (Olsen, 1970a:71).

From the perspective of power, Marxism emphasises that the mode of economic production is based on class. At present, the pattern of Internet use among young people is partly considered an economic effect. However, in the circumstances in which the Internet is used, whereby almost all young people in Korea today have access to broadband and high quality computers, the class basis for the mode of economic production may not be the principal factor leading to Internet addiction. That is to say, it is useful only if the circumstances in which young people use the Internet differ widely due to big economic gaps.

Whilst Marxist power is seen to be centralised, something to be dominated by economic differences, the power connected with young people's use of the Internet is varied, dispersed and flexible. It may be difficult to see 'the total structure of actions' as Foucault calls it, in the relationships of power between Internet users during the cultural activities of their everyday lives, from the perspective of power in Marxism.

#### **4.2.2. The Elitist and Pluralist perspective**

Mosca (1958:383) mentions that a new method of political analysis is to study the formation and organisation of the 'ruling stratum in Italy' known by the name of the elite political class, in his 'final version of the theory of the ruling class'. Elites control a large proportion of the available resources. Thus, the elite are highly effective in exercising power throughout society. The elite also makes use of various techniques to rule their society, including the control of government and domination of the economy (Michels, 1915). Michels' study of society, 'Political Parties' is influenced by Max Weber (Michels, 1915:21). According to Weber (1986:28), domination is recognised as one of the most important bases of social action. The concept of domination is an important element in the power of elitism. Concerning power, it refers to a minority in whose hands lies power, wealth or privilege (Olsen and Marger, 1993). The notion of elitism was that the concentration of social power which small groups of elites control is predictable in all societies (Olsen and Mager, 1993).

Most parents in Korea support their children's education, including a university course, even though they may go into debt to do so (Shin, 1999). This idea of meritocracy has been widespread in Korean society as a whole, as well as in young people's lives. What is more, this parental ambition for their children to pursue elite positions may cause young people to improve their ability in using the Internet since their parents feel obliged to provide the best possible facilities for them as soon as they can. However, the concept of elitism is less helpful when exploring the flexible relationship among young people as it is difficult to distinguish between the elite and the rest and divide young people into two distinct groups

Pluralism is expressed as an idea of diversity or multiplicity, which can consist of many things. The term is complex, because it can be used in both a normative and descriptive sense (Olsen, 1970c:182-183). However, devotees of pluralism are sometimes criticised. For example, it is difficult for pluralists to have a meaningful political voice. Compared to elitists, pluralists tend to be ill-organised. From the perspective of Marxists, they produce the structural inequalities caused by the system of ownership within capitalism. In addition, the state may be inclined in favour of business interests rather than those of citizens or working groups (Heywood, 2000:177).

Pluralism, however, is difficult to use as a main framework for analysis because the variety of perspectives on pluralism means that theories multiply.

### **4.3. Using Foucault's theory**

#### **4.3.1. Introduction to Foucault's power perspective**

Foucault's interest in power seems first to have shown itself in the 1960s in his study of madness. He shows historically the knowledge and disciplines of power through human experience, beginning with a study of asylums. He was interested in the topics of distinguishing the permitted from the forbidden, the normal from the pathological, through a study of prisons. In particular, he stresses the mode of one's relation to oneself through a study of the history of sexuality. His examination of power/knowledge is one of the main areas of his work (Foucault 1980b; 1978; 1971).

In order to understand his perspective on power, it is helpful first to look at other people's perspective on it. With regard to power, Weber introduced the principles of

charisma, tradition and rational legality. These types are determined by the source of power, *Herrschaft* (a translation of 'domination' or 'authority') (Clegg, 2001). Weber's view of power, which influenced the concept of elitism, stresses the possession of power as a way of being powerful (Michels 1915). This understanding is related to the effect of power. Power understood as possession demands resistance. As mentioned above, power imparts a 'generic sense of the power-relating cause'; in order to overcome resistance to it, it must dominate (Jordan, 1999:9-10). This domination is expressed as the possibility of one person's imposing his will upon another person's behaviour (Weber 1986:29).

Foucault was interested in power in the form of domination and subjection. Foucault's view that domination is created and sustained is similar to Weber's (Jordan 1999:18). However, Weber thinks of power as possession, whereas Foucault points out that power is not a thing possessed by anybody through the means of acquisition, seizing or sharing (Foucault 1978:94; Jordan 1999:16).

Instead, for Foucault, power is exercised in the relations between different fields and institutions of the state (Foucault 1978; Danaher et al, 2000:70-71). In this process, the state may find it well beyond its capacity to manage every aspect of actual power relations.

Foucault also disagrees with the Marxist theory which denounces those patterns of false bourgeois knowledge, even though his earlier perspective was derived from Marxist theory (Gordon, 1994). It seems that Marxist theory masked the realities of exploitation in capitalist society. Foucault was interested in the role of knowledge in the exercise of power, when it is useful rather than false (Gordon, 1994:xvi).

#### **4.3.2. Discourse and power**

The simple definition of discourse is that is a conversation between people or a single utterance. In addition, discourse can also be extended to mean the entire social system which constitutes the social and political world (Howarth, 2000:2). For Foucault, discourses are included under the definition of language in action. He points out that everything which is revealed between ourselves and the forms of our experience is caused by the ways in which we act, speak and make sense of things (Danaher, et al, 2000).

Foucault had begun to mention the relationship between power and knowledge in various ways after writing his 'Discipline and Punishment' and the first volume of 'The History of Sexuality' (Foucault 1977; 1978). He set out to revitalise philosophical reflections through attempting a merger of philosophy and history (Gane, 1986). He explains that modern philosophy derives from the will to inquire into the historical emergence of adult autonomous reason. Its theme relates to the history of reason, of rationality, in the great forms of science, technology and political organization (Merquior, 1985). Through the study of history, Foucault discovers the relations of disciplines and social practices connected with power (Rabinow, 1991:5). His studies, such as the archaeologies of madness and the power to punish, reveal a classification of periods (Foucault, 1972). This classification was encapsulated in the term 'episteme'.

Foucault (1972) thought in terms of discourse being located in 'episteme', as follows:

This episteme may be suspected of being something like a world-view, a slice of history common to all postulates, a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape...By

episteme, we mean, in fact, the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, science, and possible formalised systems (Foucault, 1972:191).

Ziporyn (1992) points out that a disease, for instance, is not a fixed entity for all time. Instead, it is a useful classification dependent on society's current discourse. That is to say, some diseases may not be recognised as diseases in different cultures and different historical periods. For example, Hacking (1995) mentions the emergence, disappearance and re-emergence of Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) in his investigation of the historical formation of the disorder as a product of very particular relationships. The relationships include multiplicity, memory, discourse, knowledge and history. The social conditions of the production of truth are not always visible. Such 'truths' may become stabilized as people think of them as natural and true situations.

Foucault was interested in the historical production of truth through discourse. He sought to understand the processes by which certain concepts become accepted as true and the effects of these truths throughout people's lives (Hoy, 1986:17-18, Donnelly, 1986). For example, in Foucault's 'Madness and Civilisation', it is possible to see the way in which discourse changed over a period. In France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mad people were totally isolated from normal sane people. They were confined in special places which dealt with them as deviants, poor people or idlers. Until the Renaissance, however, madness had not been treated as a disease, but in the classical age of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, madness was dealt with as either idleness or illness (Foucault 1971:39-46). There were no psychotherapeutic aims in the classical mental hospitals. Instead, the intent was either to serve or to correct (Foucault, 1971:159).

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, through psychiatric reform, the insane were liberated from confinement, even sometimes from their chains, and were placed under a regime of benign education, whereas, in the asylum, they had been controlled as insane persons under the psychiatric discourse of the time. As madness was regarded as an illness, he believes that such treatment resulted in breaking up the dialogue between reason and insanity. Moreover, the asylum which held insane people revealed a completely authoritarian structure. But it is from the relation between madness and disorder that physicians derive their power to cure (Foucault, 1971).

In the present research, Internet addiction also needs to be explored as a discourse during the period of change from which flows the mainstream of thought, even though these problems have been emerging for only a short period. According to the current knowledge among people who lead mainstream thought, Internet addiction may lead either to normal or abnormal (pathological) situations. The present research needs to explore how this situation began and the way in which power has been produced or is exercised in the current situation. The discourse of this situation, led by mainstream thinkers, needs to be explored to discover whether such discourse matches the thinking of the younger generation and the situation itself, as well as discovering how this discourse was formed.

Foucault's views were formed historically, like everyone else's, mainly through discourses and are an autonomous system of statements. Another system of power/knowledge relations suggested by Foucault is also formed through these discourses (Howarth 2000:77-78).



#### **4.3.3. Foucault's power theory**

Foucault (1977) suggests the term 'power' in connection with the social forms which knowledge takes. His writings describe his studies of experiences such as madness, illness, criminality and sexuality. On the basis of his investigations, he suggests the concept of links between power and knowledge, as follows:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time a power relation (Foucault 1977:27).

Foucault (1970) mentions that knowledge is related to the operation of power in 'The order of things'. 'Power' as he describes it here is expressed in negative factors such as distinctions, order and exclusion. However, in 'Discipline and Punishment' he emphasises that 'the power of normalization' is exercised not only by prisons but also by our social mechanisms to procure health, knowledge and comfort, since what is intended is to alleviate pain, to cure and to comfort (Foucault, 1977).

He (1977) points out in 'Discipline and Punishment' the effectiveness or success of the panoptic schemes of society. For example, he explains that the situation of confinement has enlarged our lives beyond the compact prison, as follows:

...there was a whole series of mechanisms that did not adopt the 'compact' prison model improvement association, organisations that handed out assistance and also practised surveillance, workers' estates and lodging houses – the most primitive of which still bear the all too visible marks of the penitentiary of which the all too carceral network reaches all the disciplinary mechanisms that function throughout society (Foucault, 1977:298).

This situation of confinement may induce struggles, namely, against being dominated by the hierarchical system, against exploitation or against subjection. Foucault (1994) believes that there will be more and more important struggles against the forms of subjection, for example, against the submission of subjectivity. He identifies the power related to subjection or the submission of subjectivity as follows:

The form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subject (Foucault, 1994: 221).

Gordon (1980:239) notes that Foucault developed a concept of power ‘as able to take the form of a subjectification as well as of an objectification’ and asserts that ‘power regularly promotes and utilizes a true knowledge of subjects and indeed in a certain manner constitutes the very field of that truth’. Foucault (1994) recognises that power is formed as a subject and not only as a situation which is controlled by and dependent upon someone but also as a pattern which is attached to its own consciousness or self-knowledge. Foucault’s focus on power changed from the negative concept of power to more productive notions after the writing of ‘Discipline and Punishment’. He stresses that ‘power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth.’ This production of power includes the individual and the knowledge to be gained by him (Foucault 1977:194).

Ultimately, in Foucault’s lectures on 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> January 1976, he distinguishes between a number of theories of power (these lectures were transcribed and translated from Italian into English by Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino). Foucault

(1980 a) suggests two non-economic views of power, namely, repression and war. He believes that power is not something which is given, exchanged and recovered in economic relations. Instead, power only exists whenever there is action. Thus, power is above all a relation of force. Power is fundamentally related to repression (Foucault 1980 a:87-90). For example, when we describe the phenomenon of power as exercised in the state apparatus, we must grasp it as essentially repressive (Foucault, 1991:63). There are endless repressions of power in our society. Repression causes struggle, conflict and war. In this context, power is war, a war continued by other than military means (Foucault 1980 a:90).

The power relationship implies a definite relation of forces which makes a determinate historical motivation 'in war' and 'by war'. For example, political power is inclined to end in war. Power in a given society, is 'unspoken warfare' which continuously brings out conflict through the various social institutions, through the circumstance-spread inequalities and through language. The notions of repression and war may be well matched and linked to one another. Power has a property which not only produces but also represses, the former before the latter. That is to say, individuals who are repressed by power are already to a large extent its products (Foucault 1980 a:87-92).

For the notion of repression, the police and justice can exercise punitive powers. The state is expressed as 'super-structural in relation to a whole series of power networks' which are connected to the relationships with family, knowledge, technology, and so forth. However, Foucault does not suppose that the state is unimportant, yet it may be far from capable of managing the whole field of actual power relations, such as apply in

detailed situations or new arenas (Foucault, 1991:64). For example, the rapid expansion of the Internet may bring unexpected problems. However, the state cannot manage the whole field of power relations through the Internet. The state can only manage problems on the basis of other, already existing, institutions or laws.

The exercise of power is not a simple relationship between individuals or collectives but a way of modifying the actions of others. Accordingly, power exists only in the situation where actions occur (Foucault 1994:227). The exercise of power essentially requires the condition of freedom. In other words, it is possible to exercise power only over free subjects (Foucault 1994:229). This power is not an institution or a structure. Neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with (Townley, 1993:520). Power is expressed as something which can be attributed to a complex strategic situation in a particular society. Every power relationship implies a strategy of struggle. There is apparently some relationship between power relations and the strategies of struggle (Foucault, 1994:232).

#### **4.3.4. The shortcomings of Foucault's perspectives**

Foucault's focus on 'Power/knowledge' supplies the researcher with new ways to analyse today's society more extensively and deeply. He emphasises a localised rather than a centralised origin of power, using a micro-perspective and examining power relationships (Foucault 1978; 1980a). Foucault does not see power as a possession, rather, as he points out, power is something which is exercised through relations. In addition, he shows a new concept power, seeing it as 'the total structure of actions' or a 'micro perspective'. However, in this process, he may have inherited some weaknesses

from others, shown in his inadequate or ambiguous ways of expressing new concepts. As Foucault re-examines localised and popular knowledge, he finds that, groups which had seemed to be suppressed manage to connect with power effectively in their own environment. As a result, he is blamed for the fact that his writings are mostly composed and constituted of discourses which had been suppressed. That is to say, he is attacked because his accounts resemble Gramsci's (1972) commonsense discussions in their lack of elaboration and internal inconsistencies (Cain, 1993:87-88). Foucault mentions several microforms of discipline, such as the disciplinary society and the panoptic regime mentioned above. His theory is that discipline nowadays gets in the way of law and right (Walzer, 1986:59). According to Walzer (1986:60), Foucault seems to envisage the great alternative of abolishment rather than a kind of revolution. Thus, the perspective of Foucault seems to be that of an anarchist on this point.

With regard to the exercise of power, Foucault (1994) says that power is a 'total structure of actions' brought to bear upon possible actions. Merger (1995) points out that it is difficult to associate power with a 'total structure of action' for the purpose of analysing it. That is to say, he suggests that people must choose one of two types, namely, 'analysing power in terms of action' or 'conjuring up these total structures'. Because if we want to analyse power, we need to conceptualise power before referring to some 'total structure' in which the detailed contents are not important. In addition, Soper (1993:47) adds that even though Foucault claims that power is everywhere, he gives very little attention to the nature and source of power. He simply informs us of the effect of discursive shapes, theorised as the effect of power.

As power is exercised only over free subjects (Foucault 1994), Foucault suggests a

newly formed relationship of subjects made up of localised power relations. However, he does not show any specification of new forms or make any actual proposals in his other writings (MacCannell and MacCannell, 1993:230). In spite of such weaknesses, however, Hoy (1986) can summarise Foucault's analytic approach as follows:

Foucault's work may be read as providing a radically different approach and a new set of concepts through which to develop analysis and understanding of the exercise of power and the associated effects of hegemony in modern societies (Hoy 1986:158-159).

#### **4.3.5. How the perspective of power can be used in this research**

##### **Young people's voices as the starting point**

As the starting point for showing the detail of the pragmatic situation, Foucault suggests choosing agents of power within fundamental experience. For example, he lists 'the opposition of power, for example, of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, of administration over the way people live' (Foucault, 1994:220). He favours the oppositional aspect of power in order to approach the real situation more directly and empirically. In this context, the voices of young people, for example, children who are subject to the power of their parents and other adults, provide the starting point of this research.

##### **Power relationship surrounding young people**

Foucault holds power to be 'always already there'. He suggests that the reason for its being 'always already there' is not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything, but because it is produced from one moment to the next at every point, or in

every relation from one point to another (Foucault 1980 b: 141). In short, he explains, 'Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (Foucault 1978:93). He also understands that power is ubiquitous and flows continuously. This does not mean that power need belong to or be held by anyone. It is revealed as the support which these relations of force find in one another, thus forming a chain or a network (Danaher et al. 2000).

The Internet itself has the peculiarity of being able to provide the conditions which allow users to meet and talk ubiquitously beyond place and time. In this research, the concept of power which 'is ubiquitous and flows continuously' will be used in order to explore the relationships surrounding young people, not only in peer relationships but also through the perspective of parents, commercial strategies and the role of government.

### **Producing and exercising power with knowledge**

Knowledge related to the operation of power is approached in this thesis through young people's experience and the stories of adults regarding the power relationships surrounding young people. This power/knowledge is best explored within the mainstream historical discourse. In particular, the task of the present research is to decide whether the ways in which young people use and experience the Internet can indeed be categorised.

Next, the research looks into the ways in which young people may use their own minds as elements of repression or domination. In the use of the Internet, this research must first understand what rules apply among young people. Through these factors, it may be

possible to understand and grasp the power relations among young people as they use the Internet and to explore how the exercise of power can lead to Internet addiction. The research therefore considers how power is produced and exercised among young people, explores the circumstances surrounding young people's use of the Internet, including the ability of companies to attract young people through the services they provide, and ascertains whether there are any measures to prevent the side effects of using the Internet.

### **'Young people's own world' in their power relationships**

The emergence of the Internet has supplied new experiences for young Korean people and made it possible for them to meet their friends/peers at any time and outside the normal places. They have enjoyed not only meeting their peers but also making friends online. In the process of enjoying the Internet, they may influence each other's lives through the rapid exchange of new information.

Through the mediation of the Internet, it seems that a 'new world', which the older generation, including parents, do not recognise, is being made or has been made among them. Their relationships outside time and place may subject power relationships to mediation, such as gaining popularity through the Internet or skill in using it, which do not come from traditional power relationships, but may be seen in a new way by using a Foucauldian perspective. They are made by and through the detailed actions and behaviours of these young people. Such relationships must be explored in order to understand Internet addiction.

In the context of analysing power relationships, Foucault suggests 'microphysics' as a



method for looking at forms and means of power. He thinks that power is based on individuals and their detailed behaviours and conduct. He pays attention to the function of power as it 'comes from below' in a society which is built up gradually to form a hierarchical structure of domination (Gordon, 1994: xxiv).

### **'Obedient children'**

The power relationships between young people and their parents, in relation to Internet addiction, need to be explored. They may be related to the repressive situations in which young people are brought up as 'obedient children' in the prevailing conditions of Korean society.

## **4.4. Summary**

Before describing Foucault's power theory, which is very individual, we followed general power concepts such as those of Marxism, elitism and pluralism. Power reveals a pattern of domination, with hierarchical structures causing repression through structural inequalities. This structure may induce struggles against domination.

Foucault adds to these the struggle against subjection. He understands that power is a mechanism affecting everyday life. Power is connected with practices, techniques and procedures rather than something which is acquired, seized or shared. Power is expressed as a complex strategic situation in a particular society. Every power relationship implies a strategy of struggle. Power is ubiquitous and flows continuously. Foucault gives the term a fluid and contingent meaning, treating it historically rather

than as a fixed concept. Truth is linked in a circular relationship with the systems of power which produce and sustain it. The patterns recognise flexibility towards what is historically contingent. Micro-practices functioning through detailed behaviours and conduct need to be explored in combination with the power relationships leading to Internet addiction. The analysis adapts the method of looking at things 'from below', seeing and understanding first the relationships between young people. Accordingly, through trying to understand not only young people but also the circumstances surrounding them, the thesis will explore the way in which power is produced and exercised in using the Internet and Internet addiction is created through power relations.

## **Chapter 5. Methodology**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter outlines the entire process of the research, from designing the methodology to the method of analysis. The data collected are considered in the perspective of power relationships discussed in the previous chapter. The sequence of the research can be divided into three parts, namely, the preliminary survey and meetings, the pilot research and the main research.

This research, from the perspective of power relationships, aimed to discover what relationships surrounding and among young people foster Internet addiction. Already, quantitative research into Internet addiction has been carried out in Korea, as well as in other countries, and has revealed serious symptoms over a wide extent. However, no previous research has explored the relationships surrounding young people and how they relate to cases of Internet addiction. To understand the young people's relationships from the perspective of power relations, this research captures people's experiences of using the Internet, of supplying Internet services and of making policy for IT, as well as the experiences of the young people themselves.

Particularly, I tried during the process of this research to tune my mind to the minds of young people, in order to understand their lives from their point of view, to minimise the power relationships in meetings, and thus to encourage the volunteering of information for the purposes of the research.

## **5.2. Ontological and epistemological background**

This research is fundamentally geared towards collecting users' stories of their Internet experiences and the relationships of young people through and by means of the Internet, relating them to the understandings generated by social science. As a tool of research, ontology needs to understand what the essence of the enquiry is (Mason 1996:10). In other words, ontology refers 'to being, to what is, to what exists'. The ontological position concerns the answer to the question: 'What is the nature of the social reality to be investigated?' (Hay 2002:61).

Among the ontological components, Mason (1996:12) lists social process, interpretations, social relations, social practice, experiences and understandings, as well as matching properties with qualitative research methodology. The important ontological position on which this research is based is, therefore, one which recognises that differing experiences, social relations and understandings are relevant and meaningful constituent elements of social reality which are suitable for further investigation.

Epistemology in this context means 'the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality' (Grix 2001:27). That is to say, epistemological concerns about the way in which the research could then go on to gain insights into the social world have guided the choice of method to be used in the fieldwork. There is also an intriguing epistemological dilemma for researchers who study Internet addictions. Are they addicted too?

If a researcher is indeed rather preoccupied with the Internet, does this make him less capable of being objective, and therefore less accurate in his conclusions? Or may his involvement give him valuable insights, as in participant observation research? There is no simple answer to these questions. However, I am not on the side of the positivists, who prefer to use the methods of the natural sciences to elucidate social reality (Bryman 2001:12). Even if I myself am not addicted to the Internet, I can overcome this distance from my measured subjects because I can understand their situation through having the chance, not only before but also during this research, to use IT and talk to IT specialists and young people with much experience of the Internet. I can also learn the opinions and beliefs of the people involved and their understanding of the world they live in.

Qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly 'interpretivist'. That is to say, 'interpretivism' includes a sense of being concerned with the social world as it is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced (Merriam 2002:4-5, Mason 1996:3). Basically, 'interpretivism' means understanding the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2001:12-13). The perspectives of interpretivism are that the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it and the world is socially and discursively constructed. In other words, social phenomena do not exist independently of our interpretation of them and it is this interpretation/understanding which affects outcomes. So the interpretation of social phenomena is crucial. However, shared meanings can be established and understood within discourses and texts (Grix 2001, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Moreover, the cultural context within which Internet addiction occurs is an interconnected one. Research can show how individual actions, namely community activities, chatting and playing games on the Internet, are related to this context and how this relationship helps to generate an individual's identity. Internet addiction situations may exist all around us, although they are not always obvious.

Because an objective analysis of Internet addiction is impossible, knowledge and truth about it are theory-and discourse-laden. Patterns of truth and knowledge have been defined in diverse ways through the production of rational processes, experiences or observation. The perspective on knowledge can be divided by the criteria of foundationalism and non-foundationalism as follows (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

...foundationalists, taking the view that all of these ways of defining are rooted in phenomena existing outside the human mind. Some foundationalists argue that real phenomena necessarily imply certain final, ultimate criteria for testing them as truthful ... non-foundationalists tend to argue that there are no such ultimate criteria, only those that we can agree upon at a certain time and under certain conditions... (Lincoln and Guba, 2000:176).

Thus, through the perspectives of foundationalists, which include most realists, truth and knowledge can be said to emerge. In contrast, the perspectives of non-foundationalists or anti-foundationalists, who include relativists and interpretists, are negotiated (Lincoln and Guba 2000). In this context, my ontological position is anti-foundationalist and my epistemological position is interpretist rather than realist or positivist, positions which are both related to foundationalism.

### **5.3. 'Qualitative research' as the main method**

As computers are upgraded continuously and Internet connections grow ever faster, an increase in Internet addiction situations may be expected. Qualitative research is concerned with people's own accounts of situations and events, with reporting their perspectives and feelings (Mason, 1996; Padgett 1998); this fits well with those field investigations which seek to explore such accounts.

Compared with quantitative research, qualitative research seems relatively diverse, in spite of the method of mainly using words instead of statistics (Punch 1998:139). This method can be used to establish and understand the background which lies behind any experience, such as young people's culture in using the Internet, a door which is not yet open to many adults. Accordingly, it can give the intricate details of phenomena which have so far eluded discourse with quantitative methods. Qualitative research is capable of exploring a complex, changing and contested field such as Internet addiction situations. That is to say, it can include not only young people's lives, stories and behaviours in using the Internet but also some of the cultural artefacts and organisational functions surrounding young people. Among family relationships, it is possible to see parents' endeavours to prevent the fallout effects of the Internet on their children.

Qualitative research can include several kinds of data collection, for example, interviews, observation and written documents (Patton, 2002:4). It usually involves in-depth investigation of knowledge, since a researcher can take part in observation, for

example playing games through the Internet and using Internet cafés, or employing an interviewing technique adapted to young people's expectations. Archival or other documentary analyses can also be used in qualitative research into the government documents produced by policy makers.

This qualitative approach can sometimes involve numerical measurements (Grix, 2001:33). Moreover, it is important for researchers constantly to recognise and avoid bias if they are to obtain valid and reliable data. Thus, researchers using qualitative methods need the creative ability to conduct interviews which will produce social explanations for various enquiries and to link results systematically. Through the researcher's past experience and theoretical knowledge, this research requires the formation of a link between the theoretical frame-work and the social sensitivity to interpret perceptions within the content not only of present situations but also of past situations involving young people (Mason 1996, Merriam 2002).

Thus, this research relies mainly on qualitative methods. Within this mainstream of qualitative methods, some quantitative research is included so as to understand the power relations influencing young people's Internet addiction.

#### **5.4. Research question**

The literature review indicates that computers may have negative effects on people, such as 'Internet addiction', even though they are very useful instruments. In particular, the Internet addiction situation seems to be one of the serious problems which are



increasingly affecting young people. In view of this, through considering the power relationship between young people and other influencing factors, namely peers, family and companies which supply favourite programs for young people, some of the research questions will consider the circumstances surrounding the aggressive supply of IT in Korea and its impact on the present Internet addiction situation among young people.

### **Primary Questions**

- A. How does Internet addiction spread among South Korea's young people?
- B. Is there a relationship of power which influences or guides young people towards Internet addiction?

### **Detailed Research Questions**

1. Do young people, because of their greater ability to learn and the ease and speed in accessing the Internet, experience side-effects relating to Internet addiction as well as benefits from its use?
2. What is the power relationship regarding Internet addiction between young people and their peers and families and the companies which make attractive programs?
3. What influence has government policy for implementing Information Technology had on Internet addiction?

As mentioned above with regard to the environment and power relationships, the following questions are useful to bear in mind: How does Internet addiction situation

disturb normal young people's lives? Are the environment and power relationships which surround young people conducive to an addiction to the Internet? Do Korean people, including the government, recognise these factors in relation to Internet addiction?

## **5.5. Research Design**

This research is focused on young people's lives and experiences. A research method could have taken a limited approach to their real situation without inputting their thoughts. To tackle this limitation, I have had discussions since the beginning of the study with young people who have willingly given me advice (I set up a kind of 'informal young advice panel' which comprised two high school students with the consent and cooperation of their parents.). The methodology of this research was designed on the basis of this voluntary advice and produced the following processes.

### **5.5.1. Preliminary survey and meetings**

#### **Preliminary survey**

The survey was carried out in June 2002 to prepare the direction of the main research into Internet addiction situations. The survey involved the participation, with their teachers' consent, of 234 Korean young people in Seoul. The consent and the processes of the survey were assisted by the education officials of the Seoul Metropolitan Office

of Education (SMOE) which is responsible for middle-high school education and has the authority to give consent for research into young people. In addition, 224 adults agreed to participate in the survey in the Education Centre for adults at the University of Seoul.

Internet addiction seems to be a problem not only among young people in Korea but also throughout the world, due to the anticipated side effects of widespread use of the Internet. Accordingly, this survey used Wang (2001)'s measuring tool which became available in 2001 just before the present research began. Wang (2001) in his 10<sup>th</sup> questionnaire (Appendix 2) used ten symptomatic items.

Morahan-Martin and Schumacher's (2000) report of Internet addiction among U.S young people at college divided them into three groups, namely, those with 'pathological Internet use: 8.1%' (severe IA: Internet Addiction), those with 'limited symptoms: 64.7%' (light IA) and those with 'no symptoms: 27.2%'. Wang (2001)'s results for Australian young people at college also reported three groups, namely, an 'Internet addiction group: 4%' (severe IA), a 'light Internet addiction group: 27.9%' (light IA) and a 'non-Internet addiction group: 68.2%'. By contrast, the results of an Internet addiction survey among middle and high school young people in the present research, revealed: an 'Internet addiction group: 53%' (server IA), a 'light Internet addiction group: 39.7% (light IA)' and a 'non-Internet addiction group: 7.3%'. Even adults also revealed an 'Internet addiction group' as shown in the following table (Table 5-5-1).

**Table 5-5-1) Extent of Internet addiction among young people and adults**

	Total	Addiction extent		
		Severe IA	Light IA	Non IA
Young People	234(100%)	124(53.0%)	93(39.7%)	17(7.3%)
Adult	224(100%)	20(8.9%)	139(62.1%)	65(29.0%)

***Comparing the incidence of Internet addiction***

Even though the timing and the object of the surveys were different, the results were noticeably different from those of Wang's (2001) research and were also considerably different from those of Morahan-Martin and Schumacher's (2000) report. It seems that the tools used in the above studies are not suitable for Korean young people, because the circumstances of Internet use may be very different.

For example, since 2001, the proportion using a broadband system of access in Korea has already been recognized as the highest in the world, according to an OECD report (Paltridge, 2001). The statistics of 'Broadband access in OECD countries per 100 inhabitants' are shown in the following table (Table 5-5-2).

This high quality and speedy access seems to lead to a more serious Internet addiction situation among Korean young people. In this context, it is necessary to understand what Korean peculiarities lead to more widespread Internet addiction. For example, there may be some processes to do with relationships or cultural background. Thus, this research is designed to concentrate on and understand the actual situation of Korean

young people in itself, rather than comparing them with others.

**Table 5-5-2) Broadband access in OECD countries per 100 inhabitants**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>DSL</b>	<b>Cable Modem</b>	<b>Other Platforms</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Korea</b>	14.36	8.45	0.37	23.17
<b>Canada</b>	6.09	7.18	0	13.27
<b>Iceland</b>	10.66	0	0.56	11.22
<b>Denmark</b>	7.29	3.17	0.65	11.11
<b>Belgium</b>	6.25	3.82	0.27	10.34
<b>Netherlands</b>	3.82	5.38	0.001	9.2
<b>Sweden</b>	5.44	1.96	1.76	9.16
<b>Switzerland</b>	4.7	4.43	0	9.13
<b>Japan</b>	6.49	1.75	0.36	8.6
<b>United States</b>	2.68	4.84	0.74	8.25
<b>Austria</b>	2.76	4.22	0	6.98
<b>Finland</b>	5.39	1.21	0.01	6.61
<b>Norway</b>	4.08	1.17	0.14	5.39
<b>Germany</b>	4.68	0.06	0.1	4.84
<b>Spain</b>	3.24	1	0	4.24
<b>France</b>	3.56	0.57	0	4.13
<b>Portugal</b>	1.12	2.61	0	3.72
<b>United Kingdom</b>	1.78	1.82	0.02	3.63
<b>Italy</b>	2.5	0	0.34	2.84
<b>Australia</b>	1.48	1.11	0.07	2.65
<b>Luxembourg</b>	2.02	0.24	0.06	2.32
<b>New Zealand</b>	1.87	0.06	0.14	2.07
<b>Hungary</b>	0.56	0.36	0	0.93
<b>Ireland</b>	0.19	0.08	0.14	0.41
<b>Czech Republic</b>	0.06	0.21	0	0.28
<b>Mexico</b>	0.12	0.15	0.001	0.28
<b>Poland</b>	0.09	0.12	0	0.21
<b>Turkey</b>	0.01	0.05	0	0.06
<b>Greece</b>	0.003	0	0.02	0.02
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	0	0.01	0	0.01
<b>OECD</b>	3.37	2.4	0.29	6.06
<b>EU</b>	3.31	1.1	0.14	4.55

Source: OECD [[www.oecd.org/sti/telecom](http://www.oecd.org/sti/telecom)], June 2003

### ***Finding factors linked to Internet addiction***

The purpose of young people in using the computer is related to entertainment, such as games, data searching and communication rather than study, as shown in Table 5-5-3, below.

**Table 5-5-3) Primary purposes in using the computer**

Total	Games	Data search	Communication	Study	Others
231	115	71	28	9	8
100%	49.8%	30.7%	12.1%	3.9%	3.5%

We need to understand how these factors lead to addiction situations. For example, 69.9% of young people with severe IA think that games are an important factor in their use of the computer. Accordingly, this needs to be dealt with in the main research as a meaningful factor. Parents' computer ability is poorer than that of their children, according to young people. Only 7.3% of parents (father or mother) have better computer ability than their children. The percentage of parents who are beginners or lack any ability to use the computer is 59.4%. In this condition, the research should consider how parents have managed to deal with their children's use of the Internet.

### **Suggestions for the main direction of research**

#### ***Government officials***

There were three meetings in preparation for the survey with two officials who were responsible for middle to high school education. In addition, there was a meeting with

the central government official who was in charge of managing the side effects of the Internet and had contributed to the establishing of the Centre for Internet Addiction Prevention and Counselling (CIPC) in April 2002. She introduced CIPC members to me so that I could contact them directly. Also, she suggested that I used the Korean measuring tool which the government and CIPC have prepared. She was expecting to reveal this at the beginning of 2003 in order to establish the extent of Internet addiction.

***Specialists (Internet, young people affairs)***

During this period, I had meetings with three Internet specialists who duly became a panel of special advisers in my main research. One of them suggested that one of the research methods could use the Internet because young people are familiar with it. They suggested that I should learn some Internet games in order to have some common ground with the young people. Developing a good relationship would make it easier for me to obtain new information. In addition, I met researchers who dealt with young people's problems. They included the staff of institutes such as the Research Centre for Korean Youth (RCKY). They emphasised that I needed to listen to the genuine stories and experiences of young people who must struggle up through the repressive educational system if they want to obey their parents or teachers. One of the researchers is concerned about isolation among young people. For example, it has recently been the case that young people who cannot enter the mainstream through skill in playing Internet games may be abandoned by their peers.

## **5.5.2. The Pilot Study**

### **5.5.2.1. The Contact process**

Pilot research interviews were held with four Korean young people (3 males, 1 female) who live in the UK. With the advice of this 'young advisers' panel', the pilot research was held between 7<sup>th</sup> July and 25<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

Before the interviews, it was necessary to find people who had experienced problems because of the excessive length of time they had spent on the Internet. However, adults in the community cannot identify problematic Internet users among young people. Having prepared for the pilot research with the 'young advisers' panel', I found some young people who spend considerable time playing games, chatting or surfing the Internet. Among them, I wanted to interview young people who had lived in the UK for less than three years, because I hoped that they had experienced similar conditions in using the Internet in Korea. Accordingly, I tried to find young people who used the broadband system at home. There were several young males with broadband systems. However, it was difficult to discover young females with a broadband system among those who were suitable interviewees. Therefore, I chose a young woman who spent much time online using a modem, even though she did not have a broadband system.

### **5.5.2.2. Application of the pilot result**

The names in the following table are fictitious names for the sake of anonymity and confidentiality:



**Table 5-5-4) Interviewees of the pilot research**

Interviewee	Sex	Age	Living Period in UK	School score	Result addiction Measurement	Internet system
Soon	Male	16	2 years	Middle	DUG	Broadband
Bong	Female	17	3 years	Good	NAUG	Telephone modem
Young	Male	16	3 years	Middle	DUG	Broadband
Duk	Male	17	3 years	Good	PDUG	Broadband

[Results of Internet addiction measuring tool by the Centre for Internet Addiction Prevention & Counselling: Dangerous user group (DUG); Potential dangerous user group (PDUG); Non-addicted user group (NAUG)']

### **Recognition of important contents - *power relationships***

There are many factors influencing the lives of young interviewees through the Internet. Using the Internet is an important phenomenon in their culture. Every day, they talk about the Internet with their friends for various reasons, such as games, chat and downloading programs as shown in Table 5-5-5, below. This seems to mould their 'own world' in which they enjoy relationships and compete against each other.

**Table 5-5-5) Reasons for using the Internet**

Interviewee	Search data and download	Communication friends	Enjoyment games	Study	Relief stress
Soon	++	++	++	+	+
Bong	=	++	--	++	+
Young	++	+	++	+	+
Duk	++	++	++	+	+

(Degree: ++ Very Strong, + Strong, = Middle, - Negative, --Very Negative.)

Improving their knowledge through the Internet seems to them to confer power within relationships. For instance, young people with high-level knowledge, for example in games or information, influence their friends who need help to keep pace with their knowledge of the Internet.

Male interviewees want to have a high level of ability in games because excellent performance earns the respect of their friends. Young people with a low level of ability envy their high-level friends and ask for help to increase their ability in playing. In this process, it seems that the sort of power which is associated with practices, techniques and procedures can be exercised among friends. They have a competitive desire to increase their skill in games and also to cooperate with their friends. It means they run the risk of becoming addicted to the Internet.

In particular, unexpected power factors emerged with the widespread trading of game items (equipment) and decorating Avatars. For example, interviewees mentioned the importance of the game items which are tools for using games through the Internet. Some young people want to buy game items in order to excite the envy of their friends and achieve the satisfaction of winning games. This excessive desire to win games leads young people to buy more items. Also, it may be a dangerous factor because of the possibility of fraudulent trading among the item sellers. The willingness to win games in spite of illegal methods may lead to addiction to Internet games.

Interviewees explained that other 'items', such as dresses, are used to decorate the 'Avatar', which is a kind of character used in the Internet. These items, supplied by

famous Internet site companies for commercial purposes, seem to be related to Internet addiction among young people.

Thus, the power relationship between those who excel in the games and those who seek to excel is considered to be an important area for deeper exploration in the main research.

The pilot research revealed that there were some other important findings and issues to explore in the main research, such as the influence of school scores, poorer health, parents' relationships, disruption of normal life, the influence of the software companies and government's role in the creation of Internet addiction situations.

### **5.5.3. Updating the original design following the pilot study**

#### **Using a narrative method**

Having realised that it was necessary to understand the real situation of Internet addiction among young people, I thought it would be useful to listen to young people's experiences and feelings relating to Internet addiction. Such experiences include going through the process of using the Internet/computer from the earliest days to becoming absorbed in it. Thus, a narrative method design seemed suitable for accommodating their stories of the process of using the Internet/computer.

Narrative methods may include individual historical stories. Personal narratives, family stories and life histories reveal cultural and social patterns through the accounts of individual experiences (Patton, 2002). Narratives are fundamental means for connecting

people's past and present stories and the relationship between the self and others. Therefore, within the context of cultural narratives, interviews should be approached without limitations. The content is shown to be important through the story of what the significance of the event is (Lawler, 2002:242-243).

Wengraf (2001) suggests a biographic-narrative-interpretive method, which consists of three sub-sessions. For example, sub-session 1 is a process of an initial elaboration of a story around topics. Sub-session 2 is a process of extracting more stories from the topics. Sub-session 3 involves further questions from a preliminary analysis of previous sub-sessions. Wengraf thinks that it is more effective to carry out the first two sub-sessions on the same day and focus on the narration as a story, allowing the third sub-session to wait until another day so as to prepare a preliminary analysis of the results of the first two. Thus, they require suitably deep stories from the interviewees.

On the basis of this method, I prepared a design for obtaining data. The questions in Sub-session 3 were considered a subsequent method of obtaining data. For instance, in this research, narratives were focused on patterns of use of the Internet in three main stages. The first stage is when interviewees learn and use the Internet as beginners. The second stage is when interviewees develop an interest in exchanging data with friends, playing games or chatting through the Internet. They also spend time talking about the Internet or computers with friends, relatives or others. In other words, this is when they are susceptible to the influence of people or programs. The third stage is when they reveal an escalating situation which disrupts their normal life.

### **Partial change to the original method following the pilot study**

During the pilot study, interviewees spent less than 20 minutes in sub-sessions 1 and 2 because these were aimed at listening to their stories about using computers from the beginner stage to the present, but not asking them questions. In particular, one interviewee spent less than five minutes on sub-sessions 1 and 2. Two other interviews lasted less than ten minutes. Interviews for sub-sessions 1 and 2 were therefore shorter than expected.

The shortness of the interviews suggests that Korean young people seem to be unfamiliar with these conversations without questions. They have grown up in a Confucian culture in which it is not good to say too much. There was not enough time to open up freely and relax the interviewees' minds before interviewing. However, their stories are very useful for understanding their individual experiences of the using the Internet so as to proceed to sub-session 3, the interview with questions raised by the earlier narratives.

Accordingly, the original methods were changed to make sub-session 3 a semi-structured interview with flexible questions applied to connect the topics. It is important for sub-session 3 to be linked to the stories of sub-sessions 1 and 2. The interviews for each person were carried out on one day with a short break.

#### **5.5.4. Ethical issues and consents**

I maintained a cooperative relationship and exchanged information on this topic with the RCKY and the CIPC. They also promised to cooperate and choose suitable

interviewees. For example, the measuring tool (Appendix 3), designed by CIPC in February 2003, can be used to choose young interviewees. This measuring tool is recommended by the government as a method to prevent and counsel cases of Internet addiction among young people because the process tests have both high reliability and validity (Kim, et al 2002).

After two centres had chosen interviewees who gave their consent, it was possible to make contact with the young people and their parents to obtain their consent. Young interviewees were selected by the two centres according to age, sex and the extent of their Internet addiction.

For the young interviewees, parental consent, as well as that of the young people, was needed before carrying out this research. Thus, I obtained these consents from young interviewees. Every instance of qualitative data collection required the development of a relationship between the researcher and the subject. Security was also a major issue. I myself as a researcher always had to give attention to such issues. Consequently, it was very important to preserve confidentiality and anonymity.

### **Learning from the pilot study**

For the pilot study, before I met them for interviews, I had considered the use of questionnaires based on the measuring tool designed by CIPC to establish the extent to which interviewees were addicted to the Internet. This was because I wanted to meet those who could be classified in the 'dangerous user groups' (DUG) and 'potentially dangerous user groups' (PDUG) according to this measuring tool.

However, during the period I spent gaining consent for the interviews, I recognised that the interviewees were reluctant to be tested by the measuring tool before the interview

and were curious about the process of the interview itself.

I therefore decided, if they agreed, to use a short quiz and the measuring tool after the interview. After preparing a sheet of information to introduce the research, I sought the agreement of the young people and their parents to take part in interviews.

### **Informed Consent**

As a result of the pilot process, I realised that it would be difficult to approach young interviewees with Internet addiction to supply data for the main research. In other words, it is not easy to select suitable interviewees because it is hard to judge the extent of Internet addiction prior to the interview.

Another important factor in carrying out interviews with young people was the need to give them more information about the research before the interview. That is to say, the consent should be an informed consent, based on voluntary agreement to participate and a full supply of information (Christians, 2000: 138-139).

Even though RCKY and CIPC cooperated with the main research during the preliminary survey in 2002, they are not in positions of authority with regard to the consent of young people for this research. However, an authority which could give consent for me to interview young people was needed to help me select interviewees. In addition, there is no institute, structure or individual through which a young person may be judged as addicted to the Internet, even though these institutes can use measuring tools to assess the level of Internet addiction.

In this context, in order to select young interviewees and get their agreement to participate, a sampling device was designed by asking schoolteachers through the Seoul

Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE). On the suggestion of their teachers, each young interviewee was invited to be a voluntary participant in the research. Thus the power which could have been exercised by teachers in the choice of interviewees was minimised.

This process meant that the young interviewees were informed about the research through their teachers who has an understanding of the process and background of this research through information prepared by me and sent by e-mail.

Also, the interviewees needed to have an experience of the Internet which is or was capable of 'disturbing normal lives' (which seems to mark it as an Internet addiction pattern), due to the side effects of the great use of the Internet. Accordingly, the design was established that after selecting the interviewees through their teachers, I then made contact individually with young people and their parents in order to ensure that they were giving informed consent.

Before starting the interviews, I informed the interviewees of the process of the interviews and the background of the research. Then, after confirming the young peoples' agreement to participate, I began the interviews.

## **5.6. The process of the main research**

The core of the main research was to collect young people's stories of present or past experience of Internet addiction. Their voices have been included in the design for deciding the direction for research, on the lines of France's (2000) key lessons for



research with young people. With this background it was possible to use their language and exchange opinions with them before and during each interview.

The starting point for data collection was, then, the young people, followed by interviews with their parents. Then, people who were related to the power factors surrounding the young people were chosen for interviews, and several methods such as case study and surveys were put into action, as in the Table 5-6-1, below.

**Table 5-6-1) Data collection period and method**

Relationship		Method	2003				2004		
			9	10	11	12	1	2	3
Core Interview	Young people	Narrative + semi-structured		→	→				
	Parent	Semi- structured		→	→				
Focus interviews with Psychiatrists		Un-structured		→		→			
Power Factors	Policy makers	Semi- structured		→	→				
	Company	Semi- structured			→				
	NGO	Semi- structured			→				
Evidence	Cyber police	Un-structured				→			
Case study (CIPC)		Un-structured		→		→			
Observation	Internet café	Talking, Taking pictures		→	→				
	Game	Play and learning	→				→	→	→
Newspaper search		Using Internet	→						→
Survey	Off-line	Cooperation with teachers			→				
	On-line	Specialist support				→	→	→	

**Table 5-6-2) Outline of the main research**

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Provided data</b>	<b>Contribution (understanding)</b>
Young people (25) (Appendix 7)	Experience of using the Internet  Thoughts about relationships with peers Feelings about their parents	Individual Internet addiction situation (eg. Table 6-1-2, Figure 9-2-1, 9-2-2). Moulding 'their own world' in power relationships. Repression and resistance (eg. Ch6, Ch7, Ch8, Ch9).
Parents (6) (Appendix 7)	Experience of using the Internet Parenting for their children, Control of their children's Internet use	Showing poorer level than their children for the Internet Use of force rather than persuasion Late recognition of problems (eg. Ch7.2).
Psychiatrist (Hyn:private medical centre) (Ji: public hospital)	Experience of attending broadcasting and newspapers interviews for counselling and advice. Stories of treatment for young people Explaining serious situations of Internet addiction using quantitative data	Moulding discourse towards counselling as a power The real situation for counselling young people as a psychiatrist Background of the policy which focuses on the counselling approach (eg. Ch6.1, Ch8.2, Ch9.4).
CIPC psychologist (Soo)	Experience of counselling young people	Limitation of the counselling approach for young people (eg. Ch8.2).
MIC Policymakers (Min: previous job) (Sub : present job)	Experience of policy for the prevention of Internet addiction. Thoughts about policy for the prevention of Internet addiction	The process of policy making The status of government with regard to IT industry. Delays in policy to address side effects (eg. Ch8.2).
MCT Policymaker (Hoon)	Documents and information of game policy and youth policy. Thoughts on game item trading.	Neglect and delay of policy on prevention of side effects (eg. Ch8.2).
The president of a company (Doo)	Strategy for young people and their contribution with regard to IT development	Targeting young people for business profits (eg. Ch8.1, 8.2).
A company staff (Koo)	Experience in supplying game items	Intention not to prohibit game trading with money (eg. Ch8.1).
NGO (Kwon, Kang)	Experience of the activities of young people, parents, game policy and Internet cafés	Powerlessness of parents to make policy which will prevent side effects(Ch8.2)

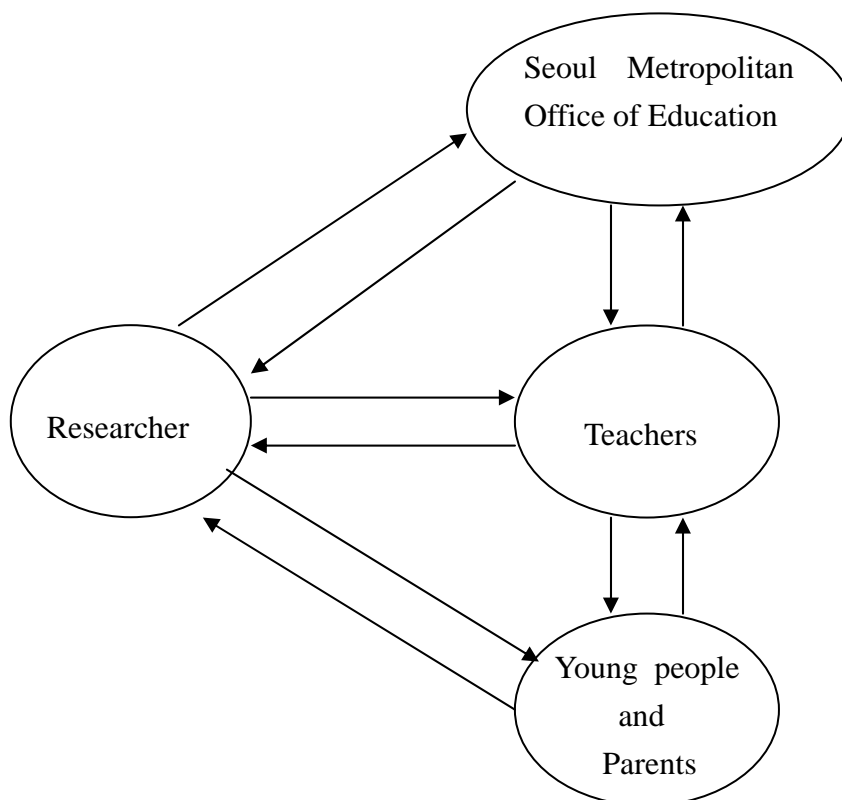
Cyberpolice(Kyu)	Experience of cyber police	Fraudulent item trading. The cyber space crimes of young people (eg. Ch8.2).
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### 5.6.1. Young people and parent interviews

#### The process of choice and consent

The task of meeting young people for interviews involved several groups of people to be introduced to and give consent, as shown in the Figure 5-6-1, below.

**Figure 5-6-1) The process of consent:**



Firstly, I met a senior supervisor and supervisor from the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education; they are responsible for middle and high schools in Seoul. As they are also teachers, the role of a senior supervisor may change to that of a head teacher in a high

school. A supervisor's role may change to that of a vice-head teacher. They agreed with the purpose of the present research – to understand the situation of young people who suffer from Internet addiction.

They asked schoolteachers to cooperate and, if possible, to choose young interviewees and their parents. This was carried out by e-mail and fax, with some information for the research. They also sent letters asking for cooperation (see Appendix 4) and translations which had been prepared by the supervisor of this research at the University of Birmingham and sent by fax.

Next they sent me information by e-mail, including the names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of several teachers who agreed with this research and were willing to choose young people and give permission for them to be interviewed.

Thirdly, I also sent e-mails to the teachers to express my thanks for the information about the research method and how to go about obtaining the consent of the interviewees. I earnestly requested teachers to inform the young people about this research and to suggest an interview when they spoke to them, using an introduction to the research sent by e-mail. In addition, I emphasised that participation in this research was voluntary and at the discretion of interviewees. Each time the teachers chose an interviewee, they sent me an e-mail or called me to tell me about him or her.

Fourthly, I contacted each young interviewee and their parents by telephone to obtain consent and decide the day, time and place for the interview. Most young people and their parents agreed with the research purpose and promised detailed schedules. They willingly gave their consent to participate in this research.

However, a few young people and their parents indirectly declined the invitation, even though they had given their consent to the interview through teachers. For example, one young person said ‘Can I ask you for the interview next time, not now?’ Another mother said ‘my child is too busy to decide a time to be interviewed at the moment.’ According to Korean custom, such expressions are recognised as rejection, for people are not inclined to express direct rejection. There were two cases of young people refusing to be interviewed, in spite of the teachers having obtained their consent during the contact process.

### **Choosing times and places**

To be comfortable for the interviewees, interviews needed to be at a suitable place and time. Parents arranged a suitable time and place with their children. However, there were some difficulties. Most Korean young people have extra private lessons after school. Their spare time is usually concentrated at weekends. Most interviews were, therefore, arranged for Saturdays or Sundays. In some cases, interviews were held later in the evening, for example, after 7:00pm or 8:00pm on a weekday. They themselves wanted to ask me about the experience of studying in the U.K. before or after the interviews.

Some teachers considered that it was difficult to fix a time for an interview because many children have work to get on with by themselves in study time immediately after school. The teachers arranged some interviews at school. But interviewees tended to want an interview at home. Some interviewees, after obtaining their parents’ permission, preferred to go to other places, such as restaurants near home

### **Interview process**

Before each interview, I briefly introduced the research. In addition, I checked their willingness to participate in the interview. Continuously, I asked whether the young people still wanted to be interviewed. During this checking, two young people who were going to be interviewed in their schools said that they did not have enough time to attend now, even though they wanted to attend this research. So I was obliged to give up the two interviews-

I suggested that if there was a question which they would prefer not to answer, including the short questions after the interview, they could pass to the next or stop the conversation at any time. I asked if a tape recorder could be used for the interview. I gave them the cooperation letter and the translation which had been prepared by the supervisor of this research at the University of Birmingham.

Preparing the main interviews, I twice visited the World Cyber Games (WCG) which was held from 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2003 in Seoul to find topics to talk about with the young interviewees. Before beginning an interview, the interviewees and I exchanged the latest WCG news. For example, a Korean professional gamer won the Starcraft game competition. I was able to convey an impression of the winner to the interviewees. This conversation was helpful in making the young interviewees more open-minded and receptive towards me.

Interviews used narrative methods in sub-sessions 1 and 2 and semi-structured interviews in sub-session 3, in line with the interview method design (Appendix 5)

which had been updated after the pilot research. After the interview, they responded to questionnaires including the CIPC measuring tool. After the interviews, most parents wanted to talk with me about U.K. education and ask me to send information to the young interviewees through the Internet. For example, they asked me about U.K. education and told me that if I needed to ask their children any additional questions, I could do so at any time. The interviewees and some of their parents and I exchanged e-mail addresses and phone numbers. After the interview, some young interviewees sent me e-mails to say hello and ask about life in the U.K. During the analysis, I also asked some interviewees questions which had arisen over what they had said in earlier interviews and received useful answers.

### **Parent interviews**

Parent interviews were arranged basically through the teachers. It was more difficult to choose these interviewees. The parents of five young interviewees' parents agreed using the normal process of the research. However, a mother who was interviewed with her son said that she was shy about giving a formal interview. Instead, she wanted me to talk in detail about children's education, such as the methods of study in the UK. Consequently I gave up the hope of learning her opinions in an interview. Another mother asked me to postpone the interview, as she had to deal with an unexpected matter afterwards. It was difficult to reschedule so I chose to abandon this interview also.

In addition, I arranged some parent interviewees through the Education Centre for adults in the University of Seoul, which conducted a preliminary adult survey in 2002. I asked the help of the lecturers choosing parents to interview. I told them about the

purpose and background of the research so that they could choose parents with children of middle or high school age who were experiencing or had experienced ‘disturbance of their normal life’, due to the side effects of excessive use of the Internet. Three additional parents who agreed with the purpose were then chosen. These interviews were held in a lecture room with the cooperation of the Education Centre for adults in the University of Seoul. Semi-structured interviews for six parents were matched with the contents of the young people’s interviews. This was designed to capture the parents’ view of the young people’s situation.

#### **5.6.2. Focus meetings with psychiatrists**

This research requires the advice of specialists in the Internet and the problems of young people. In the preliminary survey and meetings, this perspective was used to collect specialist knowledge from experts. These experts have given advice on the direction of the research and in special areas such as the Internet since 2002.

Before the young people’s interviews, I had prepared focus group meetings with psychiatrists (see Table 5-6-2) and a panel of special advisers (a teacher -Kyoung, a Web security staff- Kun, a Web domain planner- Mi, a part time lecturer for IT- Leenam), which also considered obtaining live information from young people with Internet addiction as well as advice for the research. However, there were some difficulties in implementing this advice. The reason why they did not meet as a group was that it was never possible to arrange a meeting for all of them at the same time. Accordingly, the psychiatrists were interviewed individually in a single unstructured interview. One psychiatrist gave a helpful interview at the initial stage of the young people’s interviews. The other psychiatrist was interviewed in the final stages to check



the interview stories and prepare an analysis. Other advisers were approached informally to further understand the situation relating to Internet addiction and to obtain materials and information during the main research.

### **5.6.3. Case study for the CIPC**

The policy for preventing Internet addiction has mainly been the work of the Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC). The CIPC was established by the MIC to produce a policy to reduce the problems of Internet addiction among young people. This area of the research focused on exploring the process of policy formation within the power relationships, as well as the situation of young people addicted to the Internet. Thus, the CIPC needed to see the case study as describing the government's role in relation to Internet addiction.

During the preliminary survey in 2002, I visited the CIPC to understand its function and to obtain materials. Later, during the main research I had two meetings with CIPC members. The first meeting was with the director and counsellors, as a consultation for the case study and to explore its facilities, such as counselling rooms and materials for counselling. In the second meeting, there was an in-depth interview with another counsellor. Also, they gave me access to their records of counselling and results of their studies of Internet addiction.

### **5.6.4. Exploration of the power relationships surrounding young people**

The research, I found, needed to identify the power relationships surrounding young people. Their experience and intentions should be understood in the current context. In this context, I drew up a semi-structured interview with them, (see Table 5-6-2). Policy

makers supplied various documents such as reports of policy to cover Internet addiction and their ministry's achievements and plans. A member of staff from an Internet software company sent excellent materials showing the company's standpoint by messenger after his interview. NGO workers also supplied me with documents including their organisational activities for young people.

#### **5.6.5. Understanding the role of the cyber police**

Through the pilot interviews, I found that trading in items for young people's Internet games (equipment) is very popular. Thus, this research needed to capture the experience of the cyber police in order to understand the real lives of young people.

Unlike other interviews, the one with a member of the cyber police could not be recorded on tape because the interviewee did not consent. The location of the interview was the Centre for Confronting Cyber Terrorism in the national police office, and was an unstructured interview about the problems of young people using the Internet. It seems that the interview with the cyber policeman was only made possible when the police knew of my position as a civil servant in Korea. Before I entered into their office, they checked my ID card and my personal history in the interests of security.

#### **5.6.6. Observation**

##### **Game, community, messenger observation**

To understand young people and to interview them, I think that the researcher needs to tune in to their minds with regard to the topics. Before and after the interviews, I accessed some well-known Internet games and communities, as a young person would.

It was one of the most difficult tasks in the research to get in touch with their minds in this way. However, if I had not tried to do it, I would not have been able to capture some of the terms of their language and if I failed in this, it might have been difficult to proceed properly with the interview.

I needed to access some of the programs which the young interviewees mentioned in order to understand their background. Also, these processes required the help of the panel of young advisers. My ability to play these games is still at beginner level. I did not take part in them in order to see other people's activity in them, but played them alone so as to understand the situation of the interviewees. Even though I could see other activities through observing the games or communities, the process of analysis included mainly interviewees' experiences and my understanding of the basis of these experiences. The main sites which can be accessed to understand this topic are listed below.

The games chosen are Starcraft (<http://www.starcraft.co.kr/>), Linage ([http://www.lineage.co.kr/linweb/lin\\_pds/client\\_down.asp](http://www.lineage.co.kr/linweb/lin_pds/client_down.asp)), Maplestory (<http://www.maplestory.nexon.com/index.aspx>) which several interviewees mentioned and which are intensely popular among Korean young people.

Community activities also vary. Among them, many young interviewees mentioned 'Daum' (<http://www.daim.net>) and 'Naver' (<http://www.naver.com>) portal sites.

Accordingly these were the main sites observed café. Some interviewees mentioned 'YahooKorea' (<http://www.kr.yahoo.com>) and 'Hanmir' (<http://www.hanmir.com>, now changed into <http://www.paran.com>).

The Messenger program is usually used in Buddybuddy (<http://www.buddybuddy.co.kr>) and 'MSN' (<http://www.msn.co.kr>) among young interviewees.

### **Internet café observation**

During the research I visited Internet cafés individually late at night to access the Internet. However, I asked help from a civil servant who managed the data on Internet cafés to take pictures in the café and to talk with some of the Internet café managers. Thus, with the consent of the managers, I visited four Internet cafés. I wanted to explore how much it cost to use each a café and to see how late at night people stayed there; it is open for 24 hours every day.

### **5.6.7. Daily newspaper searching**

To see the historical process forming the mainstream discourse of Internet addiction in Korea, the research needed access to historical data as well as interviews. I have obtained several documents, such as government reports and articles. With these materials I needed follow up the background and their consequences.

I tried to find reports in daily newspapers of cases of Internet addiction. Among the various newspapers, I chose four, namely *Chosun*, *Joongang*, *Donga* and *Hangyoure*. The *Chosun*, *Joongang* and *Donga* daily newspapers are the three most popular in Korea. Usually, these are classified as conservative in inclination. By contrast, *Hangyoure* represents a reformist inclination.

From January 1997 to September 2003, reports in these four newspapers using the term 'Internet addiction' (*Internet Joongdok* in Korean) were searched through the search systems of each newspaper.

This method helped me to explore the power relationship as it presented itself in historical sequences, forming the mainstream discourse about Internet addiction. Also, it was possible through the contents to see how the phenomena increased in importance as a social issue, by whom it was led and how parents as well as governments were influenced.

#### **5.6.8. Survey**

##### **Off-line surveying**

The survey was undertaken mainly to seek two relational factors, namely the relationships between parents' power and young people's Internet addiction and the phenomena of using the game items (equipment).

The survey design was almost entirely prepared before main research. However, I did not listen to the actual stories illustrating this problem, which was growing as the circumstances of the Internet changed. During the interviews with young people, I understood that the situation was more serious and upgraded the survey questionnaires (Appendix 6) which covered game items. Accordingly, this survey was delayed in the middle of the main research. For it, I contacted four middle school and two high schools through SOME. 1000 questionnaires were sent to the designated schools with the cooperation of some of their teachers and as a result 570 were collected by SOME. 543

of these contributed SPSS data. During this process, I also prepared a survey through the Internet, primarily to produce reliable data from the perspective of consistency (Punch 1998:98).

### **The on-line survey**

This survey was also delayed in order to prepare it after setting up the content of the off-line survey. As this is a very demanding process, I asked the help one of the Panel members of special advisers who could design web sites. In particular, I could not anticipate how many young people would contribute to this survey. However, I guessed that there would be more than contributed to the off-line survey, thousands at least.

This presented another problem, the input of SPSS. If there are a great many data it takes long time to put in the SPSS. Thus, I negotiated with the specialist to input the data automatically through the SPSS program. It seemed to be possible, like an off-line survey designed for SPSS. However, it was not straightforward and took a long time to prepare.

Also, I needed permission to use the domain. I asked the help of the Education Centre for adults in the University of Seoul in using the domain. However, it inevitably took some time to design the website. In order to shorten this time I had to give up the SPSS method. Hence the data from the on-line survey could only be assessed to show automatically the frequency with which each possible answer was made to every question.

Most Korean schools have a winter vacation after Christmas. I needed time to inform the young people about it through their teachers. However, this design had been working since 26th December.

I passed on the address (<http://nclab.uos.ac.kr/survey/index.htm>) to the teachers who had been willing to help with this survey already. However, it seemed to be too late to inform many of the young people. So I extended the period for the website until February 2004.

Another problem was that I did not consider the possibility that young people might not want to spend much time on an Internet survey. I heard moreover from a teacher that it took a long time to mark each questionnaire, more than 15 minutes for 62 questions. In addition, normally an Internet survey offers a prize for those who submit their answers. In a spaces on the questionnaire one of the young people asked 'Is there a prize?'.

As a result, from 26<sup>th</sup> December to the end of February, only 120 people submitted answers, mainly middle school students; 1 primary school student, 88 middle school students and 31 high school students. This process of preparation for the Internet survey becomes a kind of lesson about conducting surveys.

## **5.7. Coding and analysis strategy**

### **5.7.1. Strategy for the analysis**

This research centres on young people's stories and experiences through the collection of data. In dealing with the process of analysis, important key factors were

understanding the data which related to ‘power’, ‘relations’ and ‘process’. The method of understanding is used through the sequential processes of the activities to include the historical situation.

The starting point of the analysis is its relationship with the data from the young people. The events and concepts touching young people’s Internet addiction may be understood through various data. Next, the data to do with parents and company workers are linked with data about the young people. Continuously, the analysis is carried out so as to connect it with the duties of the government. For example, the direction of the analysis is to explore the government standpoint towards Internet addiction on the basis of collecting data from young people and others.

To deal effectively with a great deal of data, the analysis is designed as a sequential process. This process is accomplished in several stages as follows:

- . Check the field interview notes and summary – recall the live sense of the stories
- . Transcription
- . Coding practice
- . Proceed from coding of a first case to developmental coding with all data
- . Formation of themes
- . Analysis

Strategically, each one of the many interview cases was analysed in depth before the analysis of the data. Coding took time and was varied and flexible at first for analysis.



During the coding for a single interview case, the ideas of the data became more arranged and stabilised. The meaningful relations relating to the topic of the study were developed on the basis of the first case's coding work. That is to say, through analysing a single interview, a system of categories was developed. After this, through all the data analysis, coding continued and spread and was elaborated upon.

For example, concepts which were mentioned during the interview were classified by comparing one with against another. In cases of where similar phenomena were revealed, these concepts were grouped and dealt with in clusters in the process of the analysis. When the processing was elaborated, coding was developed as a kind of family code, or the selecting of a code required moulding themes. This process partly used ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis program. This program was useful for making codes, and making links between codes. In addition, the off-line survey data was analysed using SPSS to save time and to see the data related to the linked qualitative data. For example, the figures of useful crosstab results were described to compare the abnormal group (the dangerous user group and the potentially dangerous user group) with the normal group (not the addicted group) for the Internet by CIPC classification.

### **5.7.2. The process of analysis**

#### **Staying grounded**

The basic analysis started from the notes taken during the interview and summaries of the notes for data after the interview. Using these data helped to recall the interviewee's peculiarities. It was very useful to apply to the main analysis so as to supply concept for the data as a whole. The transcription also helped to generate ideas for the analysis.

Some interviewees sent e-mails to say hello to me during the analysis and I responded to them. When I read the transcriptions, I recalled the interviews to maintain a sensible idea of the data. Live memory is useful for directing of the analysis of what I thought during the interview and after the interview.

## **Coding**

Coding procedures in this research established links between various sorts of data, not only from young people but also from parents and others. Also, theoretical concepts are linked to data. In particular, coding linked different segments or instances in the data. Seidel and Kelle (1995: 52) point out that:

“Codes represent the decisive link between the original raw data, that is, the textual material such as interview transcripts or field notes, on the one hand, and the researcher’s theoretical concepts on the other”.

According to Flick (2002), basically, coding needs the categorising of data and developing the theory behind it. Strauss and Corbin (1990) mention that open coding, which is a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorising data, is used to make the category system more elaborate. This open coding process is based on comparisons and questions, as follows:

1) labelling phenomena; 2) discovering categories; 3) naming a category; and 4) developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions

In this process of open coding, several methods are applied, namely line-by-line analysis, code by sentence or paragraph and analysis to spot similarities and differences

from an entire document. Through this process, some of the sub-titles are adapted to describe the situation.

This research forms a kind of family code, selecting coding which is the process of selecting the core category. This process allows it to relate to other categories systematically, to confirm their relationships and write in categories to be refined and developed further.

### **Forming themes and interpretation**

When the first interview case is analysed, the refined category and thematic domains are linked to the other cases. These cases are cross-checked through the analytical thematic structure. This cross checking is used to develop the thematic structure. Through all the data, this thematic structure is elaborated. To interpret thematic domains effectively, texts such as narrative contents are analysed in more detail. The forms of each theme are also considered as the result of the pilot research, namely the ‘young people’s own world’, item trading and the decorating of Avatars.

For example, stories of young people are considered, to segment past experiences and present situations. In this research the sequence of events and action in using the Internet was carried out deliberately. Also, the description of the sequence of the texts of the stories was used to relate them to the themes of the research topic. Concerning the young people’s experiences, three stages were described and interpreted to understand the influences which may lead to Internet addiction.

The first period is that of learning to use the Internet and buying computers as a beginner. The second period is that of having fun in using the Internet or exchanging

data with friends, or visiting the Internet site including games or chatting with friends. The third relates to problems with increasing tolerance of long hours spent using the Internet, and the disturbance of adaptive functions. Of course, the voices are differentiated in the social and cultural context.

These case descriptions can include statements in some cases, and answers to the research questions. They are also the main content as regards issues. Through the analysis, these interview outlines form part of the interview results, namely, the backgrounds of the interviewees and summaries of the interviews' main contents. To make themes, the Internet addiction situation is considered following the method of Flick (2002).

- . Conditions: Why? What has led to the Internet addiction? Background
- . Interaction among the actors: Relationships between young people and their friends, parents and companies which make attractive computer programmes. Who did what? What happened as a result?
- . Strategies and tactics: What ways of handling Internet addiction situations?
- . Consequence: What changed? Consequences, results?

To answer these questions, a comparative explanation is included, namely, influences due to parenting styles. For the interpretation of Internet addiction, phenomena are explained by their traces and processes, for example, through young people's subsequent stories. This tracing and processing contributes to the interpretation of these research questions about addiction.

## **5.8. Summary**

The main research was carried out to collect various data through using several methods. In particular, this research process occupied much time in the evenings or at night on weekdays and during weekends. Ironically, however, this left the weekdays free for the profitable use of research time. It was not difficult to find time to meet many adult interviewees and members of advisory panels. This allowed various voices and data to be collected to explain Internet addiction. In a cooperative relationship with parents, teachers and policy makers, this research was conducted to establish the circumstances surrounding young people's Internet addiction situations.

The analysis is based on segmenting, coding and categorization. Valuable attempts were carried out to find and conceptualize similarities in the data. This research needs to be studied from the point of view of young people. Young people's stories can be interpreted to represent social reality and show how this can lead to an Internet addiction situation.

## **Chapter 6. Young people and Internet addiction**

This chapter mainly describes the pattern of Internet use among young people. The stories of interviewees who experience or have experienced side effects such as Internet addiction situations are explored. The collecting of problematic experiences of Internet use from individuals may supply some common patterns and features in young people's relationships. The purpose is to understand young people's lives vis-à-vis the Internet and to prepare for the next chapter which shows the power relationships which can lead to an Internet addiction situation. Through twenty-five young interviewees' (Appendix 7) patterns, this chapter explores how their situations link together the opinions of some psychologists about Internet addiction. In addition, some survey data are quoted to show problematic situations among young people. It also describes how the term Internet addiction has been used in Korea.

### **6.1. The trend towards Internet addiction**

#### **Inability to stop using the Internet**

**...If someone made me stop using the Internet altogether, I would go mad and die... (Ahnjin: 13).**

All young interviewees find it convenient to converse and discuss topics with friends at any time through the chat programs such as Buddybuddy (this is a chat room programme set up by a Korean company, which puts many Korean young people at middle and high school in touch with 100 friends when they access the Internet) and

Microsoft MSN Messenger, instead of telephoning. Their choice of chat rooms is mostly influenced by their friends.

Young people from the same school tend to use the same kind of messenger programme to contact each other. Almost all middle school interviewees have used Buddybuddy because this programme is so widespread among younger students in Korea. Some high school interviewees were inclined to use other programmes, including Microsoft MSN Messenger to contact friends as well as Buddybuddy. These chatting programmes supply young people with the opportunity to talk with anyone freely about any topics for as long as they like. Young people on the phone do not want to be interrupted by their parents. Thus, they feel free from restraint when using these programmes.

They need help from friends to get information, not only about homework, related to education, but also about games and music through the Internet. As they have talked with friends about topics to do with computers, they need to access the Internet in order not to feel left out by their friends. It seems that the influence of their parents declines, while peer influence increases, as the age of the children rises, as mentioned in Chapter 3.3.1. The Internet is the essential tool nowadays for young people, as well as businessmen who need to exchange information for the sake of their jobs.

Some interviewees seem to be absorbed by the Internet, spending a great amount of time chatting, playing games and searching their favourite sites. They may sometimes reveal symptoms of Internet addiction, such as ‘inability to stop using the Internet’, as Young mentions, (discussed in Chapter 2.2.2) as follows.

I never tried to cut down my time on the Internet... Only when my parents interrupt me as I'm using the Internet do, I feel I have to reduce the time for a few days. However, in a few days, I'm spending just as much time all over again ...My mother has even hidden the computer flex to prevent me using the Internet too much (Jangseong: 84).

I have used the computer for about six hours in a day. I also think I spend too much time on the computer. During the holidays, I just tried to decrease because it brings problems. However, I can't cut down. I have known myself use the Internet all day some days in the holidays. As soon as I get up in the morning, I start to access the Internet and stay online till bedtime. Of course, it is not easy to sit in the same chair continuously. The time passes very fast searching other homepages and reading new texts in the community sites (Joa: 112).

When they stop using the Internet for a while, some interviewees confessed to feeling anxiety about missing opportunities or expectations derived from accessing something new with their friends. For example, when interviewees cannot use the Internet at home due to the computer being out of order or parents' oppressive interruptions, some of them seem to have experienced situations similar to withdrawal symptoms, including anxiety and obsessive thinking.

I must use the Internet every day. If I do not use the Internet, I wonder what my friends are doing or how they are getting on (Kimsong: 171).

If I cannot use the Internet at home, I feel stuffy. I think I should go to Internet cafés frequently (Gyono: 62).

They need another place where they can use the Internet freely. Thus, such places as Internet cafés are widespread and open for 24 hours a day in South Korea. Korean



young people have not only the facilities, with computers and broadband systems, to easily access the Internet at home, but also suitable circumstances outside home to support their addiction to the Internet (Whang H-Y, 2002:180).

### **Feeling at ease when connecting to the Internet**

**...I feel at ease and have peace of mind when I access the Internet (Jangseong: 83)....**

**...I play Internet games quietly, secretly without my mother's knowledge... (Ahnjin: 12)**

Young people seem to have 'their own world' in which they can meet and converse with their friends, including on-line friends, such as in chat rooms, Internet games and community activities. In particular, when using the Internet they feel free and can relax from many kinds of stress, including that of studying.

Koreans are inclined to regard young people's school scores as demonstrating the family's success (Baek, 1993: 103). Korean parents want their children to use the Internet for educational purposes to improve their school scores. Almost all parents do their best to support and raise their children's school scores, not only through providing high quality computer facilities but also through paying for extra tuition in subjects such as Maths and English after school. For instance, 75.8% of students in Seoul have attended additional lessons after school, paying 294,000won (£150) per person per month (Choi, 2003:16-19).

One of the main reasons for parents' buying and running computers is to improve

their children's school scores through access to the Internet. However, young interviewees spend more time having fun, including playing games, chatting and listening to music on the Internet, although they sometimes use it for studying as well.

Several interviewees are used to being interrupted by their parents whilst using the Internet. Not only male interviewees but also some female interviewees enjoy games or taking part in communities through the Internet. One of the reasons to access the Internet is to escape from the stress of studying or pressure from parents. This escape motivation seems to be similar to the use of other addictions such as drugs or alcohol, as mentioned by the psychologists researching into Internet addiction (see Chapter 2.4.2).

It is difficult for young people to enjoy other recreations during the semester due to the need to invest their time in school work and additional lessons. Usually, they return home at 9:00 or 10:00 pm after additional lessons. Accordingly, several interviewees were inclined to use the Internet until late at night or during the night when their parents are asleep. Several interviewees seem to think obsessively about what is happening on the Internet when they are not connected to it, even though they know their parents will rebuke them if they find they are using the Internet during the night. In addition, some interviewees feel at ease connecting to the Internet despite the pressure from their parents to reduce the time spent on it.

### **Disruption of normal lives**

**.....I did not sleep and continued for 28 hours playing the Internet games (Baekbyoung: 26).**

Several young interviewees speak of using the Internet throughout the night or even longer. For instance, some RPG (role play game) games lead young people to spend much time not only enjoying the games but also upgrading their levels and obtaining items (pieces of equipment) which are useful weapons as tools to defeat monsters in games, such as swords and arrows.

As they spend more time on the games, their characters (avatars), which are taken as the other selves of the young people in games, will gain higher status and gather many items. Computer games are divided into four main groups, namely Arcade, Adventure, Simulation and Role Play, following Table 6-1-1 (Seong, 2003:239; Yoo, 2001:108).

In particular, it seems that RPG is more addictive for young people, judging by what they say. These attractive factors seem to be made competitively to vie with one another by the game companies in order to attract the most users.

These patterns of using the Internet until late at night disturb the young people's normal school lives. Those who use the Internet until late, may not get enough sleep and their concentration and work at school is affected. This phenomenon seems to be 'a situation which disrupts normal lives' exemplifying Internet addiction as described by an interviewee.

.....I have tried to decrease the time I spend on the Internet; I cannot do so because I have too much fun with games (Ahnjin: 18).

**Table 6-1-1) Genres of computer games**

	Arcade	Adventure	Simulation	Role playing
<b>Concept Contents</b>	Through a simple functioning key board, players can control persons or objects to win or reach their goal. It takes a short time.	Through the story the player copes with and solves problems. He needs to reach his goal. Game provides a fantastic atmosphere with graphic background and music.	Player reappears in the game in some real or imaginary situation. It is difficult to finish in a short time. Player feels the ambience during game with various situations.	As the Player's Character enacts his role, the character is developing and growing up within game. The character has levels to pass through. Compared to other genres, player has more free will.
<b>Kind of games</b>	Shooting games, board games, puzzle games, sports games, action games	Tomb raider, Metal gear solid, Monkey island	Starcraft, Rainbow 6, Simsity	Lineage, Diabro, Maplestory, Dark age

### **Absence from and leaving school**

As some young interviewees are absorbed in the Internet, their life patterns may change from day-time activity to night-time. It is difficult for them to get up in the morning. According to Kim (2002), some young people absent themselves from school to rest or to use the Internet continuously.

A psychiatrist interviewee (Hyun: 429) said that some young people prefer the guild master (a manager of a group of game user members, who has responsibility for exchanging information to increase members' ability and decorate group sites in popular Internet games) to the president of their school council.

One interviewee (Baekbyoung) is working as a guild master of his game group at the moment, so he has to access the games for long periods in order to respond to group members' comments and to manage their sites. Thus, he may not concentrate on his school life. Moreover, the friend of another interviewee (Soseong) left school altogether in order to spend more time on the Internet and to have more enjoyment without restraint. It is possible that this situation may worsen if young people are not dealt with suitably and protected from becoming forever absorbed by the Internet.

Recently, I have been working as a guild master instead of the original guild master in the game group, even though it takes a lot of time to decorate websites and manage our games guild for the members. I can use Photoshop and the NAMO programme (used for creating a website). This job is much more exciting and interesting than the others (Baekbyoung: 12).

One of my friends who likes the Internet and spends much time online, left school saying that there was nothing to learn. Then later, he got a job related to computers (Soseong: 222).

The processes and situations mentioned above sweep young interviewees into using the Internet. The phenomena leading to Internet addiction among the young interviewees is summarised in the following table (Table 6-1-2) to help understand their individual historical factors. Some of them seem to strike a balance in using the Internet; others, however, seem to struggle to find a *modus vivendi*. The data below come from interviews and questions following up interviews.

**Table 6-1-2) Young interviewees' phenomena towards Internet addiction**

	Sex	Age	Length of use of the Internet			School Score	The range of addiction		CIPC tool	Parenting style	
			T	M	B		Present	Past		Father	Mother
<b>Ahnjin</b>	M	13	4	2	2	E	++		P	AV	AV
<b>Baekhyoung</b>	M	13	5	1	4	G	+++		D	AN	AN
<b>Bakgun</b>	M	17	5	1	4	G	+	++	N	AV	AV
<b>Choijong</b>	M	18	5	1	4	G	=	+++	N	PM	PM
<b>Gyono</b>	M	15	4	1	3	M	++		P	PM	PM
<b>Hanseol</b>	F	14	3	1	2	E	++		N	PM	PM
<b>Hanseong</b>	M	15	4	1	3	M	++		N	AV	AV
<b>Jangseong</b>	M	18	6	1	5	G	+++		D	AV	AV
<b>Jeongjoo</b>	M	16	5	1	4	M	++	+++	P	PM	PM
<b>Jinho</b>	M	17	4	1	3	M	++	+++	P	AN	PM
<b>Joa</b>	F	13	3		3	E	++		P	AV	PM
<b>Jungil</b>	F	18	5	1	4	E	+	++	N	PM	PM
<b>Jung</b>	M	15	4	1	3	G	+	+++	P	AN	AV
<b>Kimjong</b>	F	17	5	1	4	M	+	+++	N	PM	PM
<b>Kimmin</b>	F	15	4	1	3	G	+	++	N	AV	PM
<b>Kimsee</b>	M	16	4		4	M	+	+++	N		PM
<b>Kimsong</b>	F	17	4		4	E	+	++	N	AV	AV
<b>Leeyu</b>	F	17	5	2	3	G	+	++	N	AV	PM
<b>Nohyoun</b>	F	15	3		3	G	+		N	PM	AV
<b>Songseong</b>	M	16	5	1	4	G	+	+++	N		AV
<b>Soseong</b>	M	16	5	1	4	G	+	++	P	AN	PM
<b>Yannjin</b>	M	15	4	2	2	M	+		N	PM	AV
<b>Yangso</b>	F	13	3		3	M	++		N		PM
<b>Yoojae</b>	M	18	6	3	3	VP	+	++	N		PM
<b>Yoonil</b>	M	18	3		3	G	=	++	N	PM	PM
25											

Length of use of Internet

T: total use

M: modem

B: broadband

School score

E: excellent - rank below 10%

G: good - rank 11%-30%

M: middle - rank 31%-70%

P: poor - rank 71%-90%

VP: very poor - rank 91%-100%

The range of addiction (PAST: the status a few years ago)

Very serious +++

Serious ++

Having a trend towards addiction but not serious +

Not having a trend towards addiction =

CIPC measuring tool result

Dangerous user group: D

Potential user group: P

Normal user group: N

Parenting Style

Authoritarian: AN

Authoritative: AV

Permissive: PM

## **6.2. Internet addiction and on-line game items (equipment)**

### **Game items (equipment) and currency (cyber money)**

Most Role Play Game (RPG) programs basically supply users with a ‘character’ (a kind of Avatar), which represents the user (the player) in the games and with ‘items’ (pieces of equipment) which the character can use, namely, weapons, armour and shields, and ‘currency’ (cyber money) which the character uses for trading in each game.

Items make the character strong when the game calls for fights with monsters or enemies. According to several young interviewees (Choijong; Ahnjin; Backbyoung; Kimjong) monsters sometimes drop items or currency when they are killed and then they become available to the players. But monsters can also kill players. As players become stronger at taking items or their level rises, they have more opportunities to kill monsters. In some games, players can fight each other. For example, in ‘Lineage’, which the KMRB allows only to players of 18 and above, players fight each other (Lineage game manual, <http://www.lineage.co.kr>). Strong characters who take high quality items or become high level themselves have an advantage when they fight against other players or monsters.

### **Normal trading of items in games**

Game programmes supply players in each game with markets where they can sell or buy items using game ‘currency’. According to several young interviewees (e.g. Choijong, Jinho), some items can be used only by a Character if it is suitable. If a player obtains unsuitable items from another Character, he can exchange them for other items



or can sell them in the market. Or he can exchange them for items from other players in order to accumulate suitable items for his Character in the game. These processes are normal trading methods within the rules of the game. All RPG users can obtain more items or currency by spending more time playing the game. These items or currency systems may add to the fun as users invest more time

This kind of item trading is probably implemented by many young people. For example, in order to better understand the trading situation, this research included a survey carried out during main the research period. Altogether, 535 of the 543 young people concerned responded to this particular question. The ratio of young people who had experience of item trading was 311(58%) out of 535. During the course of the Internet survey, 107 out of 120 young people responded to this particular question. The ratio of young people who had had experience of item trading was 64 (59%) out of 107.

In the process, however, fraudulent exchanges may emerge. For example, 174 (46%) out of the 379 who responded to a related question had experienced the loss of items through fraud. From the Internet survey, it was found that 39 (39%) out of the 101 who responded to a related question had experienced the loss of items by fraud. In addition, 122 (31%) of the 397 who responded to a related question had themselves exchanged items fraudulently by not giving their own items in return for items they had received. The Internet survey showed that 13 (13%) of the 102 who responded to a related question had exchanged items fraudulently, not giving their items in return for items they had received.

Comparisons (see Table 6-2-1) between the Internet addiction group and the non addiction group (normal user group) by the CIPC measuring tool show that young people in the Internet addiction group have much more experience of trading, that is to say, 68% rather than 54.2% of the young people in the normal user group, constituting 57.3% of the people who said that they had had experience of item trading. Furthermore, the percentage of young people in the Internet addiction group who have experienced the loss of items by fraudulent exchange was 58%, compared with 41% of young people in the normal user group, out of the 45.4% of people who responded to the question. The percentage of young people in the Internet addiction group who have experienced the fraudulent obtaining of items was 43.0% compared with 26.2% of young people in the normal user group, out of the 30.4% of people who responded to the question.

**Table 6-2-1) Item trading and fraudulent exchanges**

Item trade		Internet use pattern		Total
		Abnormal user group (addiction group)	Normal user group	
Experience of item trading	Count	83	228	311
	% within Item trade experience	26.7	73.3	100
	% within each Internet use pattern	68.0	54.2	57.3
Experience of the loss of items by fraudulent exchange	Count	58	116	174
	% within the loss	33.3	66.7	100
	% within each Internet use pattern	58.0	41.0	45.4
Experience of obtaining items by fraudulent exchange	Count	43	79	122
	% within Item trade experience	35.2	64.8	100
	% within each Internet use pattern	43.0	26.2	30.4

From these data, it seems that young people in the Internet addiction group have more experience not only of normal item trading but also of such bad experiences as the loss

of items by fraudulent exchange and the obtaining of items by fraudulent exchange. However, more serious problems may be revealed in the use of real money in item trading.

### **Obtaining money through Internet games as well as having fun.**

Users' basic purpose in collecting the game items is to develop a Character in the RPG game. This factor enables users to have fun and enjoy themselves as they play the games. Some game users want not only to exchange game items (equipment) but also to sell and buy them with real money. However, users when they first became game users enter into contracts with the game companies which forbid the selling and buying of all items and characters with real money (Fair Trade Commission, 2000).

They can enjoy playing more if they have powerful items. Almost all the interviewees have experienced exchanging items in Internet games. Moreover, they have sold and bought them with real money.

For example, several young interviewees have made a good deal of money through buying and selling items for others from their large collection made while playing games. Also, they may be absorbed in simply collecting items for these games. Moreover, they can buy and sell their 'character', which is their own symbol in the games, through the Internet after they have spent some considerable time upgrading their character to a high level. These processes of buying and selling items and characters may lead young people to an increased risk of addiction, as the following quotation shows:

My mother had thrown away my computer monitor in order to prevent me from becoming absorbed by Internet... One of the reasons I play games is to get money. I have already made about 3,000,000won (£1,500) selling game items (Soseng: 212-213).

It seems that almost all young people have experience of selling and buying items if they like Internet games... Currently, I am selling two items. One costs 50,000won (£25), the other 300,000won (£150) (Jinho: 289-290).

### **The spread of fraudulent trading in game items**

As mentioned above, games items are very useful for players, because they make their Characters stronger. Players find it easy to upgrade their level in a relatively short time if they have better game items. RPG game systems were deliberately designed by game companies to allow the users' characters to be upgraded and the companies supply many items for games. Several young interviewees have not only bought or sought to pay money for powerful items but have also exchanged items for Internet games in shopping malls and other such places.

For example, from the survey, 84 (16%) of the 518 who responded to the related question had bought items with real money. According to the Internet survey, 17 (16%) out of the 104 who responded to a related question had bought items with real money.

Moreover, 25 (12%) of the 207 who responded to the related question had experienced the loss of money through fraud. This question had no response from 336 out of 543. However, it is understood that 25 (30%) had experienced a loss of money by fraudulent trading among the 84 who responded to the related question by saying that

they had bought items with real money. As the result of the Internet survey, 5 (8%) out of the 62 who responded to a related question had experienced the loss of money by fraudulent trading. It is understood that 5 (29%) had experienced the loss of money by fraudulent trading out of the 17 who responded to the related question by saying that they had bought items with real money.

Conversely, some young people are familiar with selling items to get money. For example, 213 (40%) of the 528 who answered had experienced selling items for money. In the Internet survey, 37 (35%) out of the 106 who responded to a related question said that they had experienced selling items for money.

Also, 51(18%) of the 276 who responded to the related question had experienced taking someone's money by fraud. However, it is understood that 51 (24%) out of the 213 who responded to the related question had sold items with real money. In the Internet survey, 8 (8%) of the 96 who responded to the related question said that they had had experienced taking someone's money by fraud. But it is understood that 8 (22%) among 37 who responded to the related question had sold items with real money. That is to say, it seems that the young people who responded have already practised a kind of deliberate illegal activity.

From these data, it seems that young people in the Internet addiction group have more experience not only of buying items with real money (see Table 6-2-2) but also, of selling items with real money (see Table 6-2-3). As regards buying, 22.7% of the young people in the Internet addiction group said that they had done so compared with the normal user group's 13.9%, as following in Table 6-2-2..

**Table 6-2-2) Item buying with money and fraudulent exchange**

Item trade		Internet use pattern		Total
		Abnormal user group (addiction group)	Normal user group	
Buying Item	Count	27	57	84
	% within buying Item	32.1	67.9	100
	% within each Internet use pattern	22.7	13.9	15.9
the loss of money by fraudulent trade	Count	7	18	25
	% within the loss	28.0	72.0	100
	% within each Internet use pattern	11.5	12.3	12.1

In the case of selling, 47.1% of the young people in the Internet addiction group said that they had done so compared with the normal user group's 37.9%. In addition, the Internet addiction group appeared to take more people's money by fraudulent methods, namely 25.8% of young people in the Internet addiction group compared with 16% of those in the normal user group, as following in Table 6-2-3.

**Table 6-2-3) Item selling with money and fraudulent exchange**

Item trade		Internet use pattern		Total
		Abnormal user group (addiction group)	Normal user group	
Selling Item	Count	56	157	213
	% within buying Item	26.3	73.7	100
	% within each Internet use pattern	47.1	37.9	40.0
Taking someone's money by fraudulent trade	Count	17	34	51
	% within the loss	33.3	66.7	100
	% within each Internet use pattern	25.8	16.0	18.3

Generally, young people reveal more cases of selling the items (40%) with money than of buying them (15.9%). It seems that the people who sell items have better playing ability than the people who buy them. It may show that some young people spend time on these games simply to obtain money.

This pattern may lead young people to an Internet addiction situation. It leads us to assume that some adults, not only young people, want to buy game items. Through the stories from young interviewees (eg. Ahnjin, Baekyoung, Choijong, Jeongjoo, Jinho, Jung, Kimjong, Songseong) and these data, it appears that game items themselves seem to lead to an Internet addiction situation among young people.

These processes of buying and selling are very popular among young people, including some adults. One of the problems is that some people do not supply items in return for those they have received. For instance, it is possible for someone who has received items to deliberately log out of the Internet without giving his or her own items in return (Ahnjin). Even though this trading is done in cyber space and not in the real world, such frauds have recently spread among young people. Moreover, in processing the buying and selling of items, some young people adopt fraudulent methods (Baekbyoung). It is dangerous and disquieting that young people are apt not only to learn injustice so easily but also to apply it themselves soon.

One of my friends enjoys fraud item trading. He asks the other person to send items for trade and then he turns off his computer after he receives the items without giving his back. The other person just knows the game ID of my friend, but this ID is changed straight afterwards (Anjin: 4).

When I sell items through the commission site, I once lost my items to someone. He sent a text message by mobile phone confirming that he had put money in my bank account to pay for the items and then I sent the items to him through the Internet. However, I realised that he had not put any money into my bank account. The commission site person responsible for linking the selling and buying of items did not send me any text message. After the fraudulent trading for the items, he changed his mobile phone number (Backyoung: 23-24).

### **6.3. Shifting degrees of Internet addiction**

#### **Difficulty in distinguishing between abnormal and normal user groups**

The Centre for Internet Addiction Prevention & Counselling (CIPC), supported by the Korean government, used the following operational definition for Internet addiction : ‘Internet addiction is characterized by increasing tolerance of long Internet use hours, withdrawal, and disturbance of adaptive functions’ (Kim et al., 2002a:8). Young people using the Internet are divided by the CIPC measuring tool into normal user groups and abnormal user groups, including dangerous groups and potentially dangerous groups.

This measuring tool seems to be more suitable than other measuring tools such as that for Internet addiction in Wang (2001)’s survey or that used by Young (1998)’s (see Chapter 2), in Korea, where almost all young people use a broadband system at home. The Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC) has encouraged the use of this measuring tool to help prevent Internet addiction as the process test results for this tool have high reliability and validity (The Ministry of Information and Communication and Korea Agency for Digital Opportunity and Promotion, 2003).



With this tool, young people are divided into two groups, the addicted (dangerous and potentially dangerous use; abnormal use) and the non-addicted (normal user group) by their score when measured. However, it is difficult to distinguish between the lowest score (total points 95) for the abnormal user groups and the highest score (total points 94) for the normal user groups. Even though several interviewees who were marked below 95 and classified in the normal user group, they showed serious symptoms of Internet addiction, such as withdrawal symptoms (e.g., Hanseong and Hansel: normal users group) or disturbance of normal life.

It is impossible for me to control the time I spend on the Internet except when the computer is out of order (Hansel: 68).

Once I was stopped from using the computer for a month by my parents, as my school exam results were bad. It was a very difficult time to endure without the Internet. I cannot converse with friends normally. I kept thinking about playing the games, again and again (Hanseong: 75).

There may be some limitations within the measuring tool for testing whether people are addicted to the Internet, even if this tool is needed to understand the extent of problematic Internet use and the general trend in using the Internet among young people. Accordingly, the CIPC measuring tool seems to help to show that young people have an inclination to becoming addicted, rather than an accurate measurement of this.

### **Change of inclination towards Internet addiction at present or in the past**

Interviewees talked about their Internet experiences from their first steps to their becoming skilled users of the Internet as they proceeded from primary school age to middle school and then to high school. In the process, some interviewees classified in

the normal user group by the tool said that they had had serious symptoms a few years ago. For instance, some high school students mentioned becoming absorbed in the Internet in middle school.

... Also, it was difficult for me to manage time to use the Internet at middle school and primary school in the past, but now I can control how much time I spend (Pakgun: 39).

In the past I sometimes spent 24 hours a day on Internet games. But now I do not have so much time to play them (Choijong: 49).

One of the reasons for this is that some high school students recognise the difficulty of entering university if they spend too much time on the Internet. They change their pattern of Internet use themselves, even though they enjoy the fun they derive from it. They appreciate their situation, namely, the difficulty of entering university if they let the Internet interfere with study and get low marks in the university exam. In other words, they may have realised that they should prepare themselves for the future. Alternatively, their preferences on the Internet may change, namely, from RPG games to simulation games, from playing games to listening to music and from attending communities to searching data. These changes may keep addiction at a distance.

This tendency seems to echo Grohol (1999)'s view that people are not permanently addicted but evolve towards a balanced use of the Internet. He outlines the process of using the Internet as enchantment (obsession), disillusionment (avoidance) and balance (normal) (see Chapter 2.4.2).

Comparing high school with middle school students, the latter are inclined to play Internet games with their classmates when they meet them there. They know each

other's game abilities and play the same games competitively as a class. A type of group seems to form based on the kind of games chosen or their preferences in using the Internet. This group exists as a class, in a class or beyond a class. They are influenced by classmates in what kinds of game they enjoy and choose, because they are their peers. It may be easy to absorb the games through the Internet. Also, this factor may lead middle school students to a pattern of addiction.

Middle school interviewee case: My classmates know that I am second best in the class at the 'Starcraft' Internet game. We already have experience in playing this game, in order to decide the winner through a tournament system (Gyono: 57-58).

High school interviewees are inclined to play the same games with their closer friends, including friends from middle school, as small groups rather than at class level. Some high school interviewees also mentioned the usefulness of studying with the Internet, even though they also enjoy the Internet. It seems a case of achieving a balanced situation of Internet use.

High school interviewee case: Even though I play games and chat with friends I have also attended the '87 study world community' which exchanges information concerning the entrance exam for universities and how to study effectively. We members were all born in 1987. (Songseong: 190-192).

Since April 2003 CIPC has used the same measuring tool with another evaluation between middle and high school students and primary school children (The Ministry of Information and Communication and Korea Agency for Digital Opportunity and Promotion, 2003). The evaluation between middle school students and high school

students is the same. However, young people undergo some major changes, not only physically and but also mentally, during this period of six years, three in middle school and three in high school .

On the one hand, there is only a one-year gap between the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school and the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of middle school. On the other hand, there is a five-year gap between the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of middle school and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in high school. This seems to form a limitation to measuring the extent to which young people are addicted the Internet.

In order to understand the young people's addiction situation, information on individual environment conditions may be required. For example, there may be peer pressure persuading young people to spend so much time on the Internet, for example, through games or chat rooms or pornographic sites. Also, the historical backgrounds of the young people are useful for understanding the process whereby they begin to be absorbed, become absorbed or remain absorbed in what kinds of specific use of the Internet.

Thus, it is necessary, as well as using the measuring tool, to know when analysing the interview whether the young interviewees have an inclination towards Internet addiction at present or had one in the past. Young people who are absorbed by the Internet find it difficult to reduce the time they spend on it, in particular, students of middle school age. Moreover, some young interviewees said that they need their family's help to control the time they spend on the Internet since they cannot control it themselves. A great part of young people's conversation at school or in any communities is related to using the Internet, on such topics as games, chat rooms and new information about Internet sites. Situations of addiction to the Internet may change as time goes by, according to the

young people's individual condition, such as peer pressure, the part played by their parents or the recognition that they must prepare themselves for their future.

For instance, some high school students preparing for the university entrance exam (*SuneongGosa*) have changed their attitude to using the Internet. Their attitudes turn from accepting that they are not managing their time well (as with addiction) to taking a more balanced approach to their study and rest, even though they still enjoy using the Internet. In addition, some young people who have spent too much time on Internet games may discover that they have had enough of them.

Hence, by abstaining from Internet games, they are moving from a dangerous (abnormal) use of the Internet (addicted) to a so-called normal user.

These inclinations, which imply that the range of Internet addiction is not fixed, relate to Foucault's interest in the historical production of truth (Foucault, 1977; 1994). This perspective can be used to understand the process of these problematic Internet use patterns throughout young people's lives. In other words, it seems that a Foucauldian analysis does not accept a single cause of Internet addiction. It prefers to understand situations and relationships flexibly in processes related to the condition of Internet addiction rather than seeking to hypothesise an unwavering definition of it.

### **Revealing trends of Internet addiction even among high school students**

On the one hand, as shown above, some high school students have been inclined to reduce the time spent on the Internet from what it was in middle school. On the other hand, however, some high school students have shown a tendency to become continuously absorbed in using the Internet. Because they have had fun through the

Internet, it already occupies part of their lives. Some of them may even give up the opportunity of entering university as their school scores go down because they cannot concentrate on their studies if they spend too much time online.

I never tried to decrease the time I spent on the Internet. I have played Internet games for four hours every day. Some days I spend ten hours playing Internet games. It seems that my school scores have declined. However, I have had good relationships with friends though the Internet (Janseong: 83-84).

They feel that all things are possible through the Internet and that it supplies them with new and special materials. For instance, some young people ask the Internet communities for their opinion on which style is suitable for them when they go shopping for shoes.

There is a 'knowledge IN' community in the Naver portal site which I can ask anything I want to know. I use this site to ask which shoes are most suitable for me among several styles.... Sometime I have asked advice about my homework if I found the question difficult. Usually, the response took one day (Songseong: 202-203).

### **Young people's inclinations among early ages**

Several interviewees said that their attitude towards using the Internet was developed in primary school. Also, some interviewees mentioned that their younger brothers also spent a disquieting amount of time on the Internet. Through their experiences, it seems that young people's tendency to become addicted to the Internet has increased, in particular, the younger ones, not only those attending middle school but, more recently, primary school children also as the following extract indicates:

I have played the Internet game, Starcraft (which is a strategy simulation game played all over the world) since the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school (Kyono: 58).

I have had interesting times with friends using the messenger programmes through the Internet since I was a 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary school student (Joa: 107).

When I play the 'Maplestory' Internet game, I meet many primary school children who have Characters decorated with their expensive Avatars. I think that it is serious for children to be so absorbed in the games (Jinho: 286).

I fight with my primary school age younger brother about using the Internet. He plays the Starcraft game very well. He downloads game programs. Sometimes I learn skills from him (Hanseol: 64-65).

#### **6.4. Consideration of the term 'Internet addiction'**

##### **Increasing use of the Internet by installing broadband**

The term 'Internet addiction' has a comprehensive meaning, as people generally have some idea of the symptoms. Also, the term can be used to explain or define several side-effects of using the Internet. But it is not enough to describe the symptoms at any particular and the process of the addiction.

At the initial stages, some interviewees learned how to use computers in computer learning centres which gave private tuition in word processing and basic skills as additional skills paid for by their parents. Others learned these skills for themselves from relatives.

As they began to enjoy using the Internet/computer, they became motivated to spending

more and more time talking with friends, playing games or searching for information on the Internet. In particular, their time spent on the Internet increased dramatically as soon as they installed a broadband system at home. After this, interviewees were inclined to become absorbed in the Internet, for example in games, attending communities, chatting and searching for data according to their individual preferences.

### **Individual peculiarities (male and female, past and present)**

Most interviewees feel a sense of achievement and relaxation about their activities on through the Internet. Of course, some portal sites and games seem to encourage young people to become absorbed in the Internet. Accordingly, interviewees are or were inclined to be addicted to games, chatting or community activities.

For example, several (Anjin, Baekyoung, Gyono, Hanseong, Yangjin, Jangseong, Jeongjoo, Jinho, Soseong) of the male interviews are absorbed in games, whilst only one the female interviewees (Yangso) is absorbed. Instead, some other female interviewees (Joa, Kimsong, Nohyoun) are enchanted in community activities.

Several interviewees showed a situation of addiction very clearly during the interview, not only at present but also in the past (see Table 6-1-2). Some interviewees expressed more addicted symptoms a few years ago than they do now. Symptoms of Internet addiction do not seem fixed or maintained permanently among young people. Situations may change from showing addiction symptoms to those of non-addiction, or from non-addiction to addiction, according to circumstances and time in relation to their motivation.



### **The term ‘Internet addiction’ as a way of recognising the problems**

The term ‘Internet addiction’ has been used by many who work in different areas including scholars who study the side effects of the Internet, even though it is not formally defined in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) by the American Psychiatric Association, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, the term ‘Internet addiction’ is often used or mentioned by parents and teachers who are concerned about young people’s problematic use of the Internet. In particular, some journalists and reporters have tried to identify the social issues relating to the Internet in order to awaken the adult generation to its bad effects as well as its benefits of the Internet. Without doubt, young people regard the term Internet addiction as a formal one.

However, adults sometimes use this term only to control young people’s attitudes towards spending too much time on the Internet/computer. Even though this term is not a formal or legal notion, its general meaning is well known and widely used by young people, as in the following extract.

One of the side effects of using the Internet is ‘Internet addiction’. If we are addicted the Internet, we cannot control the time we spend on the Internet (Jungil: 121).

Even though some young people revealed the serious symptoms mentioned above, not all young people can be regarded as having these symptoms and being addicted to the Internet. Yet the inclination towards Internet addiction and the abuse of the computer may exist all around us, even though it is not always obvious.

Objective analysis of Internet addiction may be impossible. The knowledge about Internet addiction is theoretically and discursively laden according to Lincoln and Guba (2002: 176-178) by non-foundationalists. In other words, Internet addiction may not have an ultimate criterion by which foundationalists can use a method for testing the truth. However, the terms related to 'Internet addiction' seem only those which people can agree upon at a certain time and in certain conditions.

However, the use of the term 'Internet addiction' is perhaps be acceptable until a more formal term is defined which covers the understanding, informing and preventing of problematic Internet use. That is to say, even though this term is not formalised, it is currently widely used to express a certain level of devotion to using the Internet. However, it may develop from its present meaning of a partial level of addiction to a universal level, when young people become the older generation.

## **6.5. Summary**

Young people have increased their use of Internet topics as subjects for conversation with friends. The Internet is essential for their friendships as well as their study. Through the Internet, young interviewees have spent considerable time chatting, playing games and searching their favourite sites. The pattern of using the Internet begins with communication among friends/peers and develops into becoming absorbed in attractive programs such as games. These patterns of using the Internet, namely, spending more and more time and staying up until late at night, have disturbed young people's school

lives. Thus, they may be unable to concentrate on their work due to lack of sleep.

Some interviewees have obtained money through selling and buying the Internet game items. More serious problems are caused by the fraudulent trading for game items which is now widespread among young people, according to the results of surveys. These factors have also made some of the young interviewees become addicted. However, Internet addiction situations are flexible, because as individual conditions, such as friendships and other relationships, parents' influence and becoming aware of their own situation, for example their need to be competitive in the university entrance exams. It is also difficult to measure the extent to which they are addicted to the Internet. The measuring tools for gauging addiction seem to be useful for warning of addiction situations so as to prevent the problems arising rather than as ways of judging how they should be treated.

The term 'Internet addiction' is not a formally registered phrase. However, the term may be helpful in preventing the problems of using the Internet and warning comprehensively of the side effects, rather than for discussing as a judgement whether a person is addicted to the Internet or not. In particular, in Korea, the use of the term is very popular among young people as well as adults, including parents and the government, in recognising the problems of using the Internet.

## **Chapter 7. Power relationships in relation to Internet addiction**

### **7.1. Background of power relationships - Repressive circumstances**

Young people may be in repressive situations from the various regulations for their school lives and other controls, including the ‘surveillance’ mentioned by Foucault, not only of teachers but parents as well. It seems that Korean young people are deeply influenced by the dominant philosophical systems of their society (Choi, 1999a: 11-13). For instance, they have lived with Confucian social customs in which obedience is regarded as a virtue, even though Korean social structure has changed from traditional family groups to nuclear families (see Chapter 3.4.1). Traditional Korean family values include family orientation, an authoritarian structure and family loyalty (Kim, et al 1997).

They are controlled by another dominating feature, namely, the oppressive educational system. This requires young people who want to satisfy their parents’ aspirations through family values including obedience or loyalty to gain a university place. There is a basic recognition that young people in Korea should proceed to higher education. For instance, they are forced to try to enter famous universities to achieve better status after graduation in order to earn more money or to enhance the family reputation. With this background, the proportion of those who continue up the educational ladder is revealed to be high. According to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), the percentage of educational promotion in 2002 was 99.9% from primary (6<sup>th</sup> grade from 7 years old to 12 years old) to middle school; 99.5% from middle school (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) to high school; and 74.2% from high

school (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) to institutes of higher education including University (4-year course) and College (2-year course) (The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2004).

Accordingly, most young people, not only middle school pupils but also those at high school, attend various extra lessons after school. They need to increase both their competitiveness and their ability in order to get better grades and to prepare for the *SooneongGosa* (the university entrance exam, similar to the A-level exam in Britain). They may not return home until about 9:00 pm or 10:00 pm (Choi, 2003). Some of them may have personal tutors at home. These conditions are fostered by the parents' competitive mindset which requires their children to enter one of the famous universities, which would be regarded as a success for the family.

If young people do not want to accept this system, they may expect to experience punishment or disadvantages. For instance, they may feel that they are falling behind their peer group, who are making constant progress as they conform to the dominant society systems. Their parents may be disappointed and regard them as failures if they do not adapt to the trends of the times. Adults in Korea are inclined to assume that it is normal for young people to conform to this system. Young people who do not conform to it may be treated as abnormal (Shin, 1999:197-206).

It seems, however, that young people need a 'safety valve' from these obsessively dominating social demands. In recent years, the Internet has given them this chance. They have made their so-called, 'own world' as they talk freely and enjoy themselves

using such vehicles as chat-rooms or game programs available on the Internet (Whang, 2002:21-25). The Internet has contributed to the process of moulding ‘their own world’ for young people. In the background, however, there are other contributors and abettors, such as the companies who make games and chat-room sites, which focus their marketing on young people (Kim S-I, 2002:7).

This chapter explores the power relations of the young people’s ‘own world’ including their peers/friends, extended through the Internet. These power relations in ‘their own world’ may be revealed not only in off-line relationships but also in on-line relationships. Alternatively, the power relations may be demonstrated in mixed relationships both off-line and on-line. In addition, another power relationship, that between young people and their parents through and by the Internet, is also discussed.

## **7.2. Power relationships among young people (peers/friends)**

### **7.2.1. Emergence of new words related to dominance and repressiveness**

The peer relationships between young people bring a hierarchy unlike that in adult society. Society at large includes various ranks to show a person’s status, in particular the Korean society dominated by Confucianism. Peer status generally means equivalence within individual relationships (see Chapter 3.3.1). However, as the Internet spreads more widely among young people, it seems that even peer relationships display different ranks or levels, such the relationships of domination.

For example, young people live in a dominating structure not only on-line but also in their off-line lives, through the use of words such as '*level*' (used in Korea with the same meaning and the same pronunciation as in English) in some Internet games or '*zzang*', used in certain cases by young people. ('*zzang*' applies to someone who enjoys popularity as pre-eminent in a particular special area or realm mainly on the Internet; it is now widely used and has many slang forms, and is applied for example to a very beautiful girl or handsome boy in a group of young people, or distinguished and popular player of a game (Naver knowledge in open dictionary, 2004).) By the contrast, the word, '*Hujub*' to signify mockery or neglect is also widespread among young people. ('*Hujub*' is not a formal word but is used widely and may occur as mockery of someone who is different, for example, 'someone who is very poor' at Internet games (Naver knowledge in open dictionary, 2004).)

Interaction within peer relationships may help to extend the relationships through the group's social network. Hartup (1983) mentions that 'popularity' and 'status' among peers may reveal social power. What happens in young people's peer relationships and friendships is influenced by their changing circumstances, such as family relations, their school lives and their community activity. In recent years, young people's relationships with their peers/friends may have been enlarged due to the diversity of current social developments.

In particular, the widespread provision of the Internet makes our whole society more diverse and complicated. Young people also have various social desires and make new relationships among peers and friends through the Internet. In the process, new words

expressing relationships such as *level*, *zzang* and *hujub* have emerged and spread among young people. Young people, from the Foucauldian perspective, may through these new words be categorised according to status by a form of power applying itself to immediate everyday life.

As Holloway and Valentine (2003) mention, friendly relationships are important if young people are to increase their social desire to interact and learn social skills. Young people share this desire and learn various skills from friends and peers through the Internet. In these processes, power relationships among peers are exercised through the medium of the Internet/computer.

### **7.2.2. Pursuit of power/knowledge for the Internet**

#### **Desire to lead in conversational topics**

Even though peers by definition are of about the same age, they do not all have the same intelligence and social skills. Their conversation ranges are varied. For example, they include not only topics related to school achievements but also to having fun, such as game information, the backgrounds of movie stars or the characteristics of classmates. They want to communicate with peers at school and in other communities on all topics.

Most interviewees mentioned that their current conversation topics were mainly from and about the Internet. For instance, during break-times, young female interviewees talked about the previous day's information regarding movie stars and singers obtained



through the Internet, as follows:

In school break-time, I usually talk with friends about the information obtained in cafés (community sites), such as movie stars, fan clubs and jokes (Nohyun: 186).

I meet friends or old friends to chat about movie stars or singers almost every day through the MSN chat-room. I need information to chat with classmates at school (Kimmin: 148).

Young male interviewees tend used in the past to converse about sports topics such as football and basketball, when they used to enjoy sports after school. The best sports players in the class were popular and others envied them. However, nowadays, it is not easy for them to take part sports outdoors with friends because as soon as possible after school their friends go home in order to access the Internet. Or they occasionally go to the Internet café with friends to play Internet games, instead of taking part in sports. For example, young male interviewees mentioned that they talked with their friends about Internet games and things to do with the Internet, rather than about physical sports.

These days, the young people who have greater knowledge of the Internet, namely, those who are highly skilled at games, decorating Internet homepages and techniques for solving mechanical computer problems, may become popular among their peers as a ‘*zzang*’. From the Foucauldian perspective, their knowledge of games or the Internet can at the same time constitute a power relationship among their friends.

Young people try to get more information about the Internet to maintain their status as ‘*zzang*’ or to become ‘*zzang*’. Some young interviewees have tried to gain popularity

among their peers by not only being well-informed on current topics but also by collecting a wealth of data, such as pictures or music files, to share with their friends in order to acquire a dominant status among them, as the following extract makes clear:

To send files I use the Buddybuddy chat program. It is very convenient for sharing data. There is no limitation on the size of the file. Also, it can be used by two people at the same time if my friend and I need to exchange data. When I leave the computer, I can check who has visited my Buddybuddy. Some friends leave a memo on my Buddybuddy ... I am a '*zzang*' among my friends as I have lots of data about games and other items. So my friends pop in here, to my Buddybuddy (Baekbyoung: 29-30).

On the one hand, young people may get pleasure from ignoring or mocking people with poor Internet skills. On the other hand, they occasionally do help people with low level skills to improve their ability. This knowledge of the Internet/computer is exercised as a source of power among young people who do not want to be isolated in 'their own world'. Almost all young interviewees would prefer to be a level '*zzang*', a leader, to being ridiculed by their peers.

Among friends between 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in middle school and 1<sup>st</sup> grade high school, most topics are related to games, such as players, strategies and information. A person who does not know about games may be isolated. Some friends sometime ignore him as a *hujub* (Backgun: 37-38).

Young people's methods of obtaining information for topics to talk about are no longer through the mass media, including newspapers, books and magazines, and are now mainly through the Internet. In other words, their information has changed from having off-line to on-line sources. Spending time using the Internet is directly related to

collecting data for leading the direction of conversations with peers. That is to say, one way in which they can exercise power is through conversation with their peers.

### **Attempt to improve low skills in Internet use**

Young people with poor levels of skill in using the Internet have tried to spend more time online. For instance, even though some young people may have high grades in school, they do not want their Internet skills to lag behind; as one interviewee commented as follows:

In order to upgrade in the game, I asked one of my friends to help me play it and he helped me to learn and use the games. In return, I have given him help in mathematics and often lend him CDs as a way of paying him back ...Nowadays I can help other friends with low skills. Sometimes I give them game items to upgrade quickly (Ahnjin: 3-5).

If they concentrate on study alone without considering the Internet, they may feel isolated from their friends. For instance, almost all male middle school students in Korea can play the 'Starcraft' game. If they did not, they might not understand what their friends were talking about in break-time:

I usually play the Starcraft game. When I lost the CD of it my friend gave me another copy. Nowadays the whole class can play it. It helps to cope with stress, such as studying, homework and teachers' attitudes (Hanseong: 72).

### **Worries about isolation, ‘Wangdda’**

If someone finds it hard to join in conversations at school due to his lack of skill on the Internet, he may become more isolated among his peers the longer this situation continues. Young people use the Internet every day in order to increase their knowledge of the day’s news, as well as to exchange information for their studies. Most young interviewees mentioned that they do not want to be isolated from their peer groups for lack of knowledge of the Internet. For instance, some interviewees said that if they have not accessed the Internet for a few days they then found it difficult to talk with their friends:

For friendship, the Internet is important. Every day we meet through the Internet games or chat-rooms ... I had a fight with my elder sister about who should use the Internet, even though she wanted to access the Internet for her report. For a few days, I was not able to go online because my mother told me off. That made me feel uneasy talking with friends. It was embarrassing to try to communicate with them (Gyono: 61)

If the Internet is not connected, I won’t even see the computer. However, the most predictable inconvenience is that I can’t talk with my friends about the usual topics (Joa: 112).

There are some reports in newspapers that there is a widespread occurrence of ‘Wangdda’, (isolation by peers or neighbours (Naver knowledge in open dictionary, 2004)), followed in some cases by bullying.

For example, the situation of ‘middle school classmates’ mocking someone was demonstrated by a digital movie. This content was shown on an Internet site. As a result,

the head teacher of the school killed himself as the one responsible who had not prevented the '*Wangdda*' (Hangyoure daily news, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2004).

'*Whangdda*', one of Korea's big social problems, is widespread among young people, mostly outside adult awareness. '*Wangdda*' is victimisation situation similar to bullying, involving in particular isolation by peers. It is generally revealed in several forms, namely, mocking someone or exclusion from playing rather than a physical attack. However, sometimes it may be made worse by an actual physical attack (Park J-K, 2002). Young people's relationships are flexible. It may be dependent not only on their intelligence but also on their physical strength. Peer relationships change in systematic ways over time (Gifford-Smith and Brownell, 2003). The widespread supply and use of the Internet may be a contributory factor in '*Wangdda*'.

Young interviewees are worried about meeting this '*Wangdda*' situation if they should neglect using the Internet. They need to access the Internet regularly so as to be familiar with 'their own world'. This circumstance may supply the starting point which leads some young people to become absorbed in the Internet. Young people easily become offenders as well as victims in '*Wangdda*' situations. For example, some interviewees mocked their classmates' incompetence in Internet games, as in the following case.

I asked a friend who had low skills why he upgraded so slowly in a game. I meant it as a joke. However, he understood that I was laughing at him. It was not my intention. Anyway, after a few days he upgraded in the game as many as ten levels. Some days he may have gone without sleep (Baekbyoung: 27).

### **Not caring about misbehaviour in using the Internet**

The desire to acquire a dominant status or avoid isolation in ‘their own world’ makes young people uncertain in their judgement of their own behaviour. Young people may obtain information or knowledge without consider whether their method is proper or improper. In some cases, their method may even be illegal.

For instance, an interviewee (Bakgoon: 42) mentioned that he and his friends in ‘their own world’ could give and receive information about porno sites or other files which save pornographic pictures. Some interviewees (e.g., Choijong, Jangseong, Jeongil) mentioned they might download movies or music without permission. They added that some of their friends competed to collect such data to share and show reciprocity between them. In these processes, they chatted with people who use only an identity number (ID) and not their real names. They have also exchanged various data through the Internet. It seems that they feel they are increasing their knowledge and information through the Internet. Thus, they recognise the Internet as an unlimited sea of information, and invest their valuable time on using the Internet more and more.

### **7.2.3. Exercising power through the games**

#### **Suitable circumstances for Internet games**

Some young interviewees mentioned that Internet games were a part of their lives. Their circumstances are conducive to becoming familiar with games, such as high-speed

Internet systems at home and Internet cafés to provide easy access outside. They can watch and record TV broadcasts of professional gamers. Moreover, after watching these broadcasts they discuss gaming strategies with friends during break-time at school.

All school classes from 1997 to 2000 acquired computers prepared with the broadband system. Almost all schools have computer rooms for students to practise according to the Young White Paper in 2003 (The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2003). Because many teachers, moreover, ask students to do their homework through the Internet, including submitting it by e-mail, parents may be deceived when their children say they are studying on the Internet whereas they are in fact using it only for fun. Some interviewees mentioned that they had done this for the sake of spending more time on Internet games.

Many kinds of games have been produced for young people as well as adults since the 1980s. However, a full-scale supply of Internet games has developed with the widespread development of Internet cafés since the late 1990s, as shown in the following table (Table 7-2-1) (Korean Game Institute. 2003) and in Figure 7-2-1.

**Table 7-2-1) Numbers for Internet cafés**

Internet cafés in Korea					Population in 2002 (thousands)	Numbers of persons per Internet café
Year	1999	2000	2001	2002		
Seoul	4,045	5,610	5056	5225	10,042	1,910
All Korea	15,150	21460	22,548	21,123	47,640	2,250

(2003 Game White Paper, Korean Game Institute)

Figure 7-2-1) Internet cafés visited





The genre of computer games generally is divided into four groups, namely Arcade, Adventure, Simulation and Role Play, as shown in Table 6-1-1, above. According to the Game White Paper in 2003 of the Korean Game Institute, the favourite games among young people are, in order, Simulation, Role playing, Arcade and Adventure. However, most interviewees spent most time on Role Playing games (RPG). Moreover, interviewees seem to be absorbed in RPG games.

### **Peer pressure in young people's preferences for games**

In the early stages of using the Internet, the interviewees tried various games of several genres. They decide upon their favourite games in response to recommendation from others or because of their own fondness for them. Young people's reasons for liking a game vary, such as its fantastic graphic backgrounds or the framework of its story. In the process of choosing their favourite games, they may talk with friends or visit game company homepages to understand a game's distinctive quality.

However, it seems that the most powerful influences in choosing games to play are their relationships with friends. For instance, middle school interviewees have played the same games with the same school friends, as mentioned above and as in the following case:

...There were two or three friends who played the 'Lineage game' at the beginning stage. Other friends got interested and started to play after listening to the players talking about it at school. Recently all my male classmates have played this game. Almost every student at my school has played this game (Jung: 127-128).

## **Developing ‘relationships’ through Internet games**

The Internet encourages interaction among the users through anonymous meetings. Users need the cooperation of and relationship with other individuals in cyber space (Seong and Ra, 2000). Currently, young people are spending more time playing on-line games with partners than off-line games (Korean Game Institute, 2003: 66-67, 266-267). They can play with anonymous users whom they have just met on the Internet. When they play continuously with specific players whom they know only by an ID, they may become more familiar. They can often talk together or exchange private information in the games, even though they have never met. They may make a guild-like game community or regularly attend the same guild. Thus, they make friends through the Internet. Moreover, some interviewees also met guild members off-line to share their skills and become friends:

There are some regular meetings for these kinds of game. I went to attend the Potulis game meeting which the president of the guild and some leaders had set up. All the people were very kind. Mainly we talked about game strategies and background. Sometimes we talked about private affairs. However, even though I and some people are very close in the game, we were shy in our actual meetings (Kimgong: 138-139).

Young people can promise to meet others in an on-line game at the end of the school day. Or, when they are talk on a messenger program, they may promise to play games on-line with friends. Almost all interviewees feel it is more fun when they go online to play with off-line friends. They feel free and comfortable playing with friends instead of

with an anonymous person known just by an ID. In RPG, they may also need the assistance of friends to hunt monsters effectively.

For doubles matches in strategy simulation games, they win more easily if they are playing with real friends rather than an anonymous person. For instance, with the ‘Starcraft’ game, players can choose whether to play in a singles or a doubles match. Some interviewees prefer the latter. In doubles matches, it is better if the partners can communicate effectively with each other. In particular, when they play together with a partner in the same place, such as an Internet café, they can directly communicate instead of through the Internet. In doubles matches effective communication with the team partner is the best strategy as first one player in the opposing team is attacked and then the other, described below:

When I play a doubles match in Starcraft with my friend at an Internet cafe, we decide to attack one opposing player first and then the other. We have a higher chance of winning (Kimjong: 139).

### **Influence through giving help in the Internet**

It is common among young people to converse and exchange information during the games so as to improve each other’s ability. They enjoy not only competing with friends in the games but also assisting one another. A person who is a high level player can help a beginner and as a result gain popularity among his friends. When the high level player plays with poor level friends, he can help directly by showing his skill in the game; this is more effective. In RPGs, in particular, it is very useful for beginners to receive help

from other players in order to quickly upgrade the level of the beginner's character. High-level friends in the same field of the same game can help their low-level friends in several ways. They can give them game items (tools as weapons) for on-line games so as to more easily defeat the monsters which are the players' enemies. Alternatively, high-level friends can play with low-level friends and hunt monsters in the same team in order to quickly upgrade their friends' Characters.

For example, an interviewee (Ahnjin) using 'Udoomeoy junseol' (Dark Ages), said that he wanted to gain higher 'experience and energy points' for his Character. He could pick up the items which the dead monsters had dropped during the player's attack. When he reached a certain number of points, his Character had the chance to upgrade his level. However, if a Character still at a low level meets more powerful monsters than his Character can cope with, the monsters may kill him. If his Character dies, he may lose items which have taken him a long time to collect. However, he could ask his high-level friends to supply energy in order to prevent his Character's dying if he and his friends are playing together.

Accordingly, low-level friends cannot help appreciating the support of their high-level friends. Moreover, some high-level friends give active support to their low-level friends, who learn easily and quickly through spending time with relative experts.

In the early stages, it is all too easy for a beginner to die of a monster's attack. But when one interviewee (Ahnjin) was a beginner, his friends received the monsters' powerful attacks in his place while he was learning and practising together with them.

Through this process, high level friends and low-level friends may make a kind of hierarchical system. In real life, high level school friends are located at the centre of relationships and have more influence on the topics of conversation. It appears that power can be produced at any time and at every point, or in every relationship from one point to another, in particular, in those of young people.

Through the Internet games young people's relationships seem to develop hierarchical structures, as well as closer cooperation, as follows:

When the Lineage game became popular among my classmates, almost all my friends followed the one at the highest level in the class. One person who could not play this game was ignored by his friends. He could not understand our talk. The most popular game in the class had changed (Jung: 128).

Some low-level friends inform their high-level friends about their Characters' upgrades in the games, parallel to reporting to their parents that their school score has improved.

I am happy to upgrade game levels as well as raising my standard at school. However, I cannot boast about my good news to my parents, unlike the school grades. So I tell my friends (Ahnjin: 10).

### **Competition in 'their own world' through games**

What determines the player's status in this 'game society' (during the games) is the player's ability in each game. Evaluating this obeys some criteria such as 'the ratio of wins' in Starcraft, one of the simulation games, or 'the level' in Lineage, one of the RPGs (Yoo, 2001). Of course, it seems that these criteria were designed by the game

providers to keep users loyal. A 'Character' in the RPG may reflect a game player's identity. When a player is immersed in the game, he may feel a connection between his own viewpoint and that of the Character.

When his Character receives much recognition from other characters in the game, he feels as happy as if he had received the recognition personally. In the game, a person's ability is shown as the level of their Character and associated items can be shown for other gamers (Yoo, 2001). Young people at high levels seem to need to invest more time in games in order to maintain the status of their Character, as in the following case:

When I play an RPG, 'Talesweaver', people recognise me, through my ID, as the best player. My classmates envy my level. Some players on the Internet, importunately ask me to give them game items or game money...I am the best player and server in 'Talesweaver', at level 147. I have devoted a lot of time to becoming the best player...Sometimes, my mother tells me off. Often I play during the night. To become the best player, I spent 12 hours a day on it for some time. If I stop playing the game, someone may become better than me. So I occasionally feel it is difficult to keep up my status..... I use the 'macro program' for easy upgrades in the other games. However, because I want to earn my title as the best player, I never used the macro program in 'Talesweaver'... (Baekbyoung: 22-26).

Also, they may have a competitive outlook as well as being cooperative with friends in improving their skills in games. This means they run the risk of becoming absorbed and addicted to the Internet/computer. For example, several interviewees (e.g., Ahnjin; Baekbyoung; Choijong; Jungjoo; Songseong; Soseong; Yangso; Jinho; Jung; Kimjong; Kimsee) mentioned that they spend more and more time in competitive 'RPGs', in which the player develops his own character by having a role as one of the Characters in the games.

Most male interviewees referred to the Starcraft 'strategy simulation game', which prepares the art of war using the intellect and fights against competitors through the Internet or via competitor-programmed games. The players need thought and judgement at critical points in the game. RPGs and Starcraft allow social relationships to be built in cyber society which in turn make communities in the online games by using IDs. The desire to win the game develops competitive minds and actively adds amusement and tension to the games. If a player lets his attendance at the PRGs lapse for a time, the game society may have changed by the time he returns. For instance, other players who worked together may improve their levels. In this context, the game society may be similar to real society from the standpoint of moulding power relationships through competition and development. The Character of the player requires to be developed in the game society, and relationships have to be maintained. Playing continuously does not only mean cooperating with other characters but also competing with them, as in the following case:

When I win the game, I feel sometimes that the burden increases. I rank 30<sup>th</sup> in our serve of Maplestory, an RPG. This level is very high. I need to work hard to maintain my rank. If I lost a game, I might not have this burden. It is more competitive because I win continuously... I am rich in the game, because I have pretty items for my Character. Sometimes, I enjoy giving some of my items to my friends. It's a pleasure to do that. My friends also follow me...In real life, people try to acquire famous brand clothes. In the games, players pursue high quality items. Players also give favourable treatment to Characters with high quality items. In games we have guilds, like alumni associations in real life. It is important to have good relationships with other players (Jinho: 292-294).

Finally, a player may feel that he is lagging behind other people if his Character lags

behind other Characters in the game. In this context, it is difficult for young people to stop playing the games, because they feel as if their lives have been given up to them. Most game companies support community groups to help beginners and supply useful information through the board in the community sites. Moreover, game companies show the best players' and higher players' IDs on their homepage to encourage players to upgrade competitively, as illustrated by the case below.

It is easy to ignore other players when the level of their Character is low. In particular, it is impossible to enter 'the blood alliance', the users' organisation in Lineage games, if their Character level is low. If they have better items or higher levels, players can attend these blood alliances... In Lineage games, the big contest is between the blood alliances. Accordingly, higher level players are apt to win against players of lower level. Players need to work hard to consistently increase their levels enough to win games (Jung: 127-128).

It is also a factor in influencing users to gain familiarity with the games and to regard these games as 'their own world'. The games offer unlimited competition and pleasure. Through the mass medium of the games, some professional gamers also influence young people, in particular those who are very young, as follows:

If adults ask them what job they are going to get in the future, my younger brother and his friends, who are in primary school 6 grade, say that they want to be professional gamers so as to enjoy games and to be popular (Jeongin: 118).

### **Production and maintaining knowledge as ability in the game society**

These criteria for players are flexible as regards rank or level. Players may invest their time and effort in honing the development of their skills. Some of them with more



competitive minds may want to develop their ability quickly; others may just want to enjoy themselves and develop their skills naturally.

However, young people seem to have a competitive desire to excel at games as a result of their friends' example and the pressure which they exert. They meet and talk about particular topics on-line as well as off-line. The competitive mindset with regard to games relates to the players' ambition to increase their playing skills. They need a comprehensive knowledge of the games, not only from the aspect of experience but also from that of knowledge about it. Thus, they have studied the background of the story. They may discuss with friends how to use items and how to attack monsters. Young people spend much time acquiring this knowledge for each game to enable them to reach a high standard of play.

I had the best player, level 99, in the Diabro game. To get there I did my best to study the game background. It took me a long time. In particular, during the vacation I played all day. When I became the best at the game, I felt a sense of emptiness (Kimjong: 137-138).

To attain a high level in a game, some interviewees need to spend a lot of time on playing them. As they become the highest level players in games such as 'Diabro', they feel either achievement or a sense of emptiness.

However, players find it difficult to achieve a relaxed status in great competitive games such as 'Lineage', which is designed to make people compete without ever ending. In this context, even though they achieve high levels, they cannot stop seeking more power. RPG games supplied by Korean companies are similar to Lineage with regard to having no outright winner and ending.

I like RPG games, in particular Lineage. This game can be endlessly upgraded. As I see my Character growing up gradually and increasing the items that it owns, I feel a sense of achievement. Korean RPG games can always go higher and higher. We need develop our Characters continuously ... In Lineage, the best player who has the highest rank in each serve is called '*Jizon*' (the Most Revered, his Majesty the King). Players recognise '*Jizon*' in the games through the ID. The game company showed on its homepage the IDs of the highest level players of several serves. The concept of 'level 99 in Diablo' in the Lineage game is impossible. Players in Lineage have to fight perpetually against monsters or other players (Choijong: 45-46).

Accordingly, a player in Korean RPG games requires others to compete against in order to raise his own level. This may lead players to spend more and more time in increasingly disturbed lives, resulting in addiction. It may be difficult to come out of the addiction situation as they pursue higher levels or better conditions in the games.

Young people sometimes ignore their classmates at lower levels. High- level players usually do not want to play with low- level players. In competitive game situations, they have to play with competent assistants to upgrade quickly. Other things may incite low-level players to upgrade their status in the games. For instance, poor level players cannot enter some communities where the entry qualifications are too high.

Of course, high-level players can help their less skilled friends by exercising their power, which has been developed through knowledge of the game. For instance, they are proud to reveal their power to their friends in several ways, namely, supplying items, teaching skills or playing together to upgrade their friends more quickly. It seems that young low-level players sometimes envy the others. Moreover, as mentioned above,

some young people respect high-level players. If a low-level player has received support from a high-level player until he has reached a certain capacity to overcome monsters, he is apt to follow the example of the high-level player in proudly demonstrating his hard-won skill and experience. In return, they may supply another service to the high-level player, such as supplying materials for homework or music files. In these processes, it seems from a positive perspective that poor level players and high level players may develop friendships through the mediation of games, but equally, low-level players may from a negative perspective suffer from hurt pride through the same mediation.

### **Resistance to the pride of high-level players**

Even though young people want to be high-level players so as not to be shunned by among their peers, they may find it difficult to get what they want in the short term. Some young people invest time on games during the night, whereas others occasionally adopt even more drastic methods.

For instance, they may buy game items instead of taking longer to obtain them through playing the games. To stop feeling neglected, they may resort to methods which they know to be wrong.

In the beginning stage of the ‘Udoomeoy junseol’ (Dark ages) game, I bought items for 30,000won (£15). I wanted to upgrade early. I did not want to be ignored by other players and friends (Jinho: 289).

Some beginners who are neglected by high-level players try to upgrade their status in

several ways. They are indifferent even if it is regarded as unfair behaviour, such as using the macro program to raise one's level in the games. Some interviewees mentioned that some of their friends make better use of 'macro programs' in which their Characters can play the games automatically without the players. These macro programs help Characters to gain experience points and energy points, even though they make fewer than in a real playing situation involving players.

In order to upgrade my Character in the game, I would need to spend a huge amount of time. However, I cannot play during school time, so I use a macro program. Even though I do not play the game directly, my Character is able to upgrade when I access the game and a macro program can be installed for my Character without me. I have to turn on the computer and access the Internet at home even when I am at school (Ahnjin: 8).

Accordingly, some young people turn on their computer and access the Internet games with macro programs while they are asleep or at school. One of the reasons for using these abnormal ways is that some young people's circumstances forbid them from spending much time on the Internet. For instance, if a player's parents are used to checking how long he spends on the Internet, or if he has to share the computer with siblings, he may not be able to concentrate on playing for as long as he might like.

However, young people need to attain high levels of playing skills so as not to be ignored by their peers. They want to have the status of being respected rather than being shunned. Sometimes they cannot help using such unorthodox methods to upgrade their level as installing macro programs or buying items.

### **7.3. Family relationships and Internet addiction situations**

In Hong's column for the Netiquette in a newspaper, *Joongang* showed how parents' attitudes toward children's use of computers and the Internet have changed dramatically over time. In 1995, parents took pride in their children's ability to use the computer. For instance, they might boast that their child was 'a computer *Dosa*' (Taoist priest) (this is the expression for someone who has superhuman ability). In 1998, they were inclined to brag about their child's skill on the Internet as a way of emphasising how very well they were doing. In 2000, however, their attitudes changed from 'pride' to 'concern'. They became worried about their child's habit of using the Internet for long periods, and tried to reassure themselves that 'my child just goes on the Internet when he comes back home' (Joongang Daily News, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2000).

#### **7.3.1. Parents' forcing their children to learn computer skills earlier**

The young interviewees told me that at the primary school stage in the 1990's, their parents had pushed them to learn how to use the computer. They wanted their children to raise their academic standard. They were also trying to prepare their children for the competitive society in adult life, even though they themselves were not able to deal with computers. For instance, most parent interviewees (Appendix 7) gave their children lessons on the new computer, either at a private institute or from a private tutor, as in the following parent interviewee describes:

I had my son learn computer skills from a tutor at home once a week. My daughter learned the computer from her elder brother (Hong: 324).

My son had computer training in an institute and he passed some exams for

the certificate in word processing. My daughter attended a special course for computers in her school (Soon: 342).

They regarded computer skills as very useful tools not only for study at the time, but also as transferable skills in the future. This belief was also a result of the parents' competitive mindset, which does not want their children to fall behind the rest of their peer group. Korean parents expect that their children will have a better position as time goes on, even though the parents themselves are not successful at present (Choi, 1999 b: 120-122). For example, a parent interviewee (Suk: 321) mentioned that it is essential for young people to learn English and computing to adapt to the future world. She added that she pushed her children to learn how to use computers more quickly than their friends in order to make her children lead their peer groups rather than follow them.

### **7.3.2. Leaving using the Internet to children's discretion – enjoyable use stage**

Parents expected that young people would use the Internet educational purposes, such as encyclopedic sources for school achievements, or to give practice in computers at break-times. They have encouraged their children to use the Internet for long periods rather than interrupt them. It was difficult for parents to recognize children's problems in using the Internet, as young people were having fun and gradually becoming absorbed in it (Bang and Jo, 2003:2-5). They had hoped that their children would use the Internet, on which they were spending more and more time, to pick up what they needed for their studies.

However, young people have spent more time having fun rather than fulfilling their

parents' expectations (Lee Y-B, 2003: 188-190). The parents of most young interviewees do not have enough knowledge of the Internet, or even of computers, to guide and give suitable control to their children in its use.

They simply decided to supply and upgrading computer equipment, such as hardware and broadband systems, so that their children would not fall behind their friends. At that time, they left the Internet to their children's discretion, irrespective of what kinds of site they might access. In this context, most young interviewees asked their parents to change from a modem system to a broadband system at home in order to have more fun, for example, in online games. From a telephone modem line at first they progressed to a broadband system, some in the late 1990s, others since the early 2000s (see Table 6-1-2). It seems that the motivation to install the broadband system at home comes from young people rather than parents, as the following extract demonstrates:

I badgered Mom to change from a modem to a broadband system, explaining that it was difficult to do my homework because of the delay in accessing the Internet. However, my real intention was to have a more convenient way of accessing on-line games (Baekbyoung: 21).

The change from a modem line to a broadband system of access has supplied young people with more opportunities to have fun through the Internet. Once a broadband is installed, the amount of time spent by young interviewees on the Internet has increased remarkably, because speedy access has made the Internet more fun for young people.

While the cost of the modem system is related to the length of time spent on the Internet, the cost of the broadband systems is fixed, from about 25,000won to 40,000won a month (from £12 to £20) (ChogosokInternt, 2004). Accordingly, as one

young interviewee (Choijong), mentioned below, young people can use the Internet without being at all concerned about cost of going on-line, with the added convenience of its speed.

It was very convenient for me to use the Internet when we changed from a modem to a broadband system in 1999. In particular, I can go on-line as much as I like because of the fixed price of the broadband system (Choijong: 44).

Some young people have become absorbed in the Internet since their parents became less concerned over the expense of using it for too long. However, it seems that some parents, having discussed the time their children spent having fun instead of studying through the Internet, regretted their lack of knowledge of computers and the less of control over their children. For instance, a parent interviewee (Soon) regrets not having controlled her children's use of the Internet because of her own ignorance.

If I had know then what I know now about computers, I would have controlled my son's use of the Internet when he was at middle school. I regret not knowing about computers in the past. I simply bought a computer for my son (Soon: 345).

### **7.3.3. Recognition of the need for control in using the Internet**

#### **7.3.3.1. Widespread broadband systems at home**

With parents' aggressive support of their children's computer use and circumstances in which they could access them easily and quickly, young people are more adept at Information Technology than the older generation. They have experienced several of



the side effects as well as the benefits of the Internet (Bang and Jo, 2003, 1-2). Young interviewees, according to their own accounts, have used the Internet, some since 1997, others since 2000, through a telephone modem. After that, it seems that everyone despite a few individual differences, changed from a telephone modem to broadband, some in 1999, others in 2001, according to Table 6-1-2. Most young interviewees asked their parents to change the system in order to access the Internet more quickly and to be able to use it continuously for a long time at a fixed monthly price.

#### **7.3.3.2. Reports on Internet addiction in the mass media**

The Dong Daily News, one of the traditional representative newspapers in South Korea, first reported on young people's Internet addiction situation under the headline "Assumed 10% Internet addiction among middle and high school students", on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1999. Before this, newspapers had sometimes dealt with cases of Internet addiction in foreign countries such as the United States. It added that this situation could be expected to get worse among young people but no steps were taken to protect them or even to understand the problem (Dong Daily News, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1999). On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2000, Hangyre Daily News, a progressive newspaper which has many young readers, highlighted young people's problems when revealing that 7% of young people were in an Internet addiction situation (Hangyore Daily New, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2000). Also, Joongang Daily News, another major newspaper, reported on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2000 that 30% of young people were in a computer addiction situation, involving such things as computer games, communication and pornography (Joongang Daily New, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2000). It would have been possible from the end of 1999 to 2000 for the older generations to begin to

understand that Internet addiction has become widespread among young people, even though the ratio of addicts to the Internet/computers might have seemed different after a statistical survey or through the use of a measuring tool for Internet addiction.

#### **7.3.3.3. Changing attitudes towards the control of children**

It seems that parents began to recognise the seriousness of young people's Internet addiction situation through the mass media, including some newspaper reports. The term 'Internet addiction' has been spreading since newspapers have been reporting the phenomenon. Also, they have become increasingly interested in certain side effects of children's using the Internet, or they regard some side effects as related to the Internet. Therefore, their attitudes towards their children have changed and they now exercise more control and interrupting them at the computer, rather than leaving the time spent online to their children's discretion. However, it seems that parents' methods of control may differ in line with their parenting styles (see Chapter 3.3.2). For instance, people who are prone to authoritarian parenting (Seong) style or authoritative parenting (Soon) style may interrupt their children more often.

I have a negative attitude to the Internet. It has many side effects as well as benefits ...I have pushed my sons not to use the Internet if possible until they enter university. ...Recently, I have allowed my daughter to use the Internet now that I, myself, have learned to use it (Seong: 304-309).

After recognizing the problems of Internet addiction, as my son spent more time on the Internet, I was sometimes compelled to stop him arbitrarily, even though he used the Internet whenever I was absent (Soon: 342).

In contrast, people who are permissive in their parenting style (Suk; Kyoung; Tack) may appreciate the use of the Internet and add it to their topics of conversation with their children. However, they are also worried about their spending too much time online.

At first, I thought that the Internet would itself play the role of a friend for my second son. He might possibly use it to combat his ennui at home after school ... I have tried to understand my son's attitude. I have not yet stopped him using the Internet, hoping he himself would control his time. Sometimes I ask him what kind of sites or games he's interested in. However, I am also worried about his spending so much time on the Internet, even though he has to do something (Suk: 317-318).

I think that my children need to use the Internet to converse their friends at school, as we, adults, can watch TV so as to have something to talk about with friends.... I don't intend to stop him forcibly from playing Internet games. However, I suggest that he should go to bed if he stays up too late playing (Kyoung: 334-337).

Most young interviewees had experienced their parents' stopping them using the Internet, or decreasing the time they might spend online. The reason was increasing anxiety about its side effects, such as worsening health, declining school scores, excessive pornographic materials and vulnerability to violence.

### **Parents' interruptions and the young people's side effects**

#### ***Anxiety over children's poorer health***

Spending too much time on the Internet may create several unhealthy conditions in young people. Some young interviewees mentioned they have some inconvenient symptoms, such as poorer eyesight, neck problems, dizziness and sleepiness at school as they have increased the time that they spend on the Internet. Even though these experiences do not apply to every interviewee, some young interviewees believe that their spending so much time online may be related to these symptoms.

As data such as the Korean Young People's White Paper (The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2003; 2002) reflects, young people's physical features, such as height and weight, have increased every year.

**Table 7-3-1) Height and weight average**

Year	2002		2001		1992	
Schools	Height (cm)	Weight (kg)	Height (cm)	Weight (kg)	Height (cm)	Weight (kg)
Primary school boys	134.42	33.14	134.18	32.59	131.99	29.76
Primary school girls	133.97	31.85	133.62	31.27	131.78	29.36
Middle school boys	161.68	54.44	161.52	53.44	157.39	48.08
Middle school girls	157.03	50.46	156.94	49.91	154.77	47.34
High school boys	172.19	64.70	172.07	63.79	169.19	59.67
High school girls	160.41	54.63	160.19	54.34	158.36	53.16

(2003 and 2002 Korean young people white paper)

At the same time, young people's physical strength has been inclined to decrease in recent years. For instance, the average running speed in 2001 of middle school students is slower than in 1998 (The Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2002; 2003). The average speed in 2001 for 50m among middle school boys was 8.6 seconds and that of girls was 10 seconds, whereas in 1998 the average speed for 50m among middle school boys was 8.3 seconds and that of girls was 9.8 seconds.

These data seem to be samples to show that young people's physical condition is deteriorating. In spite of the increase in young people's height and weight, they cannot run as fast as before. The data themselves are inconclusive in their relation to the increase in time spent on the Internet. However, they may make teachers and parents more concerned about the lack of physical exercise and sporting activity due to the increased time devoted to the use of the Internet.

It seems that young people have spent more time on the Internet through broadband systems in and since 2001 than in 1998 and before, when they used the Internet through a telephone modem line. Through these data and several reports of Internet addiction situation in the mass media, parents' anxiety about their children's gradually weakened physical condition has also increased. As a result, they have started to suggest that their children should cut down their time on the Internet.

Before the widespread use of the Internet, young people spent their time outdoors playing games to keep their weight down. However, in the case of the young interviewees, this habit has declined to make time for the Internet, as mentioned above. Parents are also worried about their children's increasing weight due to the lack of exercise.

Several young interviewees mentioned that their eyes felt tired from spending so much time looking at the computer screen. Even though some of them recognized this deterioration, they did not lessen the time they spent online. In particular, nine young interviewees (Ahnjin; Gyno; Jeongjoo; Joa; Jung; Leeyu; Nohyoun; Yangso; Jinho) said that their necks or spine ached from continuously sitting in an incorrect position and looking at the screen. One of them said that he has been diagnosed as having spinal disk problems by a doctor.

I first thought I was sleeping in the wrong position. As the discomfort in my neck continued, I went to a doctor with my mom. He diagnosed the trouble as a hernia of an intervertebral disk in my neck due to the sitting at the computer in a wrong position. I think this problem has occurred because I stay in the same position, looking at the computer screen continuously for a long time. Recently I have felt pains in my neck (Gyon: 62).

Most interviewees had experienced going without sleep to use the Internet, in particular, during the holidays or at weekends, as mentioned above (see Chapter 6.1). When they use the Internet for a long time, some of them mentioned uncomfortable symptoms, such as dizziness and palpitations. Parents do not want their children to be deprived of sleep by the Internet. If they know what was going on, they would interfere to stop their children from destroying their health. However, it is difficult for them to check their children every day when the computer is in the child's room.

I experienced feeling dizziness after playing games through the Internet for two days without sleeping. I was shocked at the time even though I am young (Songseong: 207).

### ***Declining marks at school***

Korean parents do their best to support and raise their children's school scores, regarding it as a matter of family pride that their children should study at one of the famous universities. Supplying widespread and speedy Internet access may have a good or bad influence on young people regarding their school achievements.

Most young interviewees said that the Internet is helpful for preparing and finishing

reports more easily. Some of them said that it may be useful if we control and harmonise our activities using the Internet for study and to relieve the stress of studying. Also, they added that it is not easy for them to manage their time so as to avoid lowering their academic standards.

However, it is difficult to say that using the Internet is in itself the reason for declining school scores. Most Korean young people have used the Internet every day to some degree. Yoo (2001) insists that the direct reason for declining school scores may not necessarily be connected with the use of the Internet. Some parent interviewees (Suk; Kyoung; Soon; Hong) agreed that the Internet, in itself, has little influence on their children's school scores. The other parent interviewees (Seong; Taek) mentioned that young people tend to reduce the time spent studying so as to enjoy fun and chat on the Internet and their school scores may show a decline accordingly. However, all of them are worried about the pattern seen after deep consideration of school reports of young people's merely copying and compiling Internet materials instead of writing original papers. In addition, all parent interviewees are worried about addiction situations for themselves if they become absorbed in the Internet and neglect their own jobs.

To be fair, most young interviewees are worried about a fall in their school scores from spending too much time on the Internet. It seems that their parents place great emphasis on their doing well at school. Some of them have had the experience of being forbidden by their parents to use the Internet for a while because their school scores had dropped.

My school scores dropped in the last middle school exam because I spent so much time on the 'Talesweaver' RPG game. My mother asked me to stop

playing it and I deleted it from the programmes in my computer. I have swotted to get a good score in my next exam and am eager to start playing the game again (Baekbyoung: 22).

My mother moved the computer from my room to the living room after I got poor exam results last year (Hanseong: 71).

It seems that they spend too much time on the Internet and thus have too little time to study. Accordingly, it depends on the young people themselves whether they can manage their time effectively. Most young interviewees said that whenever they had been absorbed temporally or continuously by the Internet whether now or in the past, their work, including their academic standard, had become worse. For instance, they have had experience of being absorbed by games, chat-rooms or reading novels online, even though the extent of their absorption varies from serious to uninvolved. According to Lee (2001), young people who spend excessive time on the Internet are concerned about their declining scores in school. Excessive use of the Internet/computer influences lower school scores. All parent interviewees agreed that excessive Internet use influences their child's school achievements negatively and requires suitable interference from them.

However, suitable methods for preventing excessive use of the Internet may be shown either in oppression or persuasion, according to the parenting styles. For instance, parents with authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles showed more oppressive methods in controlling their children, like halting game programs or changing the location of the computer in response to their children's lower school scores than did parents with permissive parenting styles.



Most young interviewees do not want their parents' oppressive methods imposed on them. Even though they cannot resist their parents' power, they hope for generous methods to persuade them rather than pressure to force them.

### *Accessing pornographic sites*

The Internet supplies unlimited space for young people to meet and talk without interruption. On the one hand, young people in situations where they are not interrupted may feel free to release their stress in positive ways, but equally they may easily access pornographic materials from several sources (Ahan, 2002: 66-67). For instance, they might receive spam mails with porno-graphic as well as commercial purposes.

Some young interviewees said that they tend not only to exchange porno information but also talk about these topics with friends. It is very easy to access the links between certain sites and pornography unintentionally as well as intentionally.

Some high school interviewees (e.g., Jinho, Yoojae) are also worried about younger people's having easy access to these sites or graphics, for instance, children of primary school age.

I, as a high school student, think that it is not good for very young people, including primary school children to see porno-graphic materials. It is too easy to find pornography on the Internet. It would be better to install a program to prevent children from accessing pornography at home (Yoojae: 251).

Several interviewees (e.g., Bakgun, Hanseong and Jung) have already had some programs installed by parents to prevent them from receiving spam mail and

pornography.

My father installed an anti-porn program on my computer, '*Soohochunsa*' (guardian angel) to prevent porno spam mails. However, my friends have some files saved with pornographic materials. We can exchange these if we need. It is easy to receive these files from some sites, such as '*Gooroogooroo*'. When I was at middle school, I visited porno sites frequently. Recently I have hardly used them (Bakgun: 42).

Already, most interviewees have had experience of these pornographic materials, either through spam mails or by visiting some sites out of curiosity. Some interviewees mentioned embarrassing situations with some porno sites; even though they wanted to avoid these sites, they were not able to get rid of them quickly when their family was nearby.

I was very embarrassed that pornography suddenly appeared on the screen when my parents were standing behind me. So I turned off the computer (Joa: 110).

Parents are worried about accessing young people's accessing porno sites and buy anti porno programs to protect them. But they cannot altogether prevent young people from accessing porno sites. They are also inclined to supply high quality computers with camcorders (web cameras) because young people ask for them.

Most young interviewees have a camcorder which allows screen chatting through the Internet. But in the opinion of the parents there may be danger for young people in opening pornographic messages spread on the Internet. For instance, according to Eo (2002: 18- 22), young people can talk on chat-rooms to anonymous people and this can

develop into exchanging over the Internet sexually explicit photos of themselves taken with camcorders. Moreover, they might meet such people off-line for a sexual purpose, not only people close to their own age people but also adults if they agree to do so.

Having provided high quality computers, parents can only hope that their children will not access pornographic sites. However, young people may often do so. Some parents have tried to exercise control over their children's use of the Internet. However, they may act spontaneously according to their parenting style, rather than taking their children's attitude into account, which may be resentful.

### ***Possibility of increased violence***

Most computer game themes are related to fighting, such as hunting for monsters or war in the future, the present and the past. Parents are worried about whether their children's personality will become more violent due to the impulse to imitate an attack on an enemy or on an opposing player in a game. Young people may learn violent misbehaviours through violent games.

A middle school boy killed his younger brother in March 2001. A newspaper reported that "Before this killing, he maintained that 'he wanted to kill... in order to escape everyday life...' on his homepage board. He enjoyed RPG games with a background of war in the past. Police surmised he had been unable to distinguish the real world and the game world" (Dong Daily News, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2001).

A parent interviewee (Kyoung: 333) said that her child, who liked playing games continuously, unconsciously revealed a stock of bad language. Another parent interviewee (Hong: 325) also said that her son swore at someone during an Internet game, even though he is not aggressive. At the other extreme, a parent interviewee (Suk: 317-318) claimed that her children do not reveal aggressive or violent behaviour or bad language, even though they play violent games which regularly involve bloodshed and the use of swords or other weapons. She thought it surprising that this did not encourage wild or violent activity by her children.

Even though parent interviewees surmised that Internet games would have a bad influence on their children, they did not agree that this bad influence would necessarily involve violence. Instead, they are concerned about the lack of progressive activity, such as sports and exercises. In addition, teachers, according to Kang (2002), are worried about the situation whereby the school grounds are nowadays become empty after school, unlike past times, when young people stayed at school to take part in sports.

A police interviewee (Kyou: 494) dealing with cyber crime mentioned that, on the one hand, cyber crimes such as hacking or fraudulent trading among young people had increased recently, but on the other hand, substance abuse and violent crime among young people has decreased. He added that this situation may relate to a wider use of the Internet. For example, according to reports of crime by young people, serious crimes (killing, burglary, rape, and arson) and acts of violence have decreased in recent years. Also, substance abuse by young people has decreased (The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2003: 520-536).

### **Increasingly oppressive parental control**

Parents have obtained a certain amount of information about the effects of using the Internet from the mass media or they have understood their children's patterns of behaviour in using the Internet. The parents of some of the young interviewees have chosen oppressive control rather than persuasion and permissive direction of their children as they have perceived the increased side effects of Internet use. However, their methods of control may vary somewhat according to their parenting styles. For instance, when he recognised the bad effect of the computer on his son, the authoritarian father of one young interviewee moved the computer from his room to the living room without consultation. The young interviewee said that this made him refuse to speak to his parents for a while.

My computer was in my room at first. My father discovered that I used to lock my door and play Internet games all night long. After that he decided to take my computer out of my room and put it in the living room. For a while I didn't want to speak to him. ...When my parents forbade me to use the Internet, it made me want to disobey. I think it would have been better to persuade me than to use force (Jung:125-134).

If an interviewee's parents are permissive, they tend to ask for the use of the Internet to be limited. However, even permissive parents sometimes scold their children for spending too long at the computer screen and ask them not to stay up so late. In recent years, most parents have become more interested in using the Internet themselves. Some parents register on courses to learn about the Internet not only for the sake of dealing with their children but also to enhance their own lives. Parents also hope their children

will not become obsessed with the Internet.

It seems that parents may occasionally adopt oppressive methods, such as scolding or forbidding the use of the computer as a feature of their parenting style, in order to prevent their children from suffering the bad effects of using the Internet, no matter whether their normal parenting style is authoritative or permissive.

The methods of controlling their children may differ according to the parents' computer skills. Parents with low computer skills may ban the use of the computer altogether for a while. For example, some parents can hide the computer's power line (Jangseong' mother). Some of them can throw away the computer monitor (Soseong' mother) (see Chapter 6.1, Soseong:212; Jangseong:84).

In contrast, parents who are fluent on the computer or who know a good deal about it, rather than ruling out the computer for their children can choose to direct how their children should work at the computer after making suggestions or exacting promises which will protect them from its bad effects. For instance, they may suggest that their children should delete those programmes which caused the problems (see section 7.3.3.3 above: *Declining marks at school*, the comment of Baekbyoung's mother). Alternatively, they ask their children to make their own plan for protection from the bad effects of the Internet (Songseong's mother's comment).

Recently I can control my time as I planned... My mother emphasises that I should control the time I spend on the Internet as I proposed (Songseong: 199, 206).

Such decisions give the children a chance to reflect about themselves and realise their own faults. As parents improve their knowledge of computers, young people may begin to feel that their parents' ways of exercising power over them are becoming what they see to be more rational.

On the one hand, when parents increase their degree of control the relationships between interviewees' brothers and sisters may become cooperative. For example, they may secretly exchange information about such things as games and popular sites without their parents' knowledge. When they are teenagers, they can also learn or teach each other how to have fun on the Internet. On the other hand, they may be rivals for the computer and begrudge the time spent by their siblings on the Internet. Most interviewees share a computer with a one-line broadband Internet system with all the siblings who live at home, even when there may be more than one of them. Young people who can monopolise a computer without interruption from either parents or siblings seem to be in the best position for becoming addicted to the Internet.

#### **7.3.3.4. Young people's responses to their parents' oppressive control**

##### **Parents' methods of controlling their children**

The methods used by the parents of the young interviewees to take control of their children's use of the Internet may relate to the time, place and cost of this use. For

instance, recently most of the parents who have wanted to control their children have tried to reduce the time spent by their children on the Internet, scolding or reproofing them when they spend too long.

Or they make their children attend classes at private teaching establishments, not only to improve their ability in certain subjects, notably English and mathematics, but also to make less time available for the Internet.

Some of them have removed computers from their children's rooms to the living room so as to make it easier to keep an eye on their sons or daughters. In such cases the young people seem under the sort of 'surveillance' mentioned by Foucault (see Chapter 4.1) in places where their parents can see them. Parents may thus check the time spent on the Internet by their children without intruding on their privacy. However, there are many Internet cafés in Korea and young people may visit them in order to enjoy themselves, spending many hours on the Internet rather than doing so at home under their parents' surveillance. Parents can still control their children through paying or withholding the additional charges for using the game programs, or buying Avatars for community activities, such as e-mails and chat room messages.

### **Young people' response**

#### ***The Increase in covering up the truth as a method of resistance***

Some parents' methods may not be good enough to control their children as they do not understand the real situation and know too little about the Internet. Most young



interviewees are reluctant to confess that they have not only bought Avatars or played chargeable on-line games but also to reveal how much time they have spent on the Internet outside the home and whom they have talked to and met through the Internet. The costs, subsidised by parents, of using the Internet have increased in various ways as young people's taste for it has grown. Several areas have become much more expensive, such as playing chargeable on-line games, decorating Avatars and sending presents to their friends through the Internet.

Some young interviewees (e.g., Nohyun) may tell their parents about some of these costs in the hope of getting them paid, but others may not say anything about them. Of course, the costs of the broadband systems and some of the computer hardware are paid by the parents. However, the methods of paying other charges may vary in line with the understanding between parents and their children. For instance, some young interviewees have kept quiet about their use of chargeable on-line games so as not to be scolded for it by their parents. In particular, it seems that most parents do not know the price of on-line game items exchanged between young people.

Furthermore, none of the parents interviewed had been aware that young people buy and sell these on-line game items among themselves. The young interviewees have also not mentioned this buying and selling to their parents. In addition, many parents do not understand the situation whereby young people buy 'Avatars', the symbolic alternative selves for young people on the Internet in such activities as e-mails, messaging or games. Most young interviewees, apart from a few students with permissive fathers, did not tell their parents when and how they bought 'Avatars' and used them with among

their friends on the Internet.

As the first virtue in Korean culture, which is dominated by traditional Confucianism, is filial piety, young people find it difficult not to accede to their parents' control. Traditional Korean parents, fathers in particular, are sometimes authoritarian and arrogant. However, most parents in Korea are prepared to support the entire cost of their children's education, including a university course, even though they may be put into debt by it. Moreover, they may help their children later in life, for example, by funding them or caring for their grandchildren (Shin, 1999:213-226). Young people find it hard to resist their parents' will when they seek to control their patterns of using the Internet.

However, they may be inclined to resist unreasonable methods of compelling them to do something without negotiation. Even now that the influence of traditional Korean culture has declined due to the rise of the nuclear family, it is difficult for young people to talk openly to an interviewer about conflicts with their parents when their control becomes oppressive. It would appear, however, that children work out ways to stay out of trouble, covering up the truth about their use of the Internet from parents, preferring to hide their disobedience rather than actively resist the parental will. The extent of these cover-ups as a response to parental enquiries may reveal itself differently according to the level of the parents' familiarity with the Internet and their willingness to try to understand their children as a function of parenting style. In other words, young people may suppress the truth more often when their parents have less knowledge of the Internet and their parenting style is more arrogant and authoritarian and less permissive. These patterns of concealment among young people show various methods.

Several young interviewees with authoritarian and authoritative fathers mentioned occasions when they had covered up facts, such as falsely reporting the time spent on the Internet and not telling their parents how much it cost to decorate their Avatar, which led to items on the telephone bill which the parents did not recognise.

...I have spent about six hours a day on the computer. More than three-quarters of the time I was playing Internet games. .... My parents never knew how much time I spent on playing Internet games rather than studying (Baekbyoung: 20-23).

Most parents do not understand why we young people play chargeable on-line games and use Avatars in our chat-rooms. We mostly enjoy them in secret so as to hide the situation from our parents ... I also secretly bought some 'Daum cash', a kind of cyber money in the 'Daum portal site', using my father's ID number. Of course, it was paid for through the telephone bill. If I don't spend much on something, less than 5,000won (about £2.50), my mother may not notice it .... My friends have also spent small amounts to decorate Avatars like this. It is hard for us to spend more than 10,000won (about £5) at a time (Kimseong: 164-172).

I have played 'Dark Age', an on-line game, without my parents' knowledge. It costs 19,000won (about £9) a month. One of my friends has given me some telecoupons. This is a kind of cyber money which we can buy on-line through our bank account. My friend got some money by trading game items ... I have helped him to study mathematics and often lend him CDs as a way of paying him back.... However, I should ask my mother to help if he couldn't (Ahnjin: 2-4).

### ***Concerns about the threat of addiction if children suppress the truth***

Fathers of the authoritarian kind would rather have their own way than to listen either to their children's opinions or to their wife's advice when they take family decisions, for instance about education (see Chapter 3.4.1). This is still true even though these features may have become diluted by the rise of the nuclear family and of Westernised mindsets.

Instances of children's concealing the truth occur more often when parents have an arrogant attitude and an authoritarian parenting style and less when parents have a warm relationship and a permissive parenting style. Children of authoritarian parents may continue to cover up the facts about their use of the Internet because they feel it will be difficult to change their father's views and get his support. These processes may lead to a situation in which a young person becomes addicted to the Internet due to a lack of parental consideration.

Four young interviewees with authoritarian fathers were prepared to reveal abnormal user groups, namely, dangerous and potentially dangerous user groups, as classified by the CIPC tool for measuring Internet addiction. Among the young interviewees, the ratio of abnormal groups of young interviewees to authoritarian fathers is 4:4; that of young interviewees with authoritative fathers is 3:7; and that of young interviewees with permissive fathers is 2:10 (see Table 6-1-2).

In order to understand this trend and the topics related to it, a survey was also made in November 2003 during the research period. This trend that young people with

authoritarian fathers are more likely to include abnormal user groups than normal user groups was similar to the results of a survey of 543 young people in Seoul, Korea. For instance, the percentage of abnormal groups of young people with authoritarian fathers who responded in the latter survey was 30.8% out of a total number of 65 who revealed authoritarian fathers. This means that the ratio between the numbers of fathers of young people in the abnormal (addiction) user group and the numbers of fathers of young people in the normal user group is 20:65, as shown in Table 7-3-2.

However, the percentage of abnormal groups of young people with authoritative fathers who responded in the latter survey was 19.6% of a total of 183 who revealed authoritative fathers. This means that the ratio between the numbers of fathers of young people in the abnormal (addiction) user group and numbers of fathers of young people in the normal user group is 30:153, as shown in Table 7-3-2.

In particular, the percentage of abnormal groups of young people with permissive fathers who responded in the latter survey was 16.7% of a total number of 174 who revealed permissive fathers. This means that the ratio between the numbers of fathers of young people in the abnormal (addiction) user group and the numbers of fathers of young people in the normal user group is 29:174, as shown in Table 7-3-2.

The percentage of abnormal groups of young people with neglectful fathers who responded in the latter survey was 22.2% of a total of 22 who revealed neglectful fathers. This means that the ratio between the numbers of fathers of young people in the abnormal (addiction) user group and numbers of fathers of young people in the normal user group is 4:18, as shown in Table 7-3-2.

In total, the trend of the ration of authoritarian fathers of 30.8% in abnormal user groups is higher than that of other parenting styles, such as 19.6% for authoritative fathers, 16.7% for permissive fathers and 22.2% for neglectful fathers. But when it comes to mothers' parenting styles it is difficult to say that there is a prominent difference among of the addiction situations for young people in Table 7-3-3. Nevertheless, the ratio for authoritarian mothers is a little higher than that for authoritative and permissive mothers. For example, the percentage of abnormal groups of young people with authoritarian mothers who responded in the latter survey was 23.6% (13:42); that of young people with authoritative mothers was 19.8% (33:134), that of young people with permissive mothers was 22.4% (43:149) and that of young people with neglectful mothers was 28.6% (2:5).

**Table 7-3-2) Fathers' parenting style and Internet addiction group**

Parenting style		Pattern of internet use		Total
		Abnormal user group Internet (addiction group)	normal user group	
Authoritarian	Count	20	45	65
	% within authoritarian group	30.8	69.2	100
Authoritative	Count	30	123	153
	% within authoritative group	19.6	80.4	100
Permissive	Count	29	145	174
	% within permissive group	16.7	83.3	100
Neglectful	Count	4	14	18
	% within neglectful group	22.2	77.8	100
No response	Count	39	94	133
	% within no response group	29.3	70.7	100
Total	Count	122	421	543
	% within total	22.5	77.5	100

**Table 7-3-3) Mothers' parenting style and Internet addiction group**

Parenting style		Pattern of internet use		Total
		Abnormal user group (addiction group)	normal user group	
Authoritarian	Count	13	42	55
	% within authoritarian group	23.6	76.4	100
Authoritative	Count	33	134	167
	% within authoritative group	19.8	80.2	100
Permissive	Count	43	139	1924
	% within permissive group	22.4	77.6	100
Neglectful	Count	2	5	7
	% within neglectful group	28.6	71.4	100
No response	Count	31	91	122
	% within no response group	25.4	74.6	100
Total	Count	122	421	543
	% within total	22.5	77.5	100

The Korean father's traditional parenting style is influenced by Confucianism as having a mainly authoritarian trend, even though the trend has been alleviated recently. The father's arrogant attitude may make it difficult for the young people to disclose the real extent of their problems. Young people may reveal a tendency to deceive their parents as to the situation of their school lives, as well as the situation vis-à-vis the Internet at home. The habits of covering up the truth may lead to dangerous situations for young people, such as addiction, if these have continued for a long time without the parents' knowledge.

One of the reasons for such concealment is insufficient conversation between parents and their children. When young people begin to be absorbed by the Internet, they prefer it to anything else, even talking to people; and they prefer to play games on the Internet with anyone out of their parents' control. They seem to require consideration from their parents rather than interruption, otherwise the possibility of their becoming addicted to the Internet becomes more serious.

Even the permissive parents of some of these young interviewees occasionally showed authoritarian features for the sake of protecting their children from becoming absorbed by the Internet. It seems that the parents' style in controlling their children is not always of one kind, such as authoritarian, authoritative or permissive, even though they have a basic parenting style in bringing up their children. Parents need not only knowledge of the Internet to understand the situation of their children and how to exercise their own power effectively but also they should be capable of changing their attitudes, particularly if it is authoritarian, so as to talk frankly with their children. One parent interviewee described how her son began to be absorbed in the Internet:

My son took his dinner to eat in front of the computer when he was meeting friends through the Internet. Once, when his father came back home, he did not even say hello when he was playing a game on the Internet. My husband was very angry with him and scolded him severely .... Nowadays my husband and I are trying to discuss things with him, because I have learned to use the Internet (Soon: 346-348).

#### **7.4. Summary**

In the repressive circumstances of dominating social systems such as surveillance for children and oppressive education systems, young people need a 'safety valve' from their feelings. It seems they have found in the Internet a suitable vehicle of escaping the repression, since it has become widespread and easy to access. They can meet their friends and enjoy themselves through the Internet which is able to transcend time and space. Through and by the Internet, young people seem to mould 'their own world' in



which they can talk freely and have fun.

However, young people make a hierarchical structure in 'their own world' out of their ability in using the Internet, such as game skills, which bring them popularity among their peers. In their own world, they need to spend time using the Internet more and more in order to become '*zzang*' and be the leaders of their friends. Also, they may need to use the Internet regularly to avoid a '*wangdda*' situation whereby they are isolated by the rest of the group, for instance if they are unable to talk about current topics due to being unfamiliar with them or neglecting to use Internet.

Most parents have not dealt with these problems at an early stage due to their lack of ability to use the Internet/computer. They simply expected computers would improve the educational achievement of their children. When they recognised the addiction situation, most of them preferred to force their children to stop and did not use understanding and persuasion. Most parents are familiar with exercising power in an authoritarian culture to which they have adhered. However, young people may have the mindset to defy this pattern, even though they do not admit such resistance. Instead, they may conceal their misbehaviour in using the Internet. Without the control of their parents, this may be another dangerous circumstance from which an addiction situation could develop.

## **Chapter 8. Circumstances fostering Internet addiction**

Through the Internet, young people have been supplied with suitable places to escape repressive elements in their circumstances, namely, parental surveillance and the oppressive and competitive education system required to enter university. They seem to have more or less overcome the limitations of time and place in meeting their friends. Young people enjoy not only meeting but also having fun through the Internet, as they talk about their daily experiences and exchange information and data with their friends through the Internet.

This chapter mainly shows how companies persuade young people to use the Internet. For Internet addiction situations, government's role and its records are dealt with in this chapter.

### **8.1. The influence of companies on young people through the Internet**

#### **8.1.1. How companies involve young people**

##### **Approaching young people through the provision of communication tools**

Companies which manage portal sites and produce games have tried to develop their programs according to users' demands in order to satisfy and encourage them to visit their sites. These demands include the desire for nearly 'real' experiences such as real-time talking and visualisation. It has been possible for companies to supply these services more realistically due to the continuous development of Information Technology (Lee Y-S, 2000:215-216).

Although most young interviewees have more than two e-mail accounts, they do not tend to use them as frequently as in the past. They occasionally use them to submit homework or to contact people whom they cannot meet in real time in a chat-room.

Recently, I have been using e-mail once a week or every two weeks. Two years ago I used e-mail every day. Currently I meet with friends in the chat room (Ahn:15).

I hardly ever use e-mail except for contact with teachers for homework (Goyno:60).

Chat-rooms such as 'Buddybuddy (<http://www.buddybuddy.co.kr>)' have spread widely among young people in South Korea. Whenever most young interviewees turn on their computers and connect to the Internet, this program runs automatically for they have set up this function. It allows young people to communicate with many people simultaneously and more conveniently than by telephone, without worrying about additional charges. Even online game programs (e.g., Lineage, Maplestory, Darkage) have chat rooms so that players can talk with one another during playing on their sites

Companies have also developed 'Internet communities' (cyber communities), including chat-rooms, providing another communication tool for debates on various topics and the exchange of information on bulletin boards (Whang, 2003).

In particular, communities which young people use frequently are supplied by companies such as Daumcafe (<http://cafe.daum.net>), Navercafe (<http://cafe.naver.com>), Cyworld (<http://www.cyworld.com>), Freechal (<http://freechal.com>) and Sayclub (<http://www.sayclub.co.kr>) (Kim G-S, 2002:24).

Even companies whose online games are popular among young people have not only serviced chat-rooms competitively but also developed Internet communities in order to communicate with players and provide somewhere to exchange information and skills on their sites. These are useful ways to satisfy companies' desire that young people should stay longer and longer on their sites. Young interviewees mentioned that these functions are very useful for players who want to become familiar with these games as soon as possible and who enjoy exchanging information with friends while they are playing the games, as follows:

During a game, I was almost killed by monsters. However, I asked a friend who plays the same server of the 'Dark age', an RPG game, to help by game chatting and sending an emergency sign 119 (telephone number emergency, like a fire). He rescued me from the dangerous situation (Ahn:10).

Some portal sites (e.g., Daum, Naver) have used the term 'café' instead of 'community' in order to make these activities appear more friendly. These community activities stimulate users to visit their sites frequently and spend more time in their cafés in order to make relationships with other members spontaneously (Seo, 2002 ).

### **Facilitating user access to entertainment services**

The companies have given users access to entertainment more easily by directly supplying them to their sites (Whang, 2003, Kim G-S 2002). These entertainment services seem to have developed due to the strategies on the part of portal site

companies' for increasing the number of their users. In other words, portal sites have supplied entertainment to encourage users to visit and stay longer on their sites. Subsequently they have also attempted to supply convenient ways of using or making their own communities for users (Kim M-Y, 2003:125-6).

Many young people have made or attend their own communities such as class cafés, fan clubs and game cafés. For instance, Daum café had 24 million members in 2003. The proportion of 10-19-year-old people is 45.7%; that below 10 years old is 2.5%; that of 20-29-year-olds is 32.1%; that of 30-39-year-olds is 8.4 %; while that of people above 40 years old is 7.3% (Min, 2003).

In particular, most young interviewees at middle school have attended class communities where they can easily exchange various types of information, including details of entertainments such as movies, music and novels as well as school homework. Some young interviewees have tried to supply useful information in these communities as their friends may respect people who share useful information in their power relationships (see Chapter 7.2.).

### **8.1.2. Possibility of targeting mainly young people as a business strategy**

Young interviewees have used popular portal sites such as Daum (the most popular site in Korea in 2003), Naver (the second most popular site in 2003), YahooKorea (the third in 2003) as start pages to reach the Internet according to Ranky (Ranky, 2003) which regularly examines data on visitors to Portal sites as a way of increasing business.

Eighteen out of the 25 young interviewees have used mainly Daum e-mail addresses and attended communities in what are known as 'cafés' for Daum communication. Young interviewees also spend much time on community activities as well as games. Female interviewees are inclined to attend cafés more actively than male interviewees, who spend more time on games.

Companies which supply chat-rooms and cyber space for communities, want users to stay on line as long as possible for whatever reason in order to encourage more advertisers to use banners on their sites. For instance, 'Daum communication' has supplied not only the most popular mail address '@hanmail.net or @daum.net' but also various 'cafés' for communities and 'Daum shopping' (Jeong and Han, 2003).

They have developed their sites with designated spaces – chat rooms, communities or guilds – where users can talk to each other freely and without interruption. In the process, they may not care if young people have a bad experience on the Internet. Young people have used these sites as places not only for meeting and talking with peers but also for fighting without interference. For example, some young interviewees mentioned they sometimes fought against their peers through the chat-room programs or communities, their usual online communication tools in cases where people wanted to speak uninhibitedly (Bakgun: 40, Yanngso: 241), or to strongly emphasise their opinions in debate (Kimsong: 170, Joa; 112). Also, people pass on private news or information about their friends without permission through the Internet, even if the friends do not want it revealed (Gyono: 61). An interviewee (Jeong: 133) mentioned that he fought with a classmate in the Buddybuddy chat-room because if he had

physically fought someone offline, he would have been concerned about the damage to his prestige.

In addition, there may be business factors which persuade young people to access the site frequently, because they supply popular games or other attractions such as news about famous movie stars. Some programs, which are not free of charge, cannot be accessed by young people unless their parents agree.

In the commercialisation of portal sites, there is both a direct method of supplying services, such as the online shopping mall, and also some indirect methods. For instance, there are advertisement profits to be gained by persuading users to visit the site often, stay longer and pay for additional services, namely, game use charges and the costs of selling the Avatar's clothes and accessories which are used only on the Internet (Kim M-Y, 2003). Many companies have striven to obtain profit through the Internet. In particular, game and portal site companies have reaped benefits from the high speed of accessing the Internet. A company seeking profit wants to establish and enlarge a main body of consumers. Young people who spend considerable time online are suitable consumers in this regard (Hong, 2002:45).

It is easy for companies to obtain money from users for their services; there are several methods of payment methods. For instance, 'cash' can be charged by sites, through telephones, mobile phones, credit cards, remittances, online payments from bank accounts and several business tickets according to the Hanmir (2003 a) and Daum (2003) portal site. Since June 2002, companies have changed to a price limitation policy

from their previous unlimited policy for monthly payments. For instance, in the case of Daum, the monthly limit for mobile phones is 50,000won, and for telephones is 30,000won. There were many appeals related to trouble between parents and children about paying game fees and the costs of decorating Avatars (Fair Trade Commission, 2002).

A company president who was interviewed (Doo) outlined its strategy and also emphasised his company's contribution to developing the Information Technology industry.

It is true that young people's use of the Internet is a major source of profit for online game companies. However, this strategy of targeting young people has contributed to the rapid supply of the Internet facilities and Internet cultural content. As young people ask their parents to install broadband systems so as to use high quality online games, most families are suitably placed to use high quality Internet service. Parents also find it convenient to use for business purposes at home, for example, the Internet stock market and Internet shopping (Doo: 463-464).

### **8.1.3. Ways in which companies influence young people**

#### **8.1.3.1. Profiting from popular items (Avatar, emotion symbols, game items)**

##### **Following young people's tastes**

Companies have tried to increase the scope of their sites to respond to the customers' experiences and needs (Lee, et al, 2004). In recent years, portal sites in Korea have increased from a simple search or access service, including e-mail addresses, to a



variety of services, including communities, games, and shopping (Kim K et al., 2002).

Companies have designed ways of making users feel an element of real life when talking to others. They have tried to follow users' demands, in particular, those of young people, by supplying items such as 'emotion and function symbols' and 'Avatars'. (There are two types of these. The first is a symbol of the users showing their image wearing clothes and shoes in e-mails, chat-rooms or communities. The second is a Character in the RPG online games. Players feel varying emotions, such as anger, hunger, fear and a sense of social status through their Character, both in the game and out of the game.) The Avatars try to be upgraded or to enable users to express themselves (Park et al., 2002). Such ways may make users feel closer and friendlier to each other, even though they are merely a strategy on the part of the companies to enlarge their customer base.

In particular, young people may boast of their experiences to their friends when they feel they have gained something useful and helpful from the Internet through acquiring new items. For example, most young interviewees obtain more enjoyment from using the emotional symbols or Avatars supplied by companies. They share their experiences and influence others. They have become used to showing their emotions or their decorated figures to their friends on the Internet and use the symbols as they chat. These patterns of behaviour have become widespread among them because they are encouraged to use them between themselves.

Moreover, famous portal sites (e.g., Daum and Naver) with communities and chat-room

programs have been linked to games. It is very convenient for users to be able not only to meet their friends but also to connect to the games. As a result, through supplying various conveniences such as talking in real time with emotion symbols and Avatars, and linking them to game sites, companies appear to be profiting, as indeed are the young people who use the new communication tools.

### **Conveyance of ‘emotion’ in Internet communication**

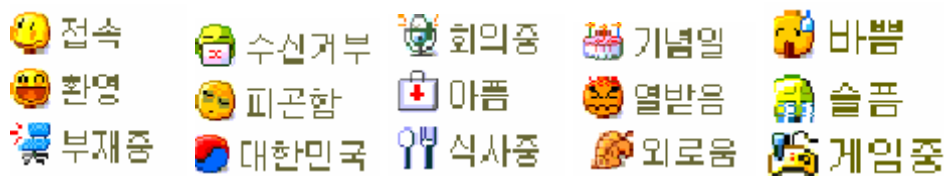
In the sending and receiving of text messages, companies have tried to convey the emotions of the users. Of course, young people are used to expressing their emotions through emoticons (example, ^^ : face laughing, and ^\_^\* : face laughing with flowers) (Research Centre for Korea Youth culture, 2003) However, these emoticons are not colourful graphics and their expressiveness is limited. Hence, companies have developed further techniques to satisfy young people’s desire to show their emotions on the Internet.

At first, companies supplied these ‘basic symbols’, messenger items, in the background to attract users. When users, in particular young people, became familiar with these items, the use of these symbols to show emotion became more and more popular (Park et al., 2002).

For instance, Buddybuddy, one of the most popular chat-room programs among young people, supplied at no charge basic items called ‘picture marked expressions’ (Figure 8-1-1), namely, expressions to show connection, welcome, not here, reject message, tired,

Korea, meeting, sick, having dinner, special day, angry, loneliness, busy, sad, and playing games, in order to let users show their feelings or situation other users (Buddybuddy, 2004 a).

**Figure 8-1-1) Picture marked expressions**



Source: Buddybuddy (<http://www.buddybuddy.co.kr/Down/index.asp:31052004>)

Young interviewees are familiar with simple symbols which that readily identify their feelings to their friends, instead of words. These pictures are used frequently when they talk with friends or leave the computers for a while to do something else, even though they are still connected to the Internet. These habits are widespread in the Buddybuddy chat rooms and have become popular among young users.

However, once these items had become very popular, this company began to supply further, ‘more developed’ items, which were not free, as in the following Figure 8-1-2, for example. This shows expressions for sleeping, surprise, happy, kiss, sexy wink, hungry, having a shower, laughing and so on, which incur a small using fee, 9,900won (£5) a year. However, they still supply basic items free of charge (Buddybuddy, 2004 b).

**Figure 8-1-2) Developed picture marked expressions**



Source: Buddybuddy (<http://itemmall.buddybuddy.co.kr/item/itemView2.asp>)

These functions, in line with the companies' business strategy, lead young people to stay more in 'their own world' through the Internet with a real sense that they are communicating. In their own world, they can easily play with friends and talk to them in their own rooms at home, all day or all night.

### **Developing and evolving methods for users to express themselves**

The companies have also devised and supplied 'Avatars' which users may show as representative figures of themselves in emails, in chat-rooms or the Internet community, to make a friendly atmosphere between users and to help them express their feelings to each other (Jung 2003).

On the one hand, the Avatars themselves (e.g., Hanmir, Daum) can change their facial expression, from smiling to sad, as supplied on the chat-room programs, where as the basic items of 'Buddybuddy' are also free to users. However, the decorations for Avatars,

such as clothing, shoes and accessories, have to be paid for. Avatars' clothing for certain seasons or a special day can also be bought. Moreover, companies have prepared Avatars for special events Avatars example, St. Valentine's day, traditional holidays or the exam days for university entrance in order to increase the number of Avatar users. For instance, some young interviewees mentioned that they often used Avatars wearing Korean traditional costumes (Hanbok) during such periods as the Korean Thanksgiving holidays, Choosuk; 15th August in the Lunar calendar and the holidays between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (Hanmir, 2003 b).

Some messenger programs such as MSN even supply the user's photo so that they feel as if they are virtually talking to friends through Avatars or photos. Young people compete with their friends to use Avatars in order to appear more fashionable, in the case of girls, or handsome, in the case of boys. Whenever they chat with friends in the communities, chat-rooms or games, they see their friends' Avatars or photos.

Accordingly, they are tempted to make their Avatars or photos look beautiful or smart. For instance, Avatars which were supplied originally on the 'Daum' portal site wore only underpants and vests (see the left hand picture, Figure 8-1-3 below) (Daum, 2004). The first line below the Avatar shows how to choose expressions such as smiling, normal and sad. Avatars provide the basic choice of expressions free of charge. The second line below the picture shows how to buy clothes after trying them on and making a choice and how to choose accessories.

When users buy clothes, they are informed that they can keep their wardrobe. These

methods are similar to the situation in real life, in that people can change the clothes which they keep in their wardrobes. In addition, young people regularly prepare Avatars through the Internet for friends as birthday presents or for a special day. The process of trying on and wearing the clothes is shown in Figure 8-1-4 (Daum, 2004).

The half-undressed Avatar of Figure 8-1-3 has changed his style by wearing a black suit. Before he put it on, the Avatar was wearing only a vest and a pair of underpants and the user may have felt ashamed at showing an almost naked Avatar. Compared with other people's Avatars' clothes and decorative accessories, the user may have felt relatively poor on the Internet (Jeong, 2003).

**Figure 8-1-3) Half-undressed Avatar**



**Figure 8-1-4) Avatars wearing the clothes**



Some young interviewees mentioned that they feel isolated or shy if they do not use decorated Avatars in the communities or chat-rooms because the Avatars of most young people are fully dressed and decorated.

Even though I understand that decorating Avatars makes profit for the companies, I cannot leave my Avatar naked in a chat-room. I have already decorated it as a kind of self-image. Some friends spend a lot of money on Avatars through ARS (Jinho, 282-283).

Most young interviewees have bought items to clothe and decorate their Avatars in the main chat-rooms and communities. However, spending considerable sums of money on the Avatars by making use of parental IDs or putting it on the mobile phone bills which are paid by parents has certain side effects. For example, young people may deceive their parents over their use of Avatars, according to one young

interviewee (Kimseong: 170-172, see Chapter 7.3.3).

Moreover, the following tragic case was revealed by a newspaper report:

An 11-year-old girl killed herself on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2003. She was scolded by her mother because the cost of decorating her Avatar, amounting to about 200,000won (£100), was included in a telephone bill. According to police detectives, she had spent about 1,500,000won (£750) in five months (Hankyore Daily News, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2003).

In order to for their Avatars to lead a life resembling a human life, users have to buy clothes and accessories which are seasonal and fashionable. Companies may intend young people to feel such emotions sense in order to raise their profits. They may not care that young people gradually become absorbed in decorating Avatars for the Internet, as in the following case.

I also decorated my Avatar in a community to share information about computer ornamentation. I just followed the others, because they all decorated their Avatars (Joa: 109-110).

It seems that companies have striven to supply more fashionable items and to match the life styles of young people. Even if the item price for Avatars is low, between 1,000won (50p: e.g., the same price as 1.5 litres of Coca Cola in Korea) and 5,000won (£2.50: e.g., the price of lunch at a working people's restaurant), according to Daum (2004), users may pay much more as they follow fashions or want to regularly show their own images to others. Portal sites have supplied several services for Internet communities, such as bulletin boards, data rooms, chat-rooms and e-mail. Also, they have asked members to pick IDs to identify them, to use nicknames instead of real names and Avatars. In particular, the Avatar has been a successful factor in generating profits for portal sites



(Seo, 2002: 39). However, these factors are inclined to keep young people more and more in 'their own world' and to feel their emotions in the companies' terms. This may also stir up competition between young people to portray themselves more and more elaborately and smartly; it may encourage young people to lose their sense of proportion in using the Internet and lead them towards addiction.

### **Supplying attractive game items (equipment) to add to the fun of playing**

Most young interviewees have had experience of buying game items with real money even though companies forbid it. Moreover, some young interviewees enjoy buying these items, as mentioned in Chapter 6.2.

Even though the contract forbids users to trade game items for 'real money', such trading is widespread. Although companies do not deliberately attempt to popularise game item trading, it is without doubt thriving among users.

A company interviewee (Koo) mentioned this double standard in the game companies in the following comment:

'Game item trading' in real money has contributed to making games more popular. From a business viewpoint, companies do not want to punish users who trade game items for real money, even if such users are breaking their contract ... We just know our image is a little damaged. However, we, the companies, have no intention to actually prohibit such trading (Koo:465-466).

However, according to statements from companies, young people have had experience not only of normal trading but also fraudulent trading, as outlined by a young interviewee, below:

I have already bought some RPG game items... When some companies produce attractive RPG games, they supply game items which can be obtained by players eager to play the games... At the beginning we, as players, promise the game companies to use these items only in the games and for no other purpose, such as selling and buying. As time goes on, many people find it easy to buy these items. Of course, they buy and sell without the permission of the game companies. My friends and I lost money to people who cheated us over these items (Jinho: 286-287).

As mentioned above (see Chapter 6.2), this fraudulent trading has recently become more widespread among young people. These problems cannot be managed by or for young people, even though such situations are so frequent in what is called 'their own world.' In spite of widespread fraud, companies have done nothing to cure these problems. They seem to be worried that taking firm steps to prohibit this trading would reduce their profits from the online games

Currently they are inclined to turn a blind eye to the situation. This may even lead young people to an addiction situation as they want to upgrade quickly and have more fun with better items. Also, such trading is a cause of young people's increasing absorption. Some young people may obtain items in order to get money through trading, whereas they ought to collect items by spending more time and improving their play (see Chapter 7.2.3). Companies seem to ignore the fact that they already aid and abet young people to become absorbed and addicted to the Internet games.

### **8.1.3.2. Utilising users' relationships and fostering competition**

#### **Providing an 'Internet community' to promote users' interrelationship**

The ubiquity of the Internet has supplied people with the chance to exchange knowledge and information widely and quickly. It has also enlarged the community's activity from a limited range of traditional territorial or geographic areas to unlimited distances and allowed them to exchange materials or opinions in real time (Robert, 2004). Internet communities encourage members to interact and exchange ideas and experiences across vast areas or ethnic distances (Kardaras et al, 2003).

Korean portal site companies have focused on community services in which users themselves make their relationships and work by themselves, for themselves, staying longer and longer inside their communities (Kim et al., 2003).

In order to increase earnings in the competitive conditions for portal sites, they have tried to attract more members. One of the ways to increase members has been to use the term 'café' instead of 'community' to make users feel more familiar and friendly (Seo, 2002: 35).

With the Internet, young people have advantages, such as skills playing games, useful information and quick ways of finding information. Companies have supplied users with much information about accessing data. For instance, Naver has opened a 'knowledge community' in which users can ask questions and be answered by other users. Also, Naver ([www.naver.com](http://www.naver.com)) has supplied information in answers to users who asked for it. Recently, Naver has developed outstandingly among many young people

who have visited the site to obtain various kinds of knowledge in the pursuit of power (Ranky, 2004).

### **Connection between the Internet community and real life relationships**

Many Internet communities in Korea are linked to relationships offline as well as online. For instance, Internet alumnus communities and class communities are related to users' lives offline. Even game communities and fan club communities are sometimes liable to hold real meetings in each region, in particular, the centre of Seoul, the capital, or other areas, as a young interviewee (Kimjong) mentioned. Basically, these meetings arise spontaneously in order for users to make friendships and exchange information. However, competitive relationships between communities are fostered by the companies, one of the purposes being to increase members and to encourage them to stay longer on their sites. Community members' leaders may receive some economic support from advertisements if they have many members (Kang, 2003).

According to the research organisation, Pollever (2004), satisfaction research in April 2004 covering all Internet users, found that hobby/leisure activity communities are the most popular of all Internet items. The next most popular communities cover friends, followed by alumni, games, music and movies. However, in research into young people's community activities, the most popular community activities, attended by 74.1% of young people, were communities of their class or school. The percentage of young people attending communities for movies, music and cartoons is 68.1%. The percentage attending fan clubs of movie stars or singers is 52.4%. The percentage for

games is 48.0% and for hobby activities is 45.6% (Whang, 2003:78-79).

### **Fostering competition through ‘level’ or ‘pride’ among users**

Korean society, given its Confucian basis, is very familiar with terms of classification such as level, rank, and order. Confucian influence on Korean society leads it to give importance to the hierarchical structure, such as old and young, man and woman, or workers in senior positions and those in lower positions (see Chapter 3.4). All Korean people think in terms of these hierarchical structures which they learn from their ancestors as well as parents. This predisposition is encouraged by portal sites and game companies as another way of triggering young people’s impulse to instinctively keep to the same mindset. They are eager to obtain a high status in cyber space as ‘their own world’ for games well as community activities.

### ***Supplying games to generate fun and competition among users***

Young people are more inclined to enjoy themselves socially than alone. Even offline computer games supplied by CD, offline such as ‘Diablo’ and ‘Starcraft’ have been changed to allow partners to play, having moved from computer program strategies to human players who make relationships and are able to develop patterns of play on the Internet.

Players also prefer online games which let them enjoy a more lively and close relationship with human players in real time rather than offline (Hong, 2002). Or, even if a user’s partners are computers in online games, the user can fight against computers

cooperating to play against humans.

For example, RPG games can not only cooperate with but also compete with other players in computer programmed circumstances. In this context, players seem to choose online games which generate more fun through relationships and competition with other players. Currently, online games are very popular among young people. When users visit game sites, they see the highest player's ID, encouraging them to improve their ability in each game. Also, companies have supplied game programs to let players compare their abilities with other people's and try to upgrade their skills through competition (see Chapter 7.2.3).

According to the 2003 Korean Game White Paper, as regards the scope of game markets, firstly, the emphasis in 2002 changed from arcade games to online games. The cost of online games in 2002 was 452.2 billion won (£226 million), 36.1% of the total cost of games in South Korea (Korean Game Institute, 2003).

These trends relate to the Internet circumstance, such as the spread of broadband at home and of Internet cafés. One interviewee (Doo: 463) who is president of a game company, said that the major growth of the online games results from the synergy effect, as companies have linked young people's cultural content to the Internet.

### ***Encouraging upgrades through ranking or awards for community activities***

Portal sites easily show which of their communities are most popular when users access the community entrance sites. Users may be interested in their community ranking and

members encourage more active attendance. Frequent attendance and the posting messages on bulletin boards by members may earn more points. They are also encouraged the same means to have meetings offline. For instance, 'Daum' shows ranking according to category and total, the order in the sub-menu site for entering the community of the main site being determined by the number of community members, how many users visit its café (community) site ([http://cafe.daum.net/?nil\\_profile=g&nil\\_Head=cafe](http://cafe.daum.net/?nil_profile=g&nil_Head=cafe)), which is a sub menu of the main site.

In addition, companies sometimes reward communities with a very high and active membership. The purpose of the rewards appears to be to support their communities. However, the covert purpose may be related to business strategies that community members fulfil on their sites, staying longer and visiting frequently. For instance, Daum ([http://cafe.daum.net/?nil\\_profile=g&nil\\_Head=cafe](http://cafe.daum.net/?nil_profile=g&nil_Head=cafe)) gives prizes for outstanding cafés every month, according to criteria decided flexibly by the company, such as cafés maintaining excellent relations among members, not only offline but also online, or maintaining active attendance at the community's bulletin boards. Naver ([http://nboard.naver.com/nboard/list.php?board\\_id=event\\_notice](http://nboard.naver.com/nboard/list.php?board_id=event_notice)) also gives frequent prizes to community members for certain actions, such as attaching a photo or putting additional messages on the bulletin board.

Community activity is an endlessly competitive situation supplied by companies, which take care to show the highest group rankings of the communities in their homepages. In this Confucian culture, Korean young people are inclined always to seek the chance to become highest among their peers. Also, they regard these ranks or levels in the games or communities as the most important part of their lives. They talk about these topics with their peers not only on the Internet but also in their real peer

relationships, such as at school. In the process, some of them may spend more and more time on the Internet. Moreover, they may become addicted to the Internet because of its competitive element.

## **8.2. Internet addiction; the Government's role and its record**

### **8.2.1. Promoting the supply and use of Information Technology**

Policies which mainly emphasized the supply of IT, such as computers and broadband systems, have been implemented by several government ministries, for example, the Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC), the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT). MIC has generally fostered the development of the IT industry and the manufacture of hardware as well as software. Since 1994, MIC, which has extended the role of the former Ministry of Communications, has begun to expand the nationwide provision of Information Technology with the aim of increasing competition in globalised conditions and improving the quality of life (The Ministry of Information and Communication, 2003 b).

Since 1995 the government has tried more actively to establish the infrastructure for a high quality broadband system on the basis of this Act (Na, 2003). It provided IT funding, which was invested in IT development, managed by MIC and also had the aim of training people in IT to improve their economic circumstances through MEHRD and MIC (The Ministry of Information and Communication, 2003 b).



MCT also encouraged the development of cultural components such as games, cartoons and movies on the basis of IT. For example, the online games industry has become an export growth industry (Seo and Su, 1999).

In this context, the numbers of Internet users have also increased steadily as follows: 9,430,000 in 1999; 19,040,000 in 2000; 24,380,000 in 2001; 26,270,000 in 2002; 29,220,000 in 2003. The number of Internet users including young children in 2003 (29,220,000) was 61% of the total population of 47,925,000 in South Korea. However, the percentage of Internet users among people aged 6-19 is 94.8%; among people aged 20-29 it is 94.5%; among people aged 30-39 it is 80.7%; in the 40-49 age group it is 51.6%; in the 50-59 age group it is 22.8%; and for 60-year-olds and over it is 5.2%.

The percentage of households in Korea able to use the Internet at home is 89%. The home Internet access method in 2003 used was 95.9% for broadband systems such as xDSL (83.5%) and CATV (12.4%) (National Computerisation Agency, 2004; National Computerisation Agency, 2003).

## **8.2.2. Government's methods of combating Internet addiction**

### **8.2.2.1. Recognition of individual problems**

The situation of increasing PC use at home has grown even more rapidly since the late 1990s. The realisation that using the Internet may also cause bad side effects for young people first came in 1999, according to newspaper reports (see Table 8-3-1).

Since late 1999, the mass media have reported stories of Internet addiction situations as

the cause of trouble. For instance, an Internet café manger died after spending more than 10 hours playing Internet games. Some students went to Internet cafés during class time, leaving their schools without their teacher's permission (Hangyoure Daily News, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2000).

**Table 8-2-1) Numbers of reports of Internet addiction**

Description of report	Year	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Recognition of Internet addiction as an individual problem related to some kind of psychiatric symptom, suggestion of consulting specialists such as psychiatrists or psychologists	Total	23	26	4		
	A	7	7			
	B	6	7	3		
	C	4	4	1		
	D	6	8			
Recognition of Internet addiction as a social problem related to circumstances, suggestion of ethics or moral education and improved understanding the Internet among parents	Total	7		1		
	A	3				
	B	2				
	C	1				
	D	1		1		
Reports of outbreaks of crime due to Internet addiction	Total	4	2			
	A	1	1			
	B	1	1			
	C	1				
	D	1				
Reports of Internet addiction cases in other countries including the U.S.	Total	4	2	3	4	5
	A	4	2	1	1	2
	B					1
	C			1	1	2
	D			1	2	

(Names of newspapers: A: Hangyoure, B: Chosun, C: Joongang, D: Donga)

When the mass media deal with bad news related to the Internet, they identify 'Internet addiction' as the cause of the trouble. In addition, the mass media quote the opinions of some psychiatrists in order to explain Internet addiction in more detail. The psychiatrists were of the opinion that Internet addiction may be associated with psychiatric problems such as depression (Hangyoure Daily News 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2000).

It seems that this mainstream analysis of Internet addiction has been led by some Korean psychiatrists and psychologists who have studied the Internet addiction situation in the U.S..

At that time, however, NGOs and parents were ignorant compared to the psychiatrists and psychologists leading the discourse on Internet addiction. One of the NGO interviewees commented as follows:

Parents have not controlled their children's use of the Internet due to their lack of knowledge of the Internet. The education system does not work to prevent problems from Internet use. Because of the lack of facilities and experience of IT in the initial stages, the NGO has no function for preventing Internet addiction (Kwon:403).

These groups have not formed any power to oppose or offer alternatives to the views of the leading groups. The leading groups have presented the situation as if young people's Internet addiction was a kind of individual problem. Also, they have emphasised that people with Internet addiction need counselling by specialists to cure their symptoms. Policy makers seem to agree with these mainstream analyses, rather than recognising circumstantial problems leading to Internet addiction, according to one policy maker who was interviewed (Min).

We know that Internet addiction may recently have emerged in the social

science area. We also have a hypothetical definition of an Internet addiction pattern in psychological terms. For example, it is a person who has the problems of normal life, together with symptoms such as tolerance and withdrawal. We have already classified some persons in such classes as dangerous levels of use, potentially dangerous levels of use and normal levels of use (Min: 458).

This approach seemed to present the Internet addiction situation as being due to individual problems, a situation created by the mass media rather than one produced by the social circumstance of young people. In other words, the government, represented by the MIC, firstly seemed to regard 'Internet addiction' as a psychiatric problematic situation rather than as something produced by the combined effects of young people's standpoints, life patterns and the education system (Information Culture Centre of Korea, 2002). On the one hand, it is a positive contribution that the mass media have incited the government to recognise the problems of Internet addiction since 1999. On the other hand, they quoted psychologists and psychiatrists' opinions, showing that they were inclined to deduce that Internet addiction was an individual problem and needed psychiatric intervention.

#### **8.2.2.2. Delays in embarking on policy**

Some policy makers may have recognised the problems of using the Internet by 2002 through the mass media or by themselves, prior to embarking on a policy to prevent Internet addiction. However, after the economic crisis of 1997, it may have been difficult for them to prepare a policy for preventing of Internet addiction. This could have obstructed the rapid implementation of the IT supply strategy required to help overcome the crisis. A policy maker interviewee (Min) emphasised the following point:

As you know, the IT industry has contributed to the recovery from our economic crisis supported by the IMF in 1997. Until now we needed to express support for companies to improve the economic situation rather than consider the side effects of the process of supplying IT (Min: 459).

### **8.2.2.3. MIC policy execution through CIPC**

#### **Function of CIPC**

In April 2002, the CIPC was established by MIC in order to correct Internet misuse and to help people with Internet addiction. It has three functions, namely, individual counselling, education for school teachers about Information Technology ethics and ways to guide students, and the study of Internet addiction. Counselling methods are through online and also face-to-face in rooms in the Centre. People who want counselling usually need to have the level of their Internet addiction checked, namely, whether they belong to the group with a dangerous level of use, the potentially dangerous level of use group or the normal use group, as scored by the CIPC-measuring tool, mentioned above, which consists of 40 questions before counselling (The Ministry of Information and Communication and Korean Agency for Digital Opportunity and Promotion, 2003).

#### **Counselling content**

##### ***Addiction inclination of counselling***

Most people who come to counselling with CIPC are young people who are made to

visit the centre by their parents. Therefore, they already have a mindset sceptical of what adults say and a defiant attitude. Adult counsellors rarely find clients are open-minded at first. Most of the young people's visits were related to their use of online games.

We, counsellors, firstly talked with visitors about common topics, like the different kinds of games, to establish a rapport with them before counselling. They come here under their parents' coercion. They do not want to talk about anything...

Most people had problems of not being able to stop playing Internet games like Starcraft, or the RPG games... The phenomena of addiction are not the same for middle school students and high school students. For instance, middle school students are more sensitive with regard to the popularity of a game among their friends. Middle school students even after spending considerable time on a game are inclined to change the kind of game they play according to which game is popular among their friends (Soo:446-449).

Counselling usually takes about one hour. However, as young people are unwilling in the first place to visit the centre and come under pressure from their parents, they do not cooperate with the counselling. One period of counselling may be insufficient to discover a visitor's problems and suggest ways of solving them. Most visitors do not want to come a second time, even under parental pressure. In addition, the counsellor was more worried about another problem, that of younger people's addiction to pornography.

Pornographic addiction situations are no different for male or female young people in connection with online counselling. A pornographic addiction situation is a serious problem. However, young people are inclined to avoid face-to-face counselling. Through their parents we can connect indirectly with their situation... We recognise the situation through Internet counselling. Surprisingly, in the case of some young people, after 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year primary

school children (in English, children in year 4 or year 5) saw pornographic materials through the Internet by chance, they could not stop watching them even though they knew it was wrong (Soo : 446).

Accordingly, it seems that there may be some limitation to the use of counselling for Internet addiction.

- . Young people's sceptical attitude, which does not accept what adults say, and their defiant attitude
- . Mindset of avoiding topics and being reluctant to talk
- . Difficulty due to the nature of the generation gap between adults and young people

### ***Differences between young people and their parents***

One counsellor insisted that parents should identify closely with 'their children's lives' which children regard as the main part of their lives, in order to understand and solve the problems of their children's Internet addiction.

Young people are familiar with their own patterns of living as they meet, talk about their daily experiences and exchange information with their friends in chat-rooms such as Buddybuddy or MSN, as well as Internet games. However, they seem to regard these chat-rooms as their 'usual communication tools' rather than looking at the functions of the 'chat-rooms', for only the chat is recognised by adults ... It is necessary to change parents' attitude regarding the legitimacy of forcing their children to abandon the Internet. Children may not care to their parents' attitudes if their parents force them continuously. We feel that there is a lack of parental understanding over the use of the Internet. Pressure from parents may make young people increase their hostility (Soo: 446-447).

### ***Concern about game item trading***

Some young people want to obtain game items and trade them for the sake of making money rather than playing a game for fun. This purpose makes game users increase the time they spend playing online games. They also reveal a disturbance of their normal lives, due to spending so much time on games. The counsellor spoke of the difficulty of managing those situations in which young people deliberately collect game items in order to trade them. It seems to require a more comprehensive approach, calling for a national policy rather than mere counselling.

During the counselling, we sometimes feel the difficulty of giving them advice. Some visitors feel a sense of achievement and fun from playing games. Others want to obtain game items for the purpose of getting money. I wonder whether they are addicted to games. Also, they are getting money through their trading. Some of them mentioned that they do not even need to study. They might not adjust again to being a student. The game is one of the methods of escaping from their predicament (Soo: 447-448).

### ***Counselling achievement (April 2002- October 2003)***

According to CIPC data (see Table 8-2-2), this Centre has counselled young people themselves, their parents and adults who are concerned about their addiction to the Internet. The highest percentage, 37.2%, among those counselled consists of students of middle schools (i.e., young people of secondary school age).

The second highest percentage, 23.3%, consists of pupils from primary schools. It seems that even these younger people also have an addiction to using the Internet (Kim R-Y, 2003). Internet addiction situations showed mainly among young people (88.7%) rather than adults (9.3%).



**Table 8-2-2) Counselling method**

	Total	Young people's counseling							Adult	Unknown
		Total	Primary school young people	Middle school young people	High school young people	College young people	Young people leave from school	Parental counsel for their children		
Total	1195	1060 88.7%	279 23.3%	445 37.2%	159 13.3%	48 4.0%	20 1.6%	109 9.1%	111 9.3%	24 2.0%
Visit	417	373	28	151	70	15	17	92	44	
Online	778	687	251	294	89	33	3	17	67	24

(CIPC data, 31<sup>ST</sup> Oct. 2003)

The highest percentage, 55.9% of counselling content is related to games, which have spread widely over the Internet in recent years. It seems that games have a great deal of weight for young people in 'their own world'. The specific point of the CIPC's counselling is that, in its services, it does not offer any counseling for pornographic addiction. It seems to be difficult for young people to talk with adults directly about sex topics related to pornography.

**Table 8-2-3) Counselling content**

	Total	Games	Searching	Chatting	Porno graphic	Mixed
Total	1195	668 55.9%	105 8.8%	87 7.3%	50 4.2%	285 23.8%.
Visit	417	347	19	25		26
Online	778	321	86	62	50	259

(CIPC data, 31<sup>ST</sup> Oct. 2003)

#### **8.2.2.4. Limitations of the counselling approach**

##### **Counselling is not preventative**

CIPC has given counselling not only for young people and their parents but also for adults who suffer from Internet addiction situations. The CIPC has also run educational courses to train more counsellors, who have been needed in schools since April 2002. Even if people addicted to the Internet require individual counselling, this method is helpful for reducing the problems after the fact. The approach seems to be to give counselling for situations which have already arisen rather than to try to prevent future problems. What is needed is a comprehensive and fundamental policy for prevention the problems before they occur.

##### **Limited understanding of young people's lives**

One interviewee (Hyun), when referring to psychiatrists, mentioned that some older psychiatrists may not understand young people's lives, in particular, their online games. These counsellors cannot talk appropriately with the young people who have an Internet addiction. He also illustrated a young person's experience of meeting an older psychiatrist.

Before he met me, a young person went to a general psychiatric clinic in order to consult about his problems with the Internet. He said that the old psychiatrist did not mention the Internet but asked him questions based on another counselling paradigm. He confessed that he felt irritated during the consultation (Hyun: 435-436).

This example may be merely one of many cases which reveal the generation gap. In a short period, Korean young people have improved their Internet ability and become

absorbed in online games. However, older people are not as familiar with the Internet as young people. Even though someone has specialised in psychiatry, he may not understand young people in ‘their own world’, which has changed rapidly through the Internet.

### **8.2.3. Why the protection of young people has received so little attention**

#### **8.2.3.1. Lack of a coherent plan**

Initially the policy to protect young people in Korea was implemented to care for orphans after the Korean War between 1950 and 1953. The government’s focus was on juvenile delinquents or young people who needed help. In 1960, the Committee for the Protection of Young People was established to protect, guide and regulate young people in trouble, but not all young people (Kim M-O, 2000; Chun, 2000). In the late 1980s, however, levels of crime or trouble among young people rose, due to the side effects of the country’s rapid economic development. For example, rapid urbanisation increased the gap between rich and poor, leading to more widespread risks for young people. In response, from 1987 on, the government has been implementing a policy to support young people (Hong and Nam 2000:435). The government recognised the limitation of the system whereby young people were prepared for the future only by their schools and possible social troubles were not covered. Thus, the policy of looking out for the needs of young people has recently dealt with another important area in this regard. Separate from education, this new direction in youth policy has developed to support for youth activity and welfare, and protect them from possible dangers. The scope of this policy, as set out in the ‘Framework Act on Juveniles’ has steadily widened namely, through

welcoming young people to take part in decision-making in all sectors, including policy, the encouragement of youth movements, the strengthening of youth culture and the support of information technology since the 1990s (Chun, 2000:57).

These youth policies seek the cooperation and control of several ministries. However, the department which managed the policy has changed as the government made changes in the policy itself or emphasised different functions in different political condition, as shown in Table 8-2-1.

**Table 8-2-4) The changing process of the departments managing youth policy**

Period	Department with responsibility	Function
1964-1976	Home Affairs ministry ( the Committee to Protect Young People)	Suggests the direction and control for youth policy
1977-1983	The Prime Ministry (the committee's counter plan for young people)	Deliberates on planning the guidance and protection of young people
1983-1984	Education ministry (the committee's counter plan for young people)	Fosters policy for young people included in the education policy
1985-1988	The Prime Minister's Department (the committee's counter plan for young people)	Manages and controls comprehensive policy for young people
1988-1989	Sports ministry (the committee fostering the interests of young people)	Emphasises the fostering policy for young people
1990-1994	Sports and youth ministry (the committee fostering the interests of young people)	Establishes youth organisations in all local governments
1994-1998	Culture and Sports ministry (the committee fostering young people + the commission on youth protection )	Controls the policy for fostering the interests of young people. Emphasises the policy of protecting them from risks
1998-2004	Culture and Tourism ministry (the committee fostering the interests of young people),  The prime ministry (the Commission on Youth Protection )	Makes a 5 year plan to foster youth, will pass a basic law for youth.  Emphasises protection and guidance by the Prime Minister

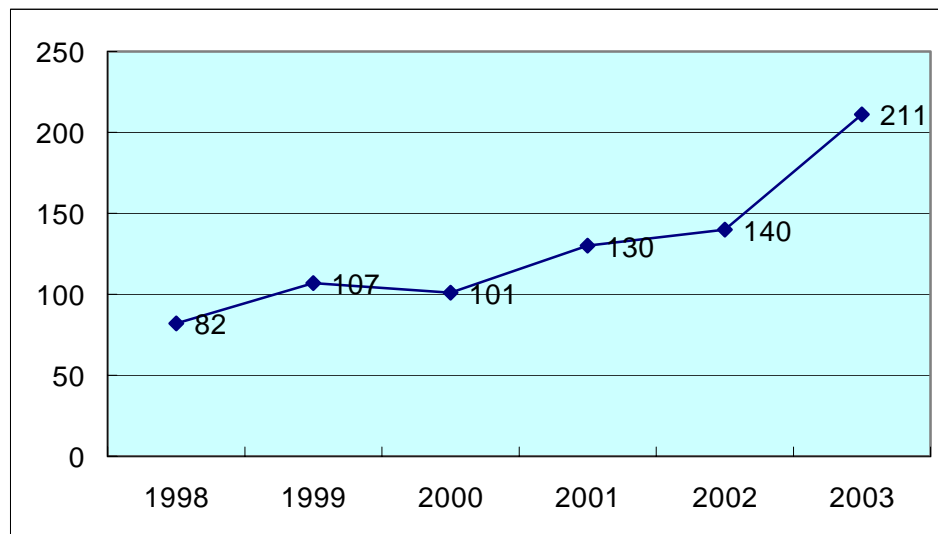
In particular, the Prime Minister's Department has been responsible for youth policy, in order to ensure cooperation and control among the ministries which implement it and manage to the power relationships between them. The government has since 1998 divided up the various tasks: the youth fostering policy has gone to MCT, the youth protection policy to the Commission on Youth Protection (CYP) of the Prime Minister's Department. However, there is a greater aim, to implement the protection of young people with the cooperation of all other ministries.

On the one hand, this aim may be effective and successful because it is backed by the power of the Prime Minister. On the other hand, this direction may cause conflict between the fostering policy and the protection policy (Chun, 2000).

#### **8.2.3.2. Delay in implementing the rating of online games**

Since the late 1990s, according to the interview with the policy maker (Min), the government has recognised the contribution to the nation's economic development made by the online game industry as something more than a childish amusement. The games industry exports, mostly online games and associated products, have increased continuously. For instance, the amount generated from the export of games is as follows: \$82 million in 1998, \$107 million in 1999, \$101 million in 2000, \$130 million in 2001, \$140 million in 2002, and \$211 million in 2003 (Korea Game Promotion Centre, 2001; Korea Game Institute, 2003).

**Figure 8-2-1 The export of games (millions of U.S.\$)**



#### **8.2.3.3. Harmful effects of the Internet and online games**

##### **Reluctance to launch a rating system for online**

Since 2000 the government seems to have recognised problems such as violence and addiction factors in online games. However, the government forbore to exercise controls on for online game companies, as it should have, through rating the games according to the user's age. Companies were eager to make profits without taking account of the harmful influence of the games on young people.

For instance, since 2000 the Korean Media Rating Board (KMRB) supported by MCT has had the authority to rate online games on the basis of the 'Records, Video Products and Game Software Act'. However, the KMRB was not forced to judge on-line game companies until October 2002 (Korea Game Institute 2002; 2003). It seems that the powers of the government have been exercising on the protection of companies

rather than of young people.

However, the discourse in the mass media and certain studies that online games had a 'harmful effect' on those who used the Internet increased. It gave people a kind of confidence to ask the government to take steps to regulate the games for the sake of young people. People recognised the playing of online games as a cause of Internet addiction. For example, the SBS (Seoul Broadcasting System) current affairs programme 'I Want to Know', broadcast on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2002, dealt with the harmful and serious effects of the 'Lineage online game', an RPG game. The content of this programme was as follows:

Some 'Lineage game' items are sold and bought for more than 100,000 won (50 pounds) each and the amount of users' game items being traded may cost more than 1 billion won (500,000 pounds) in a day. Users sometimes became violent in the pursuit of items. Female users may take off their clothes to get game items. Some users, who see themselves as monarchs with many knights, make a fortune from such trading. There are about 2 million users registered as players of this game. Probably about 200,000 users are playing now. Some young people choose games rather than school. Online games attract their users to the point of addiction. What is the government doing about it? (SBS broad text, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2002)

It seemed that the government was like being directly attacked in this current affairs programme. Because the government's MCT asked the KMRB for a counter plan to counter some of the harmful effects on young people of online games mentioned above. The KMRB, supported by MCT, announced a plan on 26<sup>th</sup> March whereby from June 2002 all online games should be rated by the KMRB before they were put on sale. The content of this plan includes ways of protecting young people from risks. It was set up under the current programme of SBS (Korean Media Rating Board, 2002 a).

The 'Records, Video Products and Game Software Act' came into effect on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1999, and some online games have been rated by KMRB since 2000. In other words, the KMRB's judgment, announced in the counter plan, should have already have been in force KMRB when the Act came into effect in 2000. KMRB had not forced companies to rate their online games (Korea Game Institute, 2002 ; 2003) until the mass media brought the problems to a head.

The KMRB explained that it needed to gather various opinions in preparing to judge all online games. Also, the KMRB mentioned that online game companies had not sufficiently understood the conditions of the judgment (Korea Game Institute, 2003). However, the social issues resulting from the harm done by online games dramatically increased during the period when the KMRB was silent. It seems also that companies had been eager to make profits from developing online games, with the government's cooperative support. They took no account of the need to protect young people.

This tendency may be identified from the KMRB's judgments between 2000 and 2001. For example, in 2000, the first year of judgment for online games, there were 22 voluntary judgments, and 102 followed in 2001. However, in 2002, after the counter plan by the KMRB, the number of judgements increased to 1,010 (Korea Game Institute, 2003:979).

Accordingly, it seems that the counter plan from the government standpoint was the reluctant launching of a rating system for online games. This is an example of the way



in which government failed to focus on the protection of young people at risk. As a result, government effectively operates and develops game companies even while Internet addiction situations are increasing among young people.

### **The effect of controlling games**

The classification guideline for rating online games is the same as that for offline PC games. The KMRB was already used to rating PC games before the counter plan. These KMRB guidelines were used to guarantee the ethical soundness and public innocuousness of game products and to the protection of young people. The KMRB has the responsibility for deliberating on such products to see if their contents might harm young people, namely, through violence or sexual content. The committee of the KMRB for online games judges and decides through guidelines on one of four classifications for each game. The classifications were decided after discussion by a committee, namely, permission for all users, permission for those of 12 years of age and above, permission for 15 years of age and above and permission for 18 years of age and above (Korean Media Rating Board, 2001).

The eventual judgment by the KMRB seems to have contributed to the online game companies' change direction from simply making profits to beginning to consider the needs of young people. For instance, game companies as they monitor the games have tried to reduce the amount of abusive, mocking and sexually suggestive chatting in them. They need to consider the rating of the games to guarantee young users. Accordingly, they are inclined to avoid or reduce their violence and sexual elements (National

Computerisation Agency, 2004).

Also, the Lineage game company finally made it impossible for their Characters to drop game items when they are killed by another player's character. It used to be one of the reasons why users kill others; that they could then obtain their items. This situation made users covet stronger Characters with high quality items to defend themselves with and moreover, encourages users to trade game items more actively. Accordingly, the judgement by the KMRB is useful for alleviating killing others deliberately (Gyoungnyang Games Week Newspaper, 22nd Oct 2003).

However, despite partly changing the regulations for dropping game items, such as the Lineage game, the companies have not been able to devise methods for preventing users from fraudulent item trading. That is to say, the action has had a partial effect in protecting young people but not the fundamental effect of eliminating illegal factors such as the fraudulent trading of items for money.

#### **8.2.4. Resistance to controlling the trade in items**

##### **8.2.4.1. The problems of item trading and item hacking**

##### **Possibility of fraudulent trade using real money**

In order to trade items using real money, players can arrange to meet one another or remit money. However, some people cannot supply the items for which they have been

paid. Young people may be offenders or victims in the fraudulent trade in items using money. It may be difficult for individuals themselves to deal with such illegality in the process of item trading, but this problem may be dealt with by the police, who regard such cases as crimes of fraud. Moreover, some people may use hacking programs to obtain items.

As regards the problems in trading items, one cyber police interviewee (Kyu) made the following comment:

Recently our work has increased due to people's irrational desire for items. We spent much time investigating this fraudulent trading if someone accuses another person of it. The selling and buying of game items is very widespread among young people, even when it is not fraudulent (Kyu: 492).

#### **8.2.4.2. The government's role in game item trading**

Since 2001, these problems of item trading among young people have been recognized by the police. Specifically, they have formed a cyber police department to manage cyber-space crimes, including hacking and fraudulent item trading. People, in particular the parents of young people, would rather see the prevention of these crimes to stop their children turning into criminals. Which ministry should set up a policy to protect young people from these harmful activities is sometimes uncertain. This uncertainty over such a policy is understandable, for its results and achievements would be difficult to show easily. A policy for game item irregularities would seem to be a prime example.

Generally, MCT is responsible for the policy of fostering young people, while MIC is

charged with for the supplying of IT and the side effects of doing so. The education of young people is looked after by MEHRD. The protection of young people from all kinds of risk is related to the Commission on the Protection of Youth (CPY) under the Prime Minister. This committee belongs to the Prime Minister's Department, which controls all the other ministries output of youth-related policies. The policy of protecting young people managed by CPY is inclined to assume that the problems break out among young people, compared with the policy of fostering the interests of young people managed by MCT. For example, its resolving the problems related to item trading, now handled by the police, is limited in its power to anticipate trouble in advance and deal with it.

The most serious aspect of the problem is that the policy for preventing fraudulent item trading is related to companies' profits. The conditions for trading items for each game are made by companies which want the games to appeal to users. Increasing the number of users is related to increasing profits.

Policy makers in the ministries have considered how best to combat these practices. One of the policy makers who was interviewed (Hoon) mentioned that the government has taken note of the problems of item trading. However, the government has not yet prepared a suitable policy to prevent it.

Trouble with online game items is a new situation in cyber space, in particular, among Korean young people. On the one hand, policy makers do not at this time have confidence in any of the methods of prevention. On the other hand, they are inclined to

avoid 'rocking the boat' by any policy of theirs. For one thing, a policy which might halt this behaviour among young people might have an effect on companies' profits.

A cyber police interviewee (Kyu) was concerned that the government did not have a policy for dealing with these problems. The law, as it were, did not follow the state of affairs in the cyber situation. Cyber crimes have increased in recent years, in particular, fraud in the trading of game items. He insisted that the companies as well as the government roles needed to make an effort to reduce the crimes.

The cause of the problems with game item is the companies. They should try to reduce them. Many cyber policy men have spent a lot of time on finding those responsible for his and for hacking. It is consuming the government budget. Fraudulent item trade generally involves small sums of money. When we take people, they are mostly beginners in crime. Accordingly, there are many suspensions or indictments of young people. It would be a better policy to attack the cause rather than spending so much time on the crimes (Kyu: 492-493).

### **8.3. Summary**

Portal sites and game companies have contributed to developing the Information Technology Industry through increasing demands for use of the Internet. Attractive programs have been supplied through the effort and investment of companies. They provide community activities where users can form relationships and play games for their entertainment. They also have produced luxurious services for users through the Internet in order to keep people on their sites longer and longer. Most services have been focused on young people to make it easier to obtain profits. However, they have not fairly considered the situation of immature young people.

Government has contributed to the widespread supply of IT and the convenience of the Internet. This has been achieved through the extent of government power, which has encouraged the IT industry and demonstrated their achievements.

However, government power has not been fully to protect the vulnerable from the side effects of what has been done, for example young people's Internet addiction. Serious problems, such as the game item trading now widespread among young people, have been dealt with by a policy. Policies for young people have not been carried out consistently, due to way in which the departments managing the policy have been changed.

This makes it uncertain which of them should protect young people from these problems. In this process, Internet addiction situations among young people have escalated.

## **Chapter 9. Discussion and Conclusion**

The Internet addiction situation in Korea has revealed a series of current problems for young people. Three earlier chapters (6, 7, 8) describe in general terms the separate situations, focused in line with the title on different areas of evidence from the fieldwork. This present research has concentrated on the Internet addiction situation from the perspective of the power relationship surrounding young people. The present chapter now seeks to link these parts so as to connect the power relationships with a summary of the main body of evidence in the earlier analytical chapters. Thus, the contents will be discussed with reference to the research questions in Chapter 5. The implications of the research will be spelled out methodologically and practically for future policy, with some suggestions for further research.

### **9.1. Acknowledgement of the power mechanism**

Foucauldian analysis is—interested in the historical production of truth through discourse. Discourses may be formed by the same process that motivated the conceptualisation. The process includes people's life experiences (see Chapter 4.3). This research has used people's experiences related to Internet addiction for its main evidence. Through these experiences, anyone who seeks to interpret the Internet addiction situation needs to understand the historical condition of individuals as well as their present circumstances, even though the period under scrutiny is short.

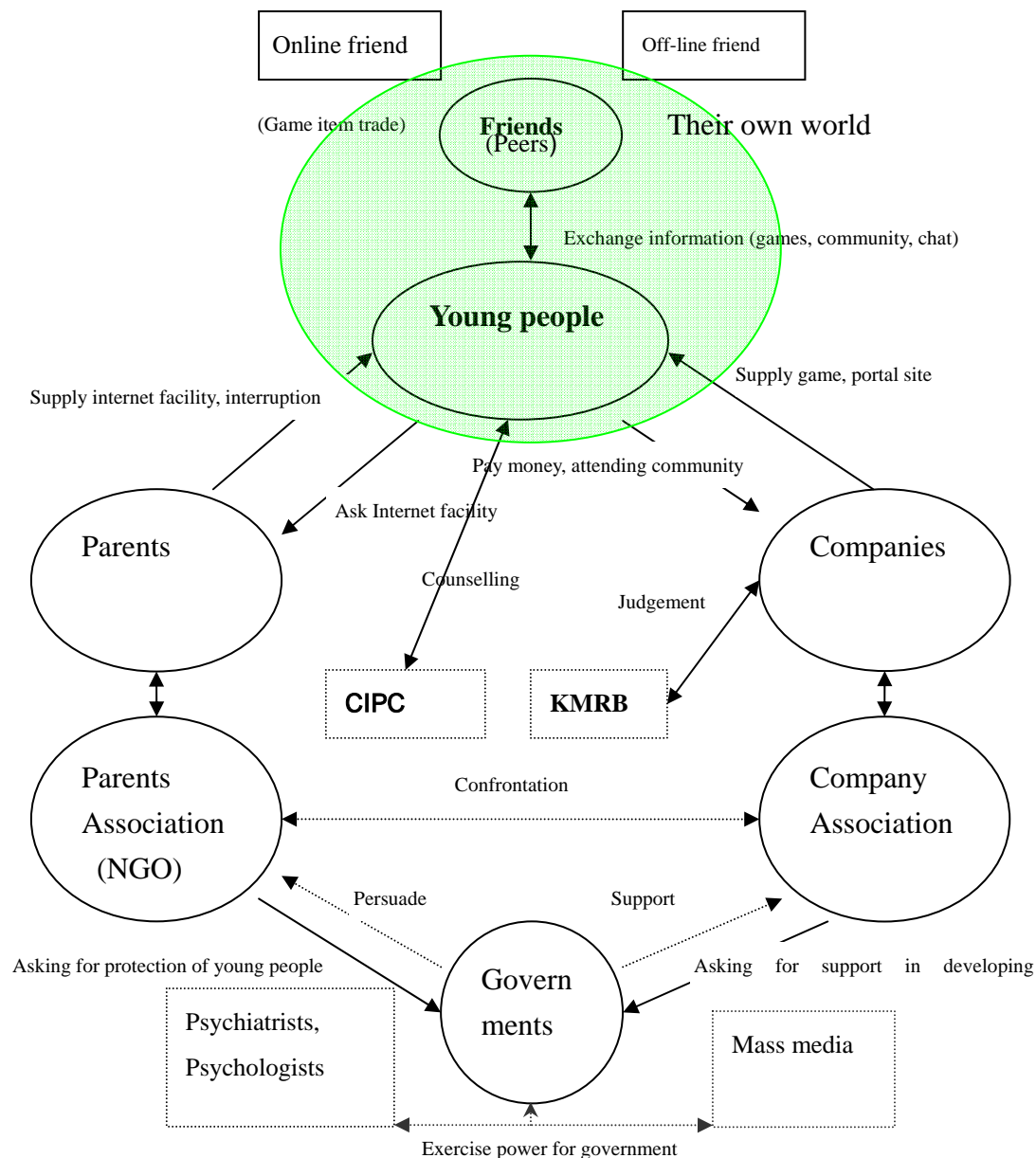
The power mechanism surrounding young people's Internet addiction situations is not straightforward but complex, because its parts are linked with each other. It seems

that Internet addiction has been recognised by psychologists and psychiatrists. In Korean society, their knowledge might help them to conceptualise Internet addiction. These processes have been described in earlier chapters in order to recognise Internet addiction in particular historical conditions and power relationships. In these power relationships, the total structure of the power brought to bear upon possible actions has been linked with various fields as the cause of Internet addiction through the structure of relationships surrounding young people, as illustrated in Figure 9-1-1 below, which summarises the descriptions in earlier chapters.

Parts of this structure have been mentioned without linking them between one chapter and another, through the process of analysis in each chapter. However, the total structure provides a useful way of recognising the power mechanism. The main way to recognising power is by the technique formed through the process. Individuals are categorised, marked by their own individualities and a rule is imposed by which they recognise each other (see Chapter 4.3). For example, in ‘their own world’ (Figure 9-1-1) young people may be categorised as *zzang* or *hujub*, high level or low level, and of high rank or low rank due to their knowledge or ability. Young people have already formed their relationships within the power mechanism. The interpretation of an Internet addiction situation should be recognised on the basis of this power relationship. The relationships may be shown in the processes which cause Internet addiction. The processes can be classified as distal cause and proximal cause, linked to each other in the total structure of actions. The distal causes are the circumstances surrounding young people which are already in place, such as the traditional hierarchical systems, the unequal social structure and the high speed Internet systems.



**Figure 9-1-1) The structure of relationships surrounding young people**



The proximal causes are expressed as the processes which are moulded by the young people's interrelationships as these influence each other, or by the strategies of companies in designing and offering services. They deal mainly with the value of the

hierarchical background. The chapter will also include a discussion of theories which have made most headway in accounting for Internet addiction among young Koreans. These will be explored in turn after discussing the interpretation of Internet addiction.

## **9.2. Interpretation of Internet addiction situations**

### **Psychologists' approach and power**

For people with Internet addiction, psychologists have suggested treatment strategies through counselling. For example, counsellors need to give such advice as 'Use the time that you would have spent on the Internet in other ways', 'Ask someone else to interrupt you', 'Set goals', 'Avoid certain applications' and so on (Young 1999). This treatment may help some people with an Internet addiction to alleviate or escape from the addictive pattern. However, while this treatment may be useful for people who have become addicted to the Internet, it does not itself prevent addiction

It seems that Korean society has recognised the problem of Internet addiction since late 1999. Most psychologist researchers choose the survey as a method of finding new evidence related to psychological theories. These have revealed that Internet addiction is serious and widespread, providing statistics about individual problems such as psychological symptoms. In Korea, these results, together with the high ratio of Internet-addicted people, have forced the government to set up counselling services to tackle the problem. Korean researchers have mainly applied Young's (1998) measuring tool to understand the extent to which people were addicted to the Internet before 2003

when the CIPC measuring tool was first used.

However, there are some differences in the results of different pieces of research, even though they all use Young's measurements. For example, Whang et al (2001:93) surveyed 13,588 Korean people through the Internet to assess the extent of addiction to it. Applying Young's measuring tool, they found that the percentage of addicted people was 39.8%. Lee K-W (2001:58) found that 36.5% of 701 young people of middle school and high school age were addicted to the Internet. She also used Young's measuring tool. Ahan (2002:76), also using Young's tool, diagnosed 14% of addicts out of 696 people from middle school and high school who responded to his survey.

These results form a discourse implying that government needed a policy for the Internet addiction pattern, since it was clearly a psychological problem. The researchers have accepted and applied the knowledge of Internet addiction as it links to Young's theory in the U.S. It seems that the skill of psychologists has been formed and exercised for preparing psychological methods to solve these social problems in Korea. Their skill seems to be connected to Internet addiction as regards the social forms which their knowledge takes (see Chapter 4.3). There are no other groups to argue against them, because they have the greatest knowledge of Internet addiction.

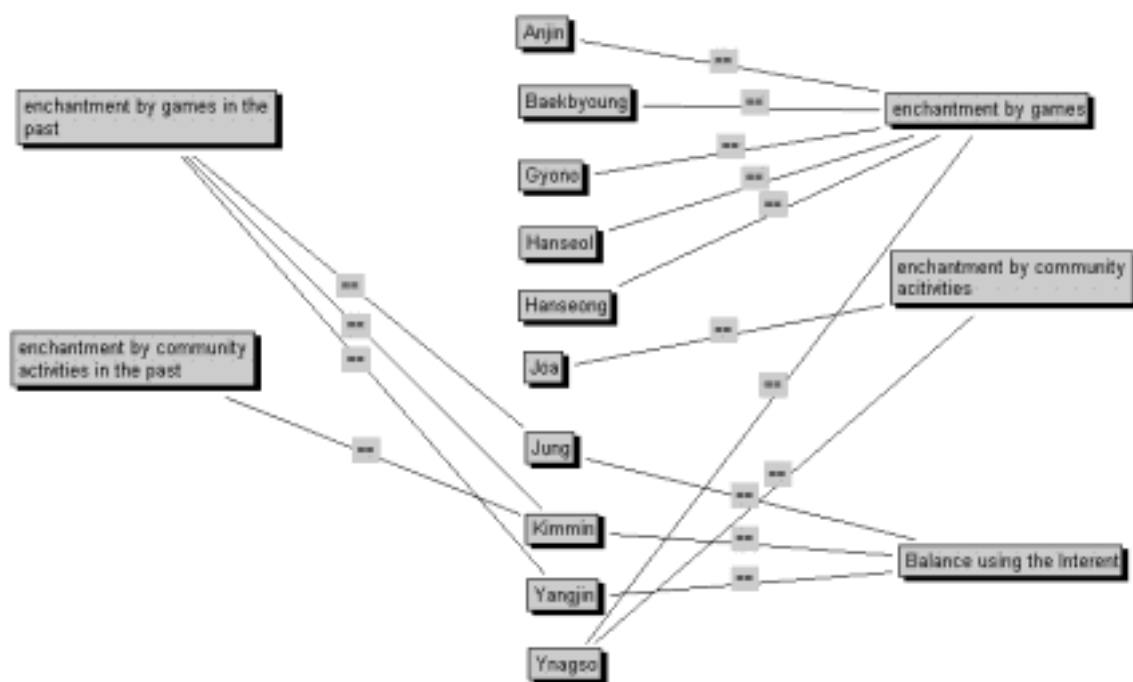
As a result, the government has formulated policies focused on counselling for young people with addiction. In 2002, CIPC was set up by the government in order to prevent Internet addiction (see Chapter 8.2). Internet addiction has been dealt with as an abnormal situation, through the process of pathological patterns discovered by psychologists and psychiatrists.

## Interpretation of Internet addiction situations

Grohol (1999) does not believe that Internet addiction is a fixed concept. He argues that Internet overuse is possible whenever people find a new on-line activity. They may be drawn to attractive sites such as chat-rooms, games or other websites. However, this pattern of using the Internet changes in stages, namely, from stage 1 (enchantment-obsession), by way of stage 2 (disillusionment-avoidance) to stage 3 (balance-normal). Some people who stay too long at stage 1 may need to help to reach stage 3.

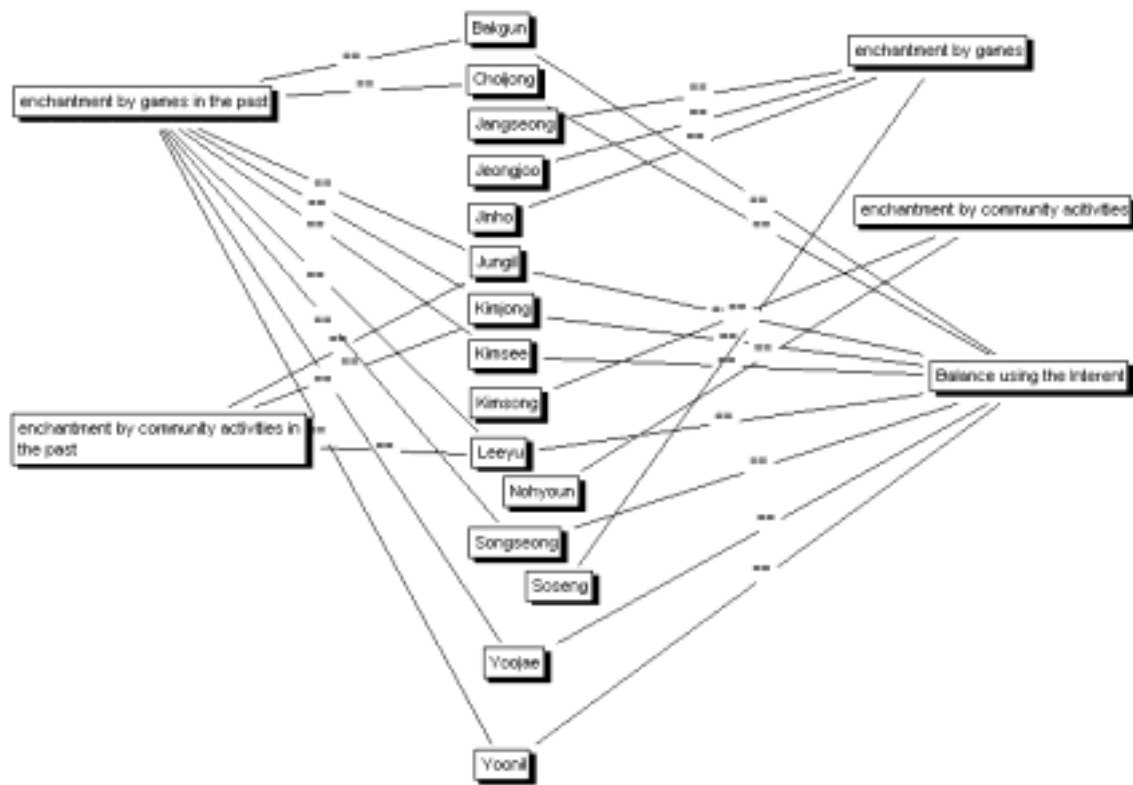
In the present research, interviewees were shown to remain at the stages mentioned by Grohol. Most interviewees are absorbed and enchanted by the Internet as such or absorbed and enchanted by specific games or community activities: this is stage 1, illustrated in Figures 9-2-1 and 9-2-2.

**Figure 9-2-1 Middle school interviewees' patterns in using the Internet**



\* The link symbol '=' means that the middle boxes (individual names) are associated with the bigger left-hand boxes (the former situation) or bigger right-hand boxes (the present situation)

**Figure 9-2-2 High school interviewees' patterns in using the Internet**



\* The link symbol '=' means that middle boxes (individual names) are associated with the bigger left-hand boxes (the former situation) or the bigger right-hand boxes (the present situation)

They may repeat the process of enchantment, avoidance and final balance. Alternatively, some of them achieve balance in using the Internet once they realise their situation. For example, some interviewees are still enchanted by the attractive factors of using the Internet. One of the interviewees (Baekyoung) is currently enthralled by Talesweaver, a PRG game, and wants to maintain his status in the game. Another interviewee (Jangseong) is equally enchanted by Starcraft, a strategy simulation game and wants to have fun competing with his friends or others. A female interviewee (Nohyun) spends much time every day at a café, as part of an Internet community, talking with friends

about movie stars. Another female interviewee (Joa) spends all her time searching homepages and reading new texts on community sites.

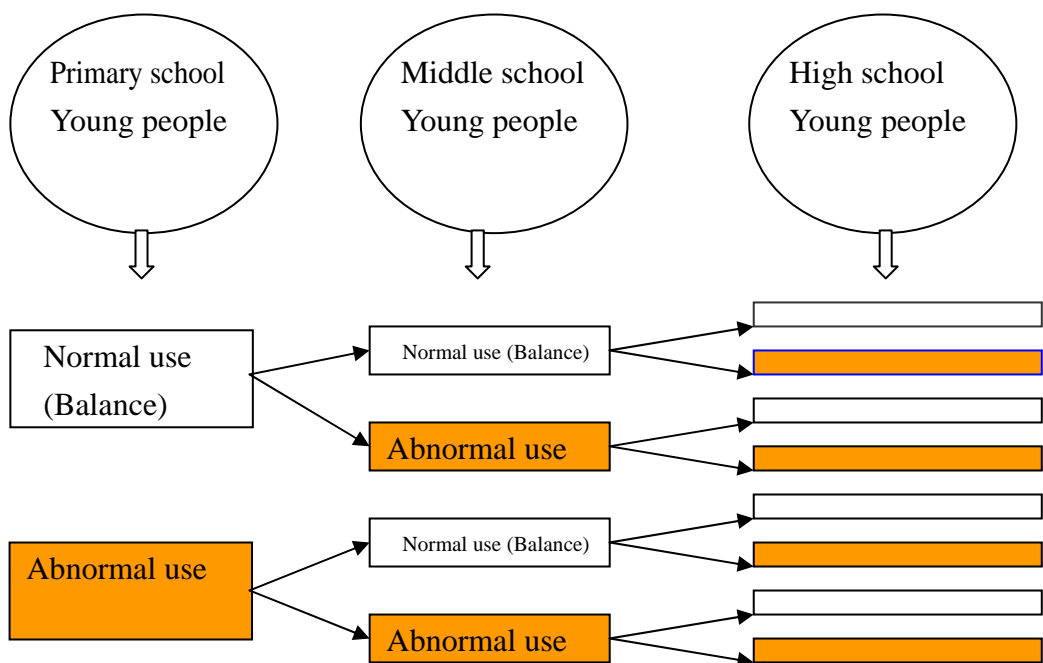
In contrast to these patterns, some interviewees have become disillusioned about specific games. For example, two interviewees (Choi Jong, Jung) have given up Lineage, an RPG game. Jung has already sold his items (equipment), having given up this game. A female interviewee (Kim Jong) gave up Diablo, a RPG game, after she became its best player and became aware of its futility. Even though they were once enthralled by specific games for some time and still enjoy using the Internet, they have changed and gained a sense of balance as time has passed.

Accordingly, on the basis of the interviewees' experiences, the interpretation of the 'Internet addiction situation' is a process involving a loss of balance in using the Internet. This interpretation seems to be closer to the reality of the Internet addiction situation among Korean young people than a fixed pathological concept is.

For example, in the present research, more of the high school interviewees than middle school interviewees seem to have completed the process of striking a balance (and become normal users). Their parents may want them to enter a famous university in order to be able to get a well-paid job and therefore they have to cut down their use of the Internet. These phenomena to do with balance have increased as they have grown older and come closer to preparing for the university entrance exams, as high school students are obliged to do. This process may be stem not from treatment by psychologists or psychiatrists but by their recognition of their situation, either imposed by someone else or led by themselves.

However, they may need to help to strike a balance earlier. For example, such help could come from parents’ proper recognition and the roles or systems prepared by the government to help them. This process of striking a balance may change continuously from children at primary school to young people at middle school and then at high school. It is illustrated in Figure 9-2-3.

**Figure 9-2-3 Internet addiction inclinations of young people**  
(Abnormal use      Normal use; balance)



For Internet addiction situations among young people, some of the connecting factors in the structure of the relationships surrounding them (as shown in Figure 9-1-2) need to be observed and discussed. Their relationships with their friends and peers foster their Internet addiction not only by supplying the factors which attract them to the Internet but also by forcing them to use them. In the process, the power between young people is produced and exercised through the mediation of the Internet (see Chapter 7.2).

### **9.3. Power relationships and factors causing loss of balance**

#### **9.3.1. The social circumstances prepared as distal cause**

##### **Society structures leading to inequality**

The Korean pursuit of education is sometimes expressed in the popular saying ‘the hell of entrance examinations’. In particular, this saying is widespread among young people when they reach third grade in high school (Lee J-K, 2002). They may feel that their whole life is a failure if they do not qualify for a place at a famous university (Park 1994). This feeling arises from their social environment and their parents’ educational ambition for them (see Chapter 7.1). For example, people without a university qualification may be disadvantaged when they look for a job or want to get married. Korean society has formed a kind of class system based on education or exams. There is a big gap between the salary of a university graduate and a non-graduate, even though the latter have had four extra years of work experience.

According to Song and Shin (2001) the average wage of men who have a high school diploma is a more or less half that paid to men with a degree (1995: 52.37%, 1996: 47.55%, 1997: 54.98%, and 1998: 61.13%). This is still a problematic issue in Korea, although the gap is decreasing a little. Education is one of the factors determining social class. It seems to have the power to set up social inequality; as Foucault mentions, exams lie at the centre of discipline (Foucault 1977).



### **Surveillance for ‘obedient children’**

Young people are trained to be obedient, loyal and respectful towards their parents and other elders, according to Confucian tradition, from their earliest days. It thus becomes difficult for them to disobey their parents and also their teachers, even though (or because) older people are generally authoritarian in outlook. In this situation, young people feel obliged to do well in exams, in particular the *SooneongGosa* (entrance exam to university). Also, they may be eager to break free away from this burden of parents’ and teachers’ surveillance (see Chapter 7.1). Parents may produce young people who have adapted to obedience because of parental surveillance, which, from the Foucauldian perspective, becomes a pattern of power (see Chapter 4.3).

There may come a time, however, when complying with their parents’ ambition for them becomes difficult. They may seek a ‘safety valve’ from the dominant system of school as well as from that of home. In this situation, which affects most young people, they may get together and exchange confidences about their problems during conversation at school or on the telephone at home. In this context, the emergence of the Internet may have been a great gift to young people, allowing them to exchange views by e-mail and in chat rooms. Since early childhood, even before the Internet became popular, young people had become computer literate.

### **Supply of IT derived from government**

Young people can nowadays use the Internet more easily than their parents because of their experience with computers. Government policies to encourage the use of Information Technology have made people very proficient at using the Internet. Young

people take this encouragement as a good chance to access the Internet regularly. For example, schoolteachers have been asking young people to use the Internet for their homework since the late 1990s. Some teachers even ask their students to submit homework through e-mail. Parents have felt obliged to buy high quality computers as well as fast Internet access systems under the social pressure to compete.

As a result, 94.8% of young people in the age range 6-19 were using a broadband system at home in 2003 (see Chapter 8.2). Almost all young people seem to use the high speed Internet system at home every day. They have focused on enjoying themselves on the Internet rather than studying. By complying with the government policy that every home should be supplied with IT, parents hope that their children will utilise their computer skills to improve their scholastic achievements. Instead, however, parents are being confronted by concern about Internet addiction due to the children's disregard of the government's intention that no-one should make disproportionate use of the Internet.

### **Strategy biased toward supporting companies**

The government's policy of promoting IT contributes by making high speed Internet and high quality computers so readily available, but it does nothing to prevent the consequences of doing this. Government ministries or politicians want all their achievements in office to be acknowledged, not least the provision of IT. It has been revealed that some ministries have competed with each other to invest in and support IT as an industry (see Chapter 8.2.). In such circumstances, policy makers prefer strategies which have obvious results. For example, they have published the numbers of people who use the broadband systems or of the computers which have been supplied to schools.

Thus, under the cloak of support from the government, companies can develop their business of supplying the hardware and also the software which is capable of destroying young people's sense of proportion. For example, game companies have made programs more violent or exciting for young people, without consideration of the dangers to them. Games and portal site companies have concentrated on encouraging young people to stay online with them for a long time as well as taking part in community activities.

### **9.3.2. The relational process as a moulder of the proximal cause**

#### **Power produced through the function of micro-practices**

The role of the Internet as a 'safety valve' from the dominant conditions seems to intensify the relationships between Internet users and their friends. Young people familiar with the Internet use it as a communication or entertainment tool not only to have virtual meetings (not real meetings) and chat with their peers/friends but also to make new friends. The various functions of the Internet have, since the late 1990s, when broadband was introduced, increased the time spent by young people online. The enlargement of broadband systems resulted from the government's aim of supplying high quality access as quickly as possible.

This gives young people entry to 'another world' which only they understand and where they make new relationships with others on the Internet, through the Internet or by the Internet. In the present research, it is called 'their own world'. Hence, there may exist *zzangs* who become popular among young people because they can make

themselves popular through the attractive programs and, at the other extreme, the *hujubs* who are mocked for their poor Internet skills. Young people may form groups in ‘their own world’ with people whose usage patterns on the Internet are similar. This group becomes a class, a group smaller than a class or a group larger than a class. In the groups, some young people may earn respect for their ability in a game, a community activity or in dealing with the topics common to all the members of the group (see Chapter 7.2. and Chapter 8.1).

This situation seems to produce new power in the micro-practices functioning through the details of their behaviours and conducted through the mediation of the Internet. Young people may be categorised by their ability in several fields through the Internet. This forms a power nexus in the young people’s everyday lives. In the power relationships, young people may become individual subjects who are subjugated and made the subject of someone else (see Chapter 4.3). Accordingly, some of them, such as the *zzangs*, need to maintain their status. In contrast, others may try to transcend their low status as *hujubs* in the pattern. Both need time and effort to do this in ‘their own world’.

### **The ubiquity of power**

Young people may meet every day in school, the neighbourhood or for other activities such as private institutes for learning English, mathematics and so on. In addition, they meet through the chat programs such as Buddybuddy or MSN which connect automatically when they turn on the computer. They may feel these to be more convenient than telephoning their friends because it is more private and their parents do not interfere (Chapter 6.1).

As mentioned above, they need to spend more time using the Internet so as not to lose their power relationship in 'their own world'. In this process, young people may not consider some things in 'their own world' illegal or unsafe. For example, they may exchange data copied without permission, or pornographic files. Sometimes they use hacking programs to obtain items (equipment) from others (see Chapter 8.2). To upgrade their level in games more quickly, they may use illicit methods such as macro programs (see Chapter 7.2.3). These processes may remind us that power comes from everywhere and flows continuously (Foucault 1978).

### **Incitement of the traditional hierarchical structure**

The hieratical structure of the Confucian outlook is still spread throughout Korean society including the business sector and the state sector. Most people are interested in other people's status as well as their own. This pattern applies also to young people, as revealed in their being ranked according to their educational achievements. Young people are also trained by their parents to think a great deal of the need to raise their ranking in school. This concern to do their best to improve their rank or status in relation to others is widespread among young people and also adults in Korea. They are used to comparing themselves and competing with others to rise in rank.

As regards the Internet, this pattern has spread to games or acting online communities. For example, RPG games are composed of competitive elements such as players' levels or ranks in the same service. Strategy games show the players' ratio of wins to losses before they choose their opponents. In the Internet communities, users may be encouraged to improve their rank in a field of activity. This structure seems to be

aggravated by profit-seeking companies, due to the need to maintain a competitive mindset for the sake of ambition. In particular, Korean RPG games are conspicuous for their continuous incitement to users to attain a higher position.

This level of infinite systems with no natural ending may sweep users in and absorb them in the programs, in particular, the young people who live in the power structure of 'their own world'. They are already inclined to compare their own status with that of their friends/peers. They may incite or be incited through the system of levels and ranks systems and this means that they cannot help increasing the time that they spend on the Internet, mostly on programs which have a system of levels or ranks. These factors may cause young people to be absorbed in the Internet more and more.

### **Powerlessness to discontinue relationships**

Most young people have already spent a good deal of time online during the period when their parents left them alone, after their first use of the Internet and before their parents recognised the side effects. They have already felt the spell of the Internet. Nowadays, it may be not easy for young people to cut their habit of using the Internet.

They think it is fun to build relationships among their friends/peers in this way. If they stop using the Internet they feel 'out of it'; they find themselves not up-to-date enough in their knowledge to talk to their friends/peers in 'their own world'. Moreover, if they should stop for a long time, they might feel *wangdda*, isolated from the group of friends or from 'their own world'. It is a kind of threat of isolation or exclusion from

peers. With this threat, young people may be repressed by a power which is already to a large extent from 'their own world'. By this power and with this threat, young people feel that they cannot give up the Internet. They prefer *zzang* to *hujub* and would rather be respected than neglected. They have competed with their friends in the structure of power which maintains *zzang* and *hujub* on the Internet. Their struggle to become *zzang* or not to become *hujub* may destroy their sense of proportion and lead to a pattern of addiction.

### ***Inciting minds not to being isolated***

Companies which run portal sites and chat-rooms provide attractive features such as 'Avatars' which may look like the user's own representative figure. They supply Avatars to all users so that they can be brought into e-mails, chat-rooms or an Internet community, and can be fully decorated, from an almost naked state. Some young people take such an interest in their figures that they are drawn into the process of paying to decorate them. This too encourages competitiveness among young people. The items for decoration, such as clothes, shoes and accessories, are chosen by these young people as birthday presents or ways to celebrate special days. Through their relationships in 'their own world' some popular young people may receive many of these items and they also share them with their friends. Young people who do not receive them as gifts can buy them from companies and thus avoid revealing their unpopularity or cutting a shabby figure online, for they may feel isolated or shy if they have no decorated Avatars. In this process, companies may trigger a pattern among young people who use the Internet, giving them the impulse to enhance their relationships through these items of decoration.

Some young people feel that they must check their Avatar every day by visiting the

programs or sites. If they miss a day, they get curious about what has been happening there. Accordingly, they feel an irresistible urge to go on the Internet every day. These attitudes may be factors in addiction because they steadily build up to an excessive interest.

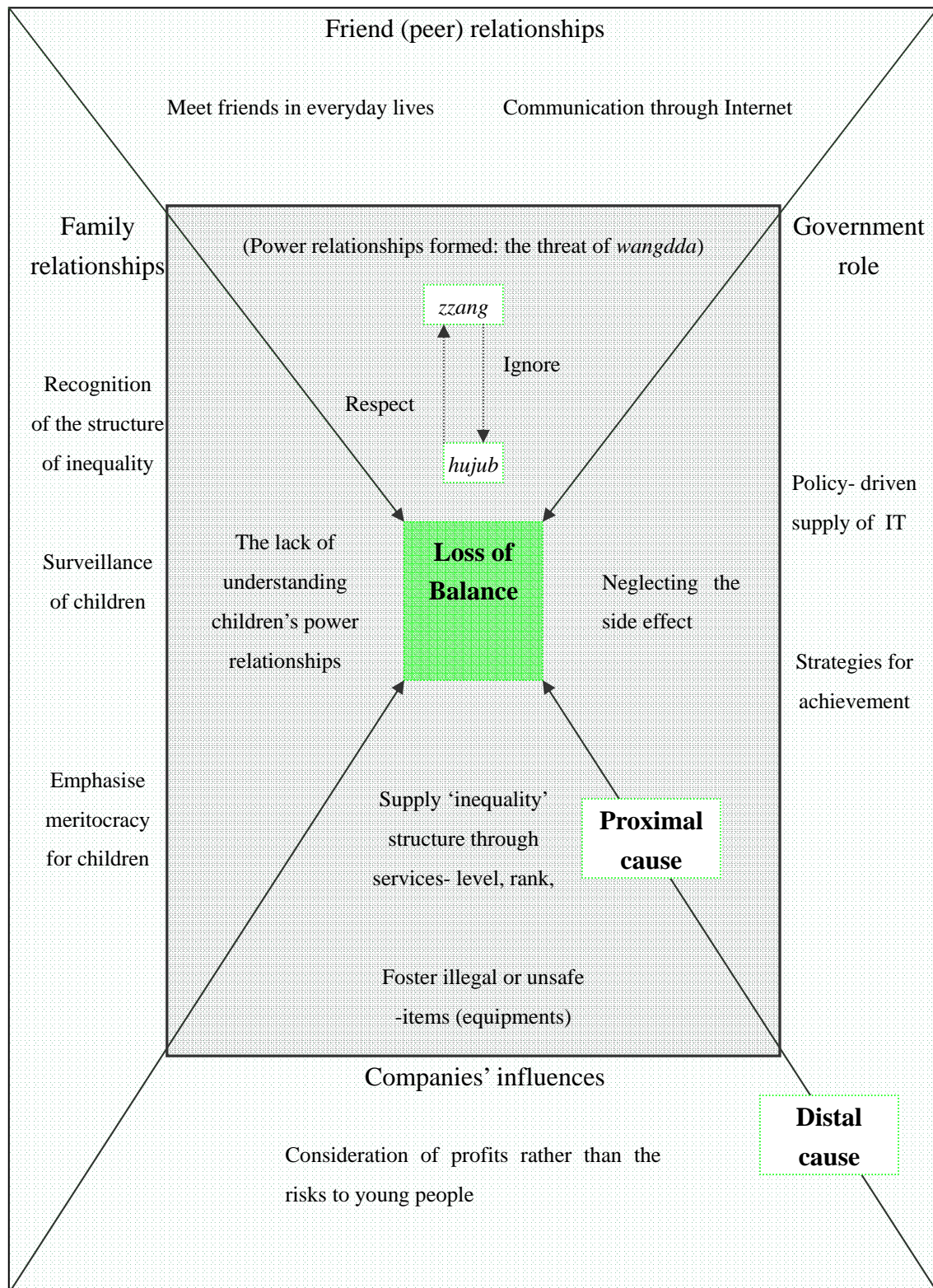
### ***Power structure on the basis of items (equipment)***

So far, this chapter has discussed mainly the concept of being entertained or having fun through the Internet. But the Internet has another profitable factor for young people in Korea. For example, RPG games have basic elements consisting of game items (equipment), such as weapons, which make a Character stronger and help him to upgrade faster. In ‘their own world’ people at a low level, *hujubs*, may choose illegitimate means to raise their level. Instead of spending time on upgrading their Character they can buy high quality items which will have the same effect. Characters with high quality items (which are helpful for killing the monsters in the games) can upgrade their levels very quickly.

Conversely, people who already have high quality items can get money for selling them. Therefore young people who want to make money spend immense amounts of time to obtain items through the games. The companies have a strategy of supplying certain rare high quality items and the struggle to obtain these seems to foster another structure of inequality among young people. Thus the system designed by the companies actually intensifies the power structure in the games.



**Figure 9-3-1) Distal and proximal cause for Internet addiction**



Accordingly, young people have stayed in this dangerous environment, which for complex reasons has made it all too easy to lose a sense of proportion, summed up as the distal and proximal factors shown in Figure 9-3-1.

#### **9.4. Evaluation of this research**

This research has been carried out to establish the concealed truth of the Internet addiction situation among young people, using the Foucauldian perspective of power. To understand the social reality, I have dealt with the processes, relationships and feelings concerned, through interviews, themselves part of social reality.

Thus, the relationships mentioned above include the relationships between me and the interviewees. Essentially, it is a sensitive relationship between a researcher and a number of young people. The researcher depends on their wish to speak their minds openly, for otherwise the research may lose focus and direction. It is essential for the researcher and the interviewees to be in tune with each other and for the researcher to prepare topics which encourage them to share their feelings and understandings with him. For example, talking about topics such as the World Cyber Games and others was helpful in establishing a relationship at the start of the interviews.

The data were collected using a variety of approaches and data collection methods. There were some difficulties, owing to the time limitation for the research, and small mistakes, such as the Internet survey which was completed by a smaller number of students than expected. For example, preparation for the Internet survey was delayed;

some questions on item trading needed time so as to include the experiences narrated by interviewees. However, the mistakes themselves also helped me learn and acquire new experience of research in the process of overcoming the problems. The Internet survey needed more time to prepare than the off-line survey. Off-line questions required changes to make them suitable for the Internet. It would have been better to make the Internet survey simpler by incorporating an easy click response.

This research was carried out so as to collect data from several directions in order to approach a real understanding. For example, stories of Internet addiction situations were collected from young interviewees and parents. In addition the specialists' experiences were included, namely, those of psychiatrists and counsellors who were involved in treatment and counselling in Korea. This contributed to a more detailed understanding of the social reality of Internet addiction situations.

The interviews for young people included both narrative and in-depth approaches. To establish the patterns in the young people's historical process, I tried to find individual histories of using the Internet. The first two sub-sessions were mainly used to listen to stories of using the Internet and were very meaningful in understanding how the processes had changed according to different conditions and different levels of education. After sub-sessions one and two, I continued the interviewing to supplement and trace the ways by which they had become absorbed in the Internet.

The school achievements of the twenty-five young interviewees were generally good; namely, excellent (rank below 10%) 5 (20%); good (rank 11-30%) 11 (44%); middle

(rank 31-70%) 8 (32%); poor (rank 71-90%) 0; very poor (rank 91%-100%) 1(4%). This result is not intentional. This reason reflects the fact that I asked teachers to choose young interviewees who would attend voluntarily, rather than by coercion. Usually, students who have good school scores seem to show co-operation towards teachers. In the Korean situation, students with high school scores are prone to follow their teacher's guidance.

Another reason is that, according to one psychiatrist in an interview (Hyn), Internet addition patterns require a certain level of intelligence in the user. For example, the strategies of games are very complicated and need intelligent decisions in order to reach high levels and compete with other users. However, if this research is to be extended at some future date, more young people and a more even spread of school achievement among the students attending is required. Also, the research will need some young people to take part who have left school due to Internet addiction.

The present research mainly dealt with games, community activities and chatting among young people as the addictive factors. This is based on the results of the preliminary survey and pilot research. However, on-line pornographic searching and sexual activity may be other factors for addiction (see Chapter 7.3.3). This research could not approach these problems in detail. If I had emphasised them, some of the concealed truths about young people might not have been revealed. Young people do not want to talk about the topic of pornography, even though they are absorbed in it. According to the CIPC counsellor (Soo), young people are inclined to avoid face to face counselling for pornographic addiction situations. That is to say, if I had tried to get information on this point, I might have lost an important area such as 'their own world'.

Hitherto, there has been little consensus among psychological approaches on the cause and the consequences of Internet addiction (Chapter 2.2.2). Taking an academic approach made the causes of these Internet addiction situations seem complex and very wide. I suggest that further study should firstly find the causes and consequences of these specific factors and deal with each factor's causes and consequences (for example, as a game, an item of pornography or a community) before linking them together in a strategy to reduce the problems.

Moreover, young people's addiction to pornography is a widespread problem which is in itself a subject for further research. Another point which deserves more research is the extent to which the supplying of Internet broadband systems contributes to the range of addiction situations. This may help to predict the problems which lead to addiction situations and more suitable forms of prevention in future for the side effects of using the Internet.

In this research, there is a considerable amount of interview data. I used the ATLAS.ti program to categorise data for analysis. The advantage of using ATLAS.ti is that it is possible to input Korean words even though the coding was made and the theory developed in English. It meant that the original meaning and raw words were kept and developed for meaningful analysis. Also, the individual situations of enchantment (e.g., being absorbed by an attractive game or community activity) are seen easily in a network diagram.

For the survey data, the SPSS program was essential for understanding the young people's addiction situations and linking to the serious problems. For example, I linked item trading and addiction situations by a cross-tabulation function. Some other phenomena were also traced through SPSS. For example, addiction situations may correspond to parenting styles, such as the father's attitude. However, in the current research this is an ancillary factor in understanding young people's addiction situations, namely, a possible way of accounting for loss of balance rather than an essential consequence.

This research starts with recognition of the power relationships which lead to Internet addiction situations. Whilst the psychological approach suggests counselling as a treatment for addiction symptoms, this focuses on treatment after the onset of addiction patterns rather than preventing the problems themselves. This research suggests that a balance can be struck in using the Internet with the participation of young people who have experienced the problems, since the addiction situation is interpreted as the result of a process involving loss of balance in using the Internet. This way will be related to changes in policy and cooperation with parents and companies.

#### **9.5. Implications of this research: recommendations**

Expanding the use of the Internet cannot be avoided and thus more side effects as well as more positive effects can be expected. However, it is a characteristic of young people to be unable to predict bad effects maturely. The following recommendations are included, mainly ways to participate in the young people's concerns and to relate to their lives so as to understand the real situation and reduce the problems.

## **Young people's participation**

The starting point is that adults, including policy makers, need to recognise the social reality of the side effects as well as the benefits of the Internet. That is to say, the government needs to be aware of young people's hidden behaviour in using the Internet. The government re-established a 'Framework Act on Juveniles' in February 2004 so as to lead young people towards participation in the process of policy-making. In article 2, this act states the principle of providing young people with the opportunity to take part in forming such policies. In particular, the Internet can provide practical opportunities for young people to take part in discussions and to make suggestions for the government's approach to and methods of preparation.

The government should suggest and prepare a policy whereby young people themselves try to reduce their problems through taking an active part in it themselves. The policy needs new directions through recognition of the changing circumstances. Young people should take part in the policy-making process through discussions.

Through the Internet, young people can take part freely if they have the opportunity. Young people as users, are necessary in forming the youth policy for Internet addiction situations. Those involved in the new phenomena of the Internet need to listen to actual experiences and hear about the dangerous aspects of the Internet from other users. For example, the government's policy for item trading has been hesitant. Participation and discussion should follow to make the process a more open one.

## **Recognition of power relationship among young people**

Young people's circumstances have changed rapidly. They have formed power relationships 'in their world' mediated by the new circumstances of the Internet. Accordingly, new approaches by the government need to start to re-consider the way in which teachers and parents approach education and parenting. That is to say, new approaches are firstly to recognise the power relationships, and in particular the peer relationships surrounding young people which lead to the loss of balance in using the Internet.

Secondly, these efforts need to continue as voluntary approaches rather than to be made over a short period. Such efforts to understand young people's power networks could perhaps be spread by NGOs with the support of the government.

With the recognition of these power relationships, the government needs to suggest to the companies, as suppliers of the cause of the problems, the development of attractive programs which could play a part in preventing addiction situations. They should keep in mind, within such power relationships, that it is not helpful to force and interrupt young people. Instead, teachers and parents may need to suggest and facilitate indirectly.

## **Using the young people's experiences**

The direction of policy should be focused on the experience of users, particularly young people. The government and youth agencies supply young people with 'doors



and spaces' in cyberspace mainly so as to let them solve or reduce the problems by themselves. For example, the young people could participate as 'volunteer helpers', would be those who have experienced Internet addiction situations and suffered *Wangdda* isolation among their peers. They rather than adults can help other young people who suffer from the same problems. They may suggest the ways to overcome or reduce the suffering of young people in power relationships.

Of course, the government and the agencies should choose 'volunteer helpers' among young people who are trusted. The government can manage the specific Internet sites or the board of the sites so as to allow the exchange of ideas between young people who have experienced the problems and young people who are suffering from them.

In addition, the government may suggest that companies form 'volunteer cyber police' composed of users who are mainly young people, in order to recognise problems before others can and propose suitable ways of prevent crime. This needs cooperation between the companies and cyber police. For example, game companies need to keep order in the games in order to prevent violence and abuse among users during play. Moreover, the cyber police should work towards reducing cyber crime rather than catching offenders. They should inform young people what actions are prohibited and reassure them that young people do not generally commit crimes. Young people are eager to gain high level or rank on the Internet. These trends are remarkably clear in the peer relationships. They may try to trade fraudulently items, even though this is against the law.

### **A single unified youth policy**

Hitherto, the Korean government has mainly taken a psychological approach to Internet addiction situations. This may be effective for a small percentage of the young people who attend treatment and counselling sessions. However, it is not a fundamental approach to prevention. One reason for the limited policy response has been that the MIC was made responsible for preventing Internet addiction situations.

MIC has successfully promoted the supply of IT and supported companies in developing the IT industry and markets. However, the policies relating to the prevention of Internet addiction are only a small proportion of MIC's main work. In particular, the organisation has no experience of making policies which protect young people from harmful influences.

MCT has been responsible for the policy of improving support for young people, such as activities for leisure and culture, and for training. At the same time the Commission on Youth Protection in the Prime Minister's department has been responsible for protecting young people from harmful influences such as pornography and crime. Protection and fostering policies need to be brought together under one ministry, as otherwise in certain areas policies may be duplicated or ambiguous.

In addition, policies for the prevention of Internet addiction should be included in this ministry which would then be a unified body in implementing its policies. From time to time ambiguity in certain policy areas for young people has delayed the resolution of problems. For example, no adequate solution of the problems in game item trading has yet been found.

## **Reducing inequality factors and promoting balance**

The government needs to study and reduce society's repressive effects on young people, even though the Confucian hierarchical culture within Korea imposes some limitations. The traditional culture has become diluted as Korean society became industrialised and urbanised. In particular, the government could try to reduce the factors of inequality which may produce power relationships artificially. For example, there is a big gap between the salary of any university graduate and any non-graduate. This has become the basis of every parent's idea of a meritocracy. As a result, parents are forcing their children to have private tuition.

With cooperative parents and the steady expansion of off-line opportunities, young people need to meet and take part in activities with others. If they did they would not be so tempted to become absorbed in Internet activities. At the same time, the government should endeavour to improve parents' Internet ability and interest generally. To be able to control their children suitably, parents themselves should try to be part of the mainstream; they should give more attention to the Internet and increase their own skills and interests.

Governments might also cooperate in a global system to prevent the problems and crimes associated with using the Internet. Information on and experience of side effects such as Internet addiction situations related, for example, to games and pornography could be exchanged. Otherwise, the side effects of the Internet may become a problematic global issue.

## **APPENDIX 1)**

### **Young's measuring tool (1996)**

1. Do you feel preoccupied with the Internet (think about previous on-line activity or anticipate next on-line session)?
2. Do you feel the need to use the Internet with increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction?
3. Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use?
4. Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop Internet use?
5. Do you stay on-line longer than originally intended?
6. Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of the Internet?
7. Have you lied to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet?
8. Do you use the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphoric mood (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, depression)?

[People who answered 'yes' in the research to five or more of the questions were regarded as addicted Internet users. Others were classified as normal Internet users.]

## **APPENDIX 2)**

### **Wang's measuring tool (2001)**

- 1) I have spent more than three continuous hours on the net at least twice in the last 4 weeks.
- 2) More than once I have been late for other appointments because I was spending time on the net.
- 3) When I am away from school I usually look for an alternative method of getting on the net.
- 4) Others, whom I trust, have told me I spend too much time on the net.
- 5) I have tried to prevent others from knowing how much time I spend on the net.
- 6) My grades have declined because I have been putting more time into net-related activities.
- 7) If I have not logged on for a while, I find it difficult not to think about what is waiting for me.
- 8) I have tried to spend less time on the net, but have found it difficult to cut back.
- 9) I have got into trouble with my school teacher or parents because of being on-line.
- 10) I have missed classes or work because of on-line activities.

[People who answered 'yes' in the research to four or more of the questions were regarded as Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD).

People who answered 'yes' between one and three were regarded as light IAD.

Others (zero) were classified as non IAD]

### **APPENDIX 3)**

#### **CIPC measuring tool (2002)**

##### **Part A.**

1. Nowadays I lead an irregular life due to using the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
2. Due to using the computer/Internet my health seems to have deteriorated.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
3. My school score has gone down due to using the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
4. I suffer headaches due to using the Internet too much.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
5. I have been unable to do my work because of using the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
6. I often doze during lessons in school because I was using the Internet until late.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
7. My eye power has deteriorated due to spending too much time on the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
8. Even though I have many things to do, I opt to use the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
9. There are some troubles with my family due to the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

##### **Part B.**

10. Sometimes I feel as if I were using the Internet even when I am not.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
11. I feel as if I am listening to the sound of the Internet even though I am not. I  
also dream about using the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
12. I do immoral things due to using the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

##### **Part C.**

13. I feel very free when using the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

14. When I use the Internet, I feel better and more interested.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
15. I feel more confident when using the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
16. I feel very relaxed when using the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
17. I can feel stress disappearing when I use the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
18. There is no fun in my life if there is no Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

Part D.

19. I feel bored and have no fun if I cannot use the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
20. Life is hard to bear if I cannot use the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
21. When I cannot use the Internet, I fret and am restless.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
22. Even when I am not using the Internet, I think about it.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
23. I cannot quit the Internet even if it gives me problems.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
24. If people interrupt me when I am using the Internet, I become irritable and angry.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

Part E.

25. People who I've met through the Internet treat me better than people off-line.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
26. I have made friends through the Internet.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
27. More people are friendly to me on-line than off-line.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true
28. I relate to people better by meeting them through the Internet than to people I meet off-line.  
1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

29. I would like to behave off-line as I do on-line.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

Part F.

30. I have had to conceal the time I spend using the Internet.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

31. I have omitted classes (lessons) in order to use the Internet.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

32. I use the Internet secretly from my parents.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

33. I have had to spend more money due to using the Internet.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

34. I have intended to keep my use of the Internet secret.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

35. I have at times not kept promises because of being absorbed on the Internet.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

Part G.

36. Once I begin to use the Internet, I spend more time than I expected.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

37. When I stop using the Internet, I then feel the need to use it again.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

38. I tried to reduce the time I spent on the Internet, but I couldn't manage it.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

39. I think that I need to reduce the time I spend on the Internet.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true

40. Other people point out to me that I am spending too much time on the Internet.

1) Not at all 2) sometimes true 3) very often true 4) always true



- A: Disturbance of Adaptive Function
- B: Disturbance of Reality Testing
- C: Addictive Automatic Thought
- D: Withdrawal
- F: Virtual Interpersonal Relationship
- G: Deviant Behaviour
- H: Tolerance

#### Degrees of Internet addiction for middle and high school young people

	Dangerous user group score (sum)	Potential dangerous user group score	Not addicted group score
Total score	Above 108(160)	95 107	Below 95
a) Disturbance of adaptive functions (9 items)	Above 26 (36)	23 25	Below 23
d) Withdrawal (6 items)	Above 18 (24)	16 17	Below 16
g) Tolerance (5 items)	Above 17 (20)	15 16	Below 15

- Dangerous user group: total score above 108 or even though total is not above 108, all of the following: a) disturbance of adaptive functions, d) withdrawal and h) tolerance including dangerous scores
- Potential dangerous group: total score 95-107 or even though total is below 95, one of the following three symptoms: a) disturbance of adaptive functions, d) withdrawal or g) tolerance including potential dangerous scores.
- Non addicted group: total score below 95, or none of the a) disturbance of adaptive functions, d) withdrawal and h) tolerance including addicted group scores (apart from the above 2 groups)

#### **APPENDIX 4)**

##### **Letter asking for cooperation of the research**

## **APPENDIX 5)**

### **Interview method design**

#### **Data gathering from young people**

##### **Introduction**

Introduce individuals (interviewer and interviewee)

Talking about topics familiar to young people, for relaxation

Background information for the research

Check agreement

- 1) if you want to begin the interview now
- 2) if you don't want to answer some questions, you can pass them or stop the interview  
(including the questionnaire and CIPC measuring tool for Internet addiction, after the interview)
- 3) if I can use a tape recorder

#### **Additional material**

- 1. Interview card**
- 2. Questionnaires for interview(A+B) of the SURVEY(A+B+C)**
- 3. CIPC measuring tool for Internet addiction**

## INTERVIEW CARD

### Sub-session 1 (initial elaboration of story around topics)

Asking about the interviewee's history (including personal impressions) of using the computer/Internet in his/her life from the first stage until now; considering 3 stages:

Stage 1 : as a beginner

Stage 2 : at a level of enjoying using the Internet/computer

Stage 3 : present situation

Stage 1 (as a beginner) examples

1) When did you or your family buy a computer and install an Internet line (phone or broadband) at home?

- Process of development after this.

2) Why did you or your family purchase a computer and install the Internet to begin with?

- Purpose of buying a computer and of installing the Internet.

3) How did you learn to use a computer and the Internet?

- Where, by whom, and so on.

Stage 2 (enjoyable use of computer/Internet) examples

1) What do you like doing on the Internet/computer?

2) What is your favourite program?

Stage 3 (present situation) examples

Advantages in your life of using the Internet/computer.

Disadvantages in your life of using the Internet/computer.

(Study, family relationships, side effects, addiction...)

### Sub-session 2 (extracting more stories from the topics)

Asking for the interviewee's story (including personal impressions) of influencing and being influenced by others in using the Internet/computer.

Stage 1 : as a beginner

Stage 2 : at a level of enjoying using the Internet/computer

Stage 3 : present situation

Examples: Friend/peer relationships in using the Internet

Family relationships in using the Internet

Attractive programs: games, chatting, game items, Avatar, community groups

### **Sub-session 3**

(Further questions considering the contents of sub-sessions 1 and 2)

#### **Factors**

##### **1. Circumstances when using computer/Internet**

1.1 Broadband system

1.2 Computer circumstances

1.3 Main location of the computer

##### **2. Relationship between the computer/Internet and education**

2.1 Educational purposes

2.2 Using program for study

##### **3. Using the computer/Internet for relaxation, fun, and communication**

###### **3.1 Games**

Types of program

Purpose or intention behind playing Internet games

Game items (exchange, trading and fraudulent trading)

Game ability, the games and students' lives

Controlling students' use of time for games

Friends (peers) and games

###### **3.2. Chatting, e-mail or communications**

What programs? With whom? Why? Avatars

###### **3.3. Exchange data and user groups**

###### **3.4. Searching for information through the Internet**

#### **Relationships .....with friends and family**

##### **4. The computer/Internet and relationships**

#### 4.1. Relationships with friends/peers

Is 'using the Internet' important to maintaining relationships among friends?  
Why? How is the 'using of the Internet' related to friendships?

#### 4.2. Family relationships

How does 'using the Internet' affect family relationships?  
Parents' attitudes to controlling the use of the Internet

#### 5. How do Internet/computers influence your everyday life, such as studying or relationships?

Positive factors, Negative factors

### **Inconveniences/ Disturbances as a result**

#### 6. Effects upon your health

What kind of disturbance does the Internet (present and past) make? Why?

#### 7. If you cannot use the Internet/computer, what problems do you have?

#### 8. If you can use the Internet freely, how long would you spend on it? Can you limit your use of the Internet?

#### 9. Absorbing, addiction situations

### **Suggestions**

Side effects of using the computer/Internet - addiction

## APPENDIX 6)

### Questionnaire for SURVEY (A+B+C) and young interviewee (A+B) (Including CIPC measuring tool)

#### A. About yourself

1. What is your grade in school?
  - 1) middle school 1
  - 2) middle school 2
  - 3) middle school 3
  - 4) high school 1
  - 5) high school 2
  - 6) high school 3
- 1-1. Are you? 1) male 2) female
2. How old are you? (   )  
How many years have you used computers? (   )  
How many years have you used the Internet? (   )
3. Where do you live?
  - 1) South Seoul
  - 2) North Seoul
4. What is your rank by score (record) in school?
  - 1) excellent (1-10%)
  - 2) good (11-30%)
  - 3) middle (31-70%)
  - 4) poor (71-90%)
  - 5) very poor (91-99%)

#### B. About your parents' interest in your use the Internet

5. Your parents' ages (If they do not mind)? father (   ), mother (   )
6. Do you live with your parents?
  - 1) I live with my father and mother.
  - 2) only with my father
  - 3) only with my mother
  - 4) I don't live with my parents.
    - 4-1) I live with my relatives.
    - 4-2) I live with carers/guardians.
  - 5) I live by myself.
7. Do your parents use the Internet well?

	Father	Mother
He or she cannot use the Internet.		
He or she is a beginner on the Internet.		
His or her Internet ability is less than mine.		
His or her Internet ability is similar to mine.		
His or her Internet ability is better than mine.		

8. Do your parents control your use of the Internet?
  - 1) They do not attempt to control my use of the Internet.
  - 2) Sometimes they suggest that I control my use of the Internet.
  - 3) They actively control my use of the Internet.
9. Who is more influential in your life? 1) Father 2) Mother

10. Which number is nearest your parents' parenting styles in the following examples?

Parenting styles	father	mother
<b>1) Authoritarian style - high demand and low responsiveness.</b> He or she attempts to shape, control, and evaluate my behaviour and attitudes in accordance with a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority. He or she also values obedience as a virtue and favours punitive, forceful measures to curb my will at points where my actions or beliefs conflict with what he or she thinks is right conduct.		
<b>2) Authoritative style - high demand and high responsiveness</b> He or she attempts to direct my activities but in a rational, issue-oriented manner. Also, he or she encourages verbal give and take, and shares with me the reasoning behind policies and values. He or she values both expressive and instrumental attributes, both autonomous self will and disciplined conformity		
<b>3) Permissive style - low demand and high responsiveness.</b> He or she attempts to behave in a non-punitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner toward my impulses, desires, and actions. He or she consults with me about policy decisions and gives explanations for family rules. He or she allows me to regulate my own activities as much as possible, avoids the exercise of control, and does not encourage me to obey externally defined standards. He or she attempts to use reason but not overt power to accomplish his/her ends.		
<b>4) Neglectful style - low demand and low responsiveness.</b> He or she demonstrates low levels of control over me. Also, he or she shows a low level of acceptance of my behaviour and attitudes.		

### C. About Game items (equipment)

11. Have you ever play computer games? 1) yes 2) no
12. Have you ever play on-line games? 1) yes 2) no
13. Have you experienced item trading during the games? 1) yes 2) no
- 13-1. Have you experienced the loss of items through fraud? 1) yes 2) no
- 13-2. Have you experience of obtaining items by fraudulent exchange? 1) yes 2) no
14. Have you experienced buying game items with real money? 1) yes 2) no
- 14.1. Have you experienced the loss of money by fraudulent trading when you bought game items with real money? 1) yes 2) no
15. Have you experienced selling game items with real money? 1) yes 2) no
- 15.1. Have you experienced to make someone the loss of items by fraudulent trading when you sold game items with real money? 1) yes 2) no
- 15.2. Have you experienced taking someone's money by fraudulent trading when you sold game items with real money? 1) yes 2) no



## APPENDIX 7)

### Interviewees with young people and parents

#### Young people

**Ahnjin** is a middle school 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 13-year-old boy. He achieves excellent school scores. He has been using the Internet for 4 years, with 2 years on a modem line and 2 years on a on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with authoritative parents and a younger sister.

**Baekbyoung** is a middle school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 13-year-old boy. He achieves good school scores. He has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 4 years on a on a broadband system at home. He lives on the south side of Seoul with authoritarian parents and an elder brother.

**Bakgun** is a high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 17-year-old boy. He achieves good school scores. He has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 4 years on a on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with authoritative parents.

**Choijong** is a high school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 18-year-old boy. He achieves good school scores. He has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 4 years on a on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with permissive parents and an elder sister.

**Gyono** is a middle school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 15-year-old boy. He achieves middle level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 4 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 3 years on a on a broadband system at home. He lives on the south side of Seoul with permissive parents and two elder sisters.

**Hanseol** is a middle school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 14-year-old girl. She achieves excellent level school scores. She has been using the Internet for 3 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 2 years on a on a broadband system at home. She lives on the north side of Seoul with permissive parent and a younger brother.

**Hanseong** is a middle school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 15-year-old boy. He achieves middle level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 4 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 3 years on a on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with authoritative parents and a younger sister.

**Jangseong** is a high school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 18-year-old boy. He achieves good level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 6 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 5 years on a on a broadband system. He lives on the south side of Seoul with authoritative parents and an elder brother.

**Jeongjoo** is a high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 16-year-old boy. He achieves middle level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 4 years on a on a broadband system at home. He lives on the south side of Seoul with permissive parents and a younger brother.

**Jinho** is a high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 17-year-old boy. He achieves middle level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 4 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 3 years on a on a broadband system at home. He lives on the south side of Seoul with an authoritarian father and a permissive mother.

**Joa** is a middle school 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 13-year-old girl. She achieves excellent level school scores. She has been using the Internet for 3 years on a on a broadband system at home. She lives on the south side of Seoul with an authoritative father and a permissive mother.

**Jungil** is a high school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 18-year-old girl. She achieves excellent level school scores. She has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 4 years on a broadband system at home. She lives on the south side of Seoul with permissive parents and a younger brother and an elder sister.

**Jung** is a middle school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 15-year-old boy. He achieves good level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 4 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 3 years on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with an authoritarian father, an authoritative mother and a younger brother.

**Kimjong** is a high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 17-year-old girl. She achieves middle level school scores. She has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 4

years on a broadband system at home. She lives on the north side of Seoul with permissive parents and an elder brother.

**Kimmin** is a middle school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 15-year-old girl. She achieves good school scores. She has been using the Internet for 4 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 3 years on a broadband system at home. She lives on the south side of Seoul with an authoritative father, a permissive mother and an elder brother.

**Kimsee** is a high school 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 16-year-old boy. He achieves middle level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 4 years on a broadband system at home. He lives on the south side of Seoul with a permissive mother.

**Kimsong** is a high school 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 17-year-old girl. She achieves excellent school scores. She has been using the Internet for 4 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 3 years on a broadband system at home. She lives on the south side of Seoul with authoritative parents and a younger brother.

**Leeyu** is a high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 17-year-old girl. She achieves good level school scores. She has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 2 years on a modem line and 3 years on a broadband system at home. She lives on the north side of Seoul with an authoritative father, a permissive mother and an elder sister.

**Nohyoun** is a high school 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 15-year-old girl. She achieves good level school scores. She has been using the Internet for 3 years, with 3 years on a broadband system at home. She lives on the north side of Seoul with a permissive father, an authoritative mother, a younger brother and an elder sister.

**Songseong** is a high school 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 16-year-old boy. He achieves good school scores. He has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 1 year on a modem line and 4 years on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with an authoritative mother and a younger brother.

**Soseong** is a high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 16-year-old boy. He achieves good school scores. He has been using the Internet for 5 years, with 3 years on a modem line and 2 years on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with an authoritarian father, a permissive mother and a younger sister.

**Yannjin** is a middle school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 15-year-old boy. He achieves middle level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 4 years, with 2 years on a modem line and 2 years on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with a permissive father, an authoritative mother and a younger sister.

**Yangso** is a middle school 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 13-year-old girl. She achieves middle level school scores. She has been using the Internet for 3 years on a broadband system at home. She lives on the north side of Seoul with a permissive mother.

**Yoojae** is a high school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 18-year-old boy. He achieves very poor school scores. He has been using the Internet for 6 years, with 3 years on a modem line and 3 years on a broadband system at home. He lives on the south side of Seoul with a permissive mother and an elder brother.

**Yoonil** is a high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 18-year-old boy. He achieves good level school scores. He has been using the Internet for 3 years on a broadband system at home. He lives on the north side of Seoul with permissive parents.

## **Parents**

**Suk** is the mother of a two sons, one in middle school, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and the other at high school, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. She is 43 years old with a permissive parenting style. She has had experience of using the Internet for 1 year on a broadband system and has less ability than her children.

**Kyoung** is the mother of a son at primary school, 6<sup>th</sup> grade and another at middle school, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. She is 41 years old with a permissive parenting style. She has had a broadband system for 4 years at home. However, she has had experience of using the Internet for 2 years at a similar level to that of her children.

**Seong** is has a daughter at high school, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and two sons who have graduated from high school. He is 48 years old with an authoritative parenting style. He has had experience of using the Internet for 2 years and is better at it than his children.

**Soon** is the mother of a daughter at high school, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and has a son at university. She is 45 years old with an authoritative parenting style. She has had experience of using the Internet for 1 year and has less ability than her children.

**Taek** is the father of at daughter at high school, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and has another daughter at university. He is 49 years old with a permissive parenting style. He has had experience of using the Internet for 3 years, with less ability than his children.

**Hong** is the mother of a daughter at primary school, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and a son at middle school, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. She is 41 years old with an authoritative parenting style. She has had experience of using the Internet for 3 years, with less ability than her children.

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