Self-control Management and Internet addiction

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between self-control/management and Internet addiction. Participants were 309 university students who completed a questionnaire package that included the Online Cognition Scale and the Self-control and Self-management Scale. The relationships between self-control/management and Internet addiction were examined using correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. According to results Internet addiction were predicted negatively by self-monitoring, self-evaluating, and self-reinforcing. Results were discussed in the light of literature © 2015 IOJES. All rights reserved

Keywords: Self-control, Self-management, Internet addiction, multiple regression analysis

Introduction

Self-control has been described as the willful and intentional mechanisms by which humans may alter their own behavior, resist temptation, change their moods, and act in ways to achieve personal goals; it is the process of overriding natural, habitual, or learned responses by altering behavior, thoughts, or emotions (Baumeister & Vohs, 2003). Self-control involves a number of internal and external interactions including goals, plans, intentions, self-monitoring and self-evaluation, feedback, and corrective behavior (Barone, Maddux, & Snyder, 1998). While Tangney, Stuewig, Brown, Reyes and Zorbas (2004) described this construct as a more automatic, flexible system that responds smoothly to changing environmental demands, Metcalfe and Mischel, (1999) defined self-control as the ability to inhibit impulsive responses that undo one’s commitment; a commitment being akin to a goal or long-term objective. This definition is preferred to the previous examples as it makes specific the contrast between the immediate with long term, thus recognizing time as a key component of self-control (Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006). Self-management, more often called self-control, includes the existence of two or more response alternatives; different consequences for the alternatives; and, usually, the maintenance of self-controlling actions by longer-term external consequences (Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974). In similar, self-control involves the regulation of behaviors, thoughts, and emotions, as well as modifying or inhibiting socially undesirable tendencies (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994; Finkenauer, Engels, & Baumeister, 2005; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). It is a voluntary, conscious, effortful, and self-generated attempt to engage in an initially low probability behavior rather than one that is more immediately reinforcing (Kanfer & Gacllick, 1991). These two constructs differ in that self-control specifically addresses conscious processes while self-management tends to refer to both unconscious and conscious processes (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004). Self-control and self-management are important skills to make less painful several emotional and behavioral problems and to motivate perseverance and achievement (Mezo, 2009). Previous research has found self-control and self-management is associated positively with positive affect and negatively with depression, anxiety, and...
negative affect. Similarly self-control has been found to relate negatively with depression (Pysczynski, Holt, & Greenberg, 1987; Wenzlaff, Wegner, & Roper, 1988; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998), ruminative thoughts (Martin & Tesser, 1989), and aggression (Baumeister, 1997; Tice & Baumeister, 1993; Zillman, 1993).

Internet addiction

The significance of research on Internet addiction has been expanded over the last decade (Bayraktar & Gun, 2007; Huang, Wang, Qian, Zhong, & Tao, 2007). A wide range of terms have been utilized interchangeably for Internet addiction such as internet dependents (Kubey, Lavin, & Barrows, 2001; Yuen & Lavin, 2004), problematic internet users (Davis, Flett, & Besser, 2002; Shapira et al., 2003), or pathological internet users (Davis, 2001; Lin & Tsai, 2002; Morahan-Martin, 1999; Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000).

Internet addiction has been defined by symptoms of lack of control, intolerance, abdication, functional defect, curtailed decision-making ability (Ko, Yen, Chen, Chen, & Yen, 2005), substance experience (Ko et al., 2006; Yen, Yen et al., 2007), anxiety, psychomotor agitation, passion (Ferraro, Caci, D’Amico, & Di Blasi, 2007), enmity (Yen, Ko, Yen, Wu, & Yang, 2007), and permanent web surfing though there are many negative influences on social and psychological well-being. Studies related to Internet addiction revealed that there are some connections with Internet addiction and social phobia, depression (Yen, Ko et al., 2007; Young & Rogers, 1998), loneliness (Kraut et al., 1998; Nalwa & Anand, 2003; Whang, Lee, & Chang, 2003), diminished self-esteem and life satisfaction (Ko et al., 2005), weak mental health (Yang, 2001; Young & Rogers, 1998), subjective vitality (Akin, 2012), and subjective happiness (Akin, 2012).

The present study

The aim of the present study is to examine the relationships between Internet addiction and self-control/self-management. After examining present studies on Internet addiction and related variables (e.g. Ferraro et al., 2007; Ko et al., 2005; Kraut et al., 1998; Nalwa & Anand, 2003; Yang, 2001; Young & Rogers, 1998) such as self-control/self-management (Mezo, 2009; Pysczynski, Holt, & Greenberg, 1987; Wenzlaff, Wegner, & Roper, 1988; Martin & Tesser, 1989; Baumeister, 1997; Tice & Baumeister, 1993; Zillman, 1993), it was assumed that Internet addiction and self-control/self-management would be related.

Method

Participants

Participants were 309 university students enrolled in various undergraduate programs at the Sakarya University, Turkey. One hundred and fifty one of the participants (49%) were males and one hundred and fifty eight (51%) were females. A large majority of the students (93%) were between 18 and 27 years of age (20.47 ± 1.02).

Measures

The Turkish version of the Self-control and Self-management Scale (SCMS, Mezo, 2009) was used to measure self-control and self-management. Participants rate their agreement with 16 statements using a Likert scale from 0 (“very undescriptive of me”) to 5 (“very descriptive of me”). SCMS consists of three subscales; self-monitoring (six items, e.g., “When I work toward something, it gets all my attention”), self-evaluating (five items, e.g., “When I set important goals for myself, I usually do not achieve them”), and self-reinforcing (five items, e.g., “I congratulate myself when I make some progress”). Turkish adaptation of this scale had been done by Akin, Demirci, and Çardak (2012). Results of confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the three-dimensional model was well fit (x²= 182.11, df= 98, RMSEA= .046, NFI= .94, CFI= .97, IFI= .97, GFI= .95, SRMR= .046). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients of the adapted Turkish form were .80 for overall scale, and .78, .78, and .72 for three subscales, respectively.

Internet addiction was measured using Turkish version of the Online Cognition Scale (OCS, Davis, Flett, & Besser, 2002; Ozcan & Buzlu, 2005). This scale contains 36 items on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). It has four sub-dimensions: Diminished impulse control (10 items), loneliness/depression (6 items), social comfort (13 items), and distraction (7 items). A sum of all scores yields a total score that ranges from 36 to 252; higher scores indicate higher Internet addiction level.
related diminished impulse control involves obsessive cognitions about the internet and an inability to reduce internet use despite the desire to do so. The loneliness/depression involves feelings of worthlessness and depressive cognitions related to the internet. The social comfort involves feelings of safety and security in being a part of that social network, despite the fact that it is a virtual network. The distraction involves using the internet as an activity of avoidance. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficients of the adapted Turkish form were .79 for diminished impulse control, .60 for loneliness/depression, .84 for social comfort, .73 for distraction, and .91 for entire scale. For test-retest reliability the scale was administered to 148 undergraduate students twice in four weeks. The Pearson correlation coefficients were .89, .76, .87, .85, and .90, respectively (Ozcan & Buzlu, 2005).

Procedure and Data Analysis

Convenience sampling was used in the selection process of the participants. Participants voluntarily participated and were free to fill out the questionnaires without pressure. Three hundred and thirty-six students participated in the study. The data obtained from 309 students were statistically analyzed. In this research, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were utilized to determine the relationships between Internet addiction and self-control/management. These analyses were carried out via SPSS 11.5.

### Table 1. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations of the variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Self-monitoring</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-evaluating</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-reinforcing</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internet addiction</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>22.05</td>
<td>16.21</td>
<td>18.60</td>
<td>85.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>35.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s α</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.01

### Multiple Regression Analysis

A stepwise multiple regression analysis has applied to determine which dimensions of self-control/management were the best predictors of Internet addiction. Table 2 showed the results of multiple regression analysis where the independent variables were dimensions of self-control/management and the dependent variable was Internet addiction.

### Table 2. Summary of stepwise multiple regression analysis for variable predicting Internet addiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard Error of B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-monitoring</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>-5.933*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-monitoring</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-5.211*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluating</td>
<td>-.82</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-2.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-monitoring</td>
<td>-1.63</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-4.016*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluating</td>
<td>-.79</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-2.013*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reinforcing</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-2.435*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.01

Self-monitoring entered the equation first, accounting for 22% of the variance in predicting Internet addiction. Self-evaluation entered on the second step accounting for an additional 5% variance. Self-reinforcement entered on the third step accounting for an additional 8% variance. The last regression models involved self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement as predictors of Internet addiction and accounted for 35% of the variance in Internet addiction. The standardized beta coefficients indicated the relative influence of the variables in last model with self-monitoring (β=-.24, p<.01), self-evaluation (β=-.11,
yetestigation of the relationships between metacognition and self-regulation with subjective vitality, and subjective happiness. Findings have demonstrated that there are relationships among these variables. As hypothesized, self-control and self-management predicted Internet addiction negatively. Recent studies demonstrated that Internet addiction has correlations with some psychological maladaptive variables such poor social interactions, depression diminished self-esteem, (Ko et al., 2005; Kraut et al., 1998), and loneliness (Kraut et al., 1998; Nalwa & Anand, 2003; Whang, Lee, & Chang, 2003), life satisfaction (Ko et al., 2005), weak mental health (Yang, 2001; Young & Rogers, 1998), subjective vitality (Akın, 2012), and subjective happiness (Akın, 2012). In contrary, studies have found that self-control and self-management was associated negatively with some psychological maladaptive variables such as negative affect, and anxiety (Mezo, 2009), depression (Mezo, 2009; Pyszczynski, Holt, & Greenberg, 1987; Wenzlaff, Wegner, & Roper, 1988), ruminative thoughts (Martin & Tesser, 1989), and aggression (Baumeister, 1997; Tice & Baumeister, 1993; Zillman, 1993). Internet addiction is accepted as a maladaptive psychological variable, while self-control/self-management is accepted as a kind of adaptive variable (Mezo, 2005), therefore, it is logical that self appears that if individuals can enhance their self-control and self-management level, it is possible to ameliorate Internet addiction. This study has shown that self-control and self-management was found negatively related to Internet addiction as convenient with previous findings of the studies stated above.

The results of this research are intriguing that higher levels of self-control and self management could diminish Internet addiction. Yet limitations of the study also be discussed, such as participants were university students, and the study is correlational. In this regard, other samples can be investigated for generalization of the results. Moreover, causal studies can be implemented for examining cause and effect relationships among these variables.

In conclusion, this investigation shows that there is a relationship between Internet addiction and self-control/self-management. Students high in Internet addiction are more likely to be low in self-control and self-management. Therefore, the current findings increase our understanding of the relationships between self-control and self-management and Internet addiction. The results also a sing for educational agencies to design suitable Internet addiction prevention programs.

References


