Document Type: Original Article
https://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.26455447.2022.5.18.8.5

Iranian Journal of Learning and Memory, 2022, 5(18), 25-32

The Effectiveness of Personal Wisdom Therapy Approach in Reducing Internet Addiction of Adolescent Female Students

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Abstract

This study intended to investigate the effectiveness of personal wisdom therapy approach in reducing internet addiction in adolescent female students. The present study was a quasi-experimental study with the pre-test, post-test, and a control group. The statistical population included 200 adolescent female students studying in high schools in Hamadan in the academic year 2020-2021 from which 34 female students, selected based on convenience sampling procedure, were randomly divided into experimental and control groups (17 students in each group). The participants in the experimental group received 10 training sessions using a wisdom-therapy approach (Kordnoqabi, 1400). In order to assess the participants' internet addiction, the internet Addiction Scale developed by Young (2007) was used. In order to analyze the obtained data, a set of ANCOVA was run. The results revealed that personal wisdom-therapy had a statistically significant positive effect on reducing the level of internet addiction among adolescent female students. Since wisdom therapy has been effective in reducing internet addiction, all those involved in education, including high level education officials can design wisdom-based lessons and programs and teachers should be trained to implement these programs to help students in this regard and improve the quality of education.

Keywords: Adolescent Girls, Internet Addiction, Wisdom –Therapy

Receive Date: 16 April 2022
Revise Date: 04 July 2022
Accept Date: 30 July 2022
Publish Date: 01 August 2022

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How to Site: Kurd Noqabi, R., Asoodeh, M., & Mohammadi, M. (2022). The Effectiveness of Personal Wisdom Therapy Approach in Reducing Internet Addiction of Adolescent Female Students. *Iranian Journal of Learning & Memory*, *5*(18), 25-32. https://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.26455447.2022.5.18.8.5

Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, internet is extensively applied in both technology and science and its importance and attractiveness has greatly increased in recent years. In Iran, the internet is becoming ever more easily reached and has become an integral part of individuals' way of life. Using internet is believed to have both positive and negative psychological and social consequences (Khutornoi, 2013). One of the negative psychological and social concerns of using internet is known as internet addiction, which is regarded as a controversial issue for the past two decades.

The term 'addiction' is mainly applied to the use of some problematic behavior, activity or substance (Hatterer, 1994; Young, 1996). According to Cerniglia et al. (2017), uncontrolled or problematic use of internet is typically related with some detrimental problems and

might even bring about internet addiction, which is defined as a strong psychological reliance on the internet (Kandell, 1998). Internet addiction encompasses various activities such as extreme internet gaming, seeing inappropriate videos, obsessive online shopping, downloading and surfing various sites.

Due to its detrimental consequences to both public and personal health, internet addiction has captivated global consideration at least for the past 10 years (Yan et al., 2014). Research indicated that internet addiction can lead to poor academic performance and concentration (Dol, 2016), an incapability to express emotions (Oktug, 2012), high levels of violence (Ko et al., 2009), vulnerability for depression and anxiety (Ha & Hwang, 2014; Lam & Peng, 2010; Mamun et al., 2019), poor sleep quality (Kitazawa, et al., 2018), various personality disorders (Jiang & Leung, 2012), eye strain, insomnia, and daytime sleepiness (Balhara et al., 2018), mood and anxiety disorders (Spada, 2014), mental health issue (Gupta et al., 2018), suicidal ideation (Fu et al., 2010) and impulsivity (De Berardis et al., 2009).

According to Lian et al. (2021), smart phones not only influence the way of adolescents' social interaction and information acquisition, but also change their behaviors and life styles. In this regard, more and more humans spend most of their time on smart phones, to satisfy their needs and desires, which enhances the user stickiness of smartphones and over time the habits of carrying and using smartphones anytime and anywhere increases the risk of smartphone addiction (Kwon et al., 2013). New research also showed that more and more adolescents cannot live without their phones, and little by little they become addicted to their mobile phones (Han et al., 2017). Therefore, mobile phone addiction is considered as an important risk factor of adolescents' psychological wellbeing and also should be considered as a common concern of researchers and the public (Lian et al., 2018).

Despite an extensive body of research with regard to the potential effects of internet addiction on different aspects of individuals, it seems only few studies, if any, have investigated the ways in which this negative phenomenon, i.e., internet addiction, can be reduced or eradicated. Different studies have been conducted on internet addiction. For instance, Khazaei et al. (2017) evaluated the efficacy of a group-based positive psychology intervention in treating internet addiction. The findings of their study indicated that positive psychology intervention was an influential method for treating internet addiction, especially in modifying internet use and increasing the social relationships' quality. Likewise, Mirzakhani et al. (2019) concluded that positive psychotherapy had a significant and positive effect in reducing both internet addiction and identity crisis among young female high school students.

In another study, Baradar (2019) reported that self-regulation and problem-solving skills had a significant and positive effect in reducing individuals' internet addiction. Recently Liu et al. (2021) conducted a research study in order to investigate the potential effects of logotherapy-based mindfulness intervention on Adolescents' internet addiction throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. The results of their study revealed that logotherapy-based mindfulness intervention significantly lessened internet addiction among participants during the pandemic of COVID-19.

Previous studies mainly have focused on the negative consequences of mobile phone use and its' effect on adolescents' emotions and sleep quality (for example, Lian, et. al, 2021). For example, Sunday et al. (2021), in their research concluded that "the greater the use of the phone while studying, the greater the negative impact on learning and academic achievement". Also, some research showed that mobile phone addiction is significantly and positively correlated with psychological distress, and this correlation could be mediated by rumination (Lian, et. al., 2021). Also in this regard, Abbasi et al. (2020), in their research concluded that there is a bidirectional relationship between internet addiction and psychological wellbeing.

Based on the above-mentioned points and due to the importance of internet addiction, it seems that more attention should be paid to the way internet addiction is reduced. One of the ways in which internet addiction might be reduced among students is using personal wisdom-therapy. The concept of wisdom is basically defined as "the power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action, based on knowledge, understanding, etc." (Sternberg, 1998, p. 347).

As aptly pointed out by Yang (2008), wisdom not merely can affect knowledge, personality traits, and interests, but also can lead to a good life with emotional well-being for individuals. Likewise, Kord Noqabi (2021) maintained that full implementation of wisdom-therapy protocol supports individuals to have more control over their lives and live more consciously. This is done mainly by retrieving, reviewing, and reconstructing individuals' past experiences. Furthermore, Kord Noqabi stated that personal wisdom therapy has the following main techniques: flower and stone techniques, thematic diagrams of life, eternal repetition of life, chapters of the book of life, key scenes of life, the next chapter of life, and a study of the challenges of life.

With the above points in place, the researchers felt that there was a gap in the existing literature regarding the effect of personal wisdom-therapy on internet

addiction. Hence, to shed more light on this issue, and to fill the research gap this study set out to investigate the effect of personal wisdom-therapy on the reduction of internet addiction among young female students in the context of Iran. Therefore, this study attempted to answer the following research question:

Q: Does personal wisdom-therapy significantly reduce young female students' internet addiction?

Method

Design

The present study adopted a quasi-experimental design with pre-test, post-test, and a control group.

Participants

The statistical population was all female students of one of the non-governmental high schools in Hamadan in the academic year of 2020-2021. In the initial sampling, Young's (2007) Internet Addiction Questionnaire was distributed among 100 students. Completed questionnaires were scored and out of 55 students who scored above 49 on the aforementioned scale, 34 students were selected using simple random sampling. Then, the selected participants (n=34) were randomly divided into two groups of experimental and control, each including 17 students. The scores of the participants on the aforementioned scale was considered as their pretest of the study. Afterwards, the participants in the experimental group received ten sessions of training based on personal wisdom-therapy approach with one-week interval for students, and at the end of the treatment the same questionnaire was distributed among the participants of the two groups as their posttest. It is noteworthy that due to COVID-19 Pandemic, the training sessions were conducted virtually using WhatsApp and the training sessions were initially recorded and then placed in the WhatsApp group consisting of the researchers and the students of the experimental group. In order to analyze the obtained data, the ANCOVA was run.

Instruments

Internet Addiction Test (IAT)

In order to assess the participants' level of internet addiction, the IAT primarily developed by Young (2007) was used. This test consists of 20 items that are designed based on clinical experience to measure the size and severity of internet addiction. The participants were supposed to rate the frequency of each category they use on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 'Always (=5)', 'Most often (=4)', 'Frequently (=3)', 'Occasionally (=2)', to 'Rarely (=1)'. The ultimate score is computed in the possible range of 20 to 100, and a higher score obtained thereupon indicates a higher level of internet addiction. That is, if a person scores 49 or lower, she/he is placed in the group of normal internet users, and if she/he scores higher than 49, she/he is placed in the group of internet addicts. Based on research conducted by Widyanto and Murran (2004), this test has a good validity and reliability rate.

Educational Protocols

The method of wisdom-therapy is the correct use of the mind and the correct use of thinking and cognition. Among the types of wisdom-therapy programs in this study, one of the most practical approaches of the personal wisdom-therapy program: "life thematic diagram" was used, which were designed based on Kordnoqabi's book (1400). Table 1 below shows the educational protocols designed by the researchers based on the Technique of "Life Thematic Diagrams".

Table 1
Training Protocol for Life Chart Technique

Sessions	Training Protocols
Session 1	The concept of wisdom was explained and students were introduced to micro allegories with concrete examples from celebrities. The concept of internet addiction was clarified for students.
Session 2	The technique of thematic diagrams of life from the personal wisdom-therapy approach was explained to the students from the book "Wisdom-therapy" (Kord Noqabi, 2021) using different examples.
Session 3	Students were asked to identify wise people in their families and relatives and examine their rational dimensions, and consider internet dependence as a variable in them and report the results of their investigation in two paragraphs.
Session 4	Students were asked to divide their lives from 7 to 14 years into seven one-year courses and inspect their status in terms of internet dependence in each period (In a few paragraphs).

Sessions	Training Protocols
Session 5	Students were asked to review their academic achievement and progress, as well as their relationships with family members, separately in each of the seven courses, and to see what changes they made in each course.
Session 6	Students were asked to examine their "feelings of happiness and satisfaction in life" in the 7 courses and to present the results of their studies in four paragraphs. (It is noteworthy that in session 4, 5 and 6, the training was supplemented by providing examples and the students' reports were reviewed in the group).
Session 7	Students were asked to graph their answers to the fourth session assignment (as explained in session 2). In this session, the response of two students was plotted by the researchers as an example.
Session 8	Students were asked to graph their response to the fifth session assignment as two variables were explained in the fifth session. In this session, the answers of two students were plotted by the researchers as an example.
Session 9	Students were asked to graph their answers to the sixth session (according to the explanation of the second session). In this session, the answers of two students were plotted by the researchers as an example.
Session 10	In this session, the researchers presented the results of examining the charts and the correlation between the internet addiction chart and other charts and asked the students to think more about this and send them their final answers and conclusions.

Results

This study intended to identify the effectiveness of personal wisdom-therapy on reducing adolescent female students' internet addiction. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest administration of both experimental and control groups.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of the Groups

	Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	Experimental	17	78.00	90.00	82.70	3.51
	Control	17	80.00	90.00	83.23	3.41
Posttest	Experimental	17	50.00	60.00	54.76	3.83
	Control	17	78.00	90.00	83.82	4.23

In order to inspect the normality of the distributions, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was run, results of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Pre-test (experimental)	Pre-test (control)	Posttest (experimental)	Posttest (control)
N		17	17	17	17
Normal Parameters	Mean	82.70	83.23	54.76	83.82
	Std. Deviation	3.51	3.41	3.83	4.23
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.16	.22	.22	.18
	Positive	.16	.22	.22	.17
	Negative	-.09	-.17	-.20	-.18
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.69	.94	.93	.76
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.72	.33	.35	.60

As presented in Table 3, all the Sig. values of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for both groups' pretest and posttest scores are higher than the critical value (.05). Therefore, the normality of distribution for the scores is supported.

The research question attempted to examine whether personal wisdom-therapy had any significant effect on reducing young female students' internet addiction. Consequently, a set of ANCOVA was run. The test and its preconditions are discussed in the following sections. All sets of scores of course enjoyed normalcy as demonstrated earlier (Tables 3); hence, this prerequisite need not be discussed. With the first assumption of normalcy in place, the second procedure was testing the homogeneity of variance for which the Levene's test was run; as is shown in Table 4 below, the variances were not significantly different ($F(1,32) = 0.06$, $p = 0.80 > 0.05$).

Table 4
Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.06	1	32	.80

As one covariate is being investigated (the pretest), the third assumption of the correlation among covariates did not apply in this case. The fourth assumption is that of homogeneity of regression slopes. Table 5 below shows that the interaction (i.e., Group* Pretest) is 0.09 which is larger than 0.05 thus indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes has not been violated.

Table 5
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (1)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	7359.59	3	2453.19	216.79	.00
Intercept	15.87	1	15.87	1.40	.24
Pretest	152.91	1	152.91	13.51	.00
Group	5.46	1	5.467	.48	.49
Group * Pretest	32.87	1	32.87	2.90	.09
Error	339.46	30	11.31		
Total	170956.00	34			
Corrected Total	7699.05	33			

With the above assumptions in place, running an ANCOVA was legitimized. According to Table 6 below, the pretest scores (the covariate in the model) came out not to be significant ($F = 12.42$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$) thus demonstrating that prior to the treatment, there was a significant difference between the two groups (i.e., experimental and control) in terms of their internet addiction.

Table 6
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (2)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	7326.71	2	3663.35	304.99	.00
Intercept	17.31	1	17.31	1.44	.23
Pretest	149.18	1	149.18	12.42	.00
Group	6972.37	1	6972.37	580.49	.00
Error	372.34	31	12.01		
Total	170956.00	34			
Corrected Total	7699.05	33			

Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the covariate (the pretest) and the dependent variable (the posttest) while controlling for the independent variables ($F (1, 31) = 580.49$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$). As P-value obtained was less than 0.05, it was concluded that there were significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the posttest after

removing the possible effects of their internet addiction as tested through the pretest.

Table 7.
Mean Scores of the Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental	54.93	.84	53.21	56.64
Control	83.65	.84	81.94	85.37

The experimental group and control group did perform significantly differently from each other ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$); that is participants in the experimental group (M= 54.93, SE= 0.84) had lower levels of internet addiction than the participants in control group (M= 83.65, SE= 0.84). That is, personal wisdom-therapy had a statistically significant positive effect on reducing the level of internet addiction among adolescent female students.

Discussion

Based on the results of the present study, wisdom therapy has a positive and significant effect on reducing students' internet addiction. The results of this study are in line with the results of a study conducted by Khazaei et al. (2017), who found that the intervention of positive psychology is effective in treating students' internet addiction. One explanation of these results is that one of the characteristics of wise people is to achieve balance in life, and achieving balance prevents all kinds of disorders and anomalies (Kordnoghabi, 1400).

As different psychological studies revealed that wisdom is a component of positive psychology, therefore it can be concluded that by teaching wisdom concepts and using wisdom-cultivation methods and using wisdom-therapy techniques, great steps can be taken in the treatment and reduction of students' internet addiction. A study conducted by Jahanbini (2016) showed the relationship between internet addiction and students' introversion. That is, internet addiction has even affected students' personality traits. One of the personal wisdom-therapy techniques, i.e., thematic diagrams of life, was used in the study and asked students to draw diagrams of their relationship with family members, feelings of happiness and joy in life, and academic achievement and progress at different stages of life. The results showed that internet addiction has affected happiness and relationship with family members and has increased the characteristic of introversion in students, but after the wisdom therapy stages, the results revealed that with the reduction of internet addiction in students, happiness and vitality increased and also their relations with family members improved. One inference about these results is that according to Zhang et al. (2020), "Academic stress reaction means physical and psychological arousal that leads to experiencing stress" which its' outward manifestations which are physical problems such as headache, digestive problems, lethargy and its mental consequence is behavioral and mental disorders such as internet and phone addiction. So, using wisdom-therapy, we can remove negative consequences or at least we can decrease them.

Research conducted by Rahmati (2016) indicated that spirituality has a statistically significant relationship with students' internet addiction. As discussed in the definitions, wisdom is considered as one of the dimensions of spirituality and spirituality in people can be enriched by promoting wisdom. Contemplation and self-reflection, self-transcendence, balance in life and caring for others are the prominent features of wise individuals, all of which have a significant relationship with spirituality. Therefore, as a result, by nurturing wisdom and using wisdom-therapy, these features can be fostered in students and consequently treated many of their behavioral problems, including internet addiction.

Another study conducted by Baradar (2019) showed that increasing self-regulation and problem-solving skills has been effective in reducing internet addiction. In this article we have stated that one of the characteristics of wise people is problem-solving skills in real life. It is evident that by improving this skill (i.e., problem-solving skills in real life) among students, their wisdom is improved and using wisdom-therapy can put them in the path of wisdom and help them reduce their internet addiction.

The results of the present study are not in agreement with those of Hamidi et al. (2013). As reported by Hamidi et al., internet addiction causes academic procrastination in students, but in the present study, using the chart of academic achievement, it was concluded that internet addiction has not disrupted students' academic achievement. The participants of the present study asserted that the use of the internet

encompassed all of their leisure and rest time, but did not interfere with their education and study, and their academic results confirm the same.

In another conducted by Montazeri (2016), it was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between internet addiction and students' social skills. The balance in life and caring for others are the dimensions of wisdom that are basically related to individuals' social skills, accordingly by nurturing wisdom in students, these traits can be reinforced, social skills can be developed, and an effective step can be taken in the treatment of their internet addiction.

It is obvious that individuals with internet addiction do not have the opportunity to develop social skills because they spend the least amount of time surfing the web and using virtual networks, and this creates problems for them. In the present study, one of the diagrams was dedicated to drawing the relationship with family members and examining its relationship with internet addiction in different periods of life and it was concluded that internet addiction affects an individual's relationship with family members.

Another study conducted by Rahdan and Mottaqi (2017) showed that internet addiction affects students' personality components and causes anxiety, and this anxiety also causes academic inefficiency. As aptly pointed out by Yang (2008), wisdom not merely can affect knowledge, personality traits, and interests, but also can lead to a good life with emotional well-being for individuals. The internet not only affects an individual's social relationships but also increases anxiety by reducing the feeling of happiness and joy in life. In the present study, by drawing a graph of happiness and joy in life, we concluded that by increasing the use of the internet in successive stages, students' lives gradually decrease in their sense of happiness and joy, and as a result, negative emotions such as anxiety increase.

Conclusion

From all the studies conducted as well as the present study, it was concluded that internet addiction has negative and harmful consequences in the lives of students. Even students who maintain their academic achievement due to external and rarely internal motivations, that is those whose academic success are not affected by internet addiction, suffer from many personality and psychological problems, including lack of happiness, high anxiety, increasing introversion, lack of social skills, lack of self-regulatory skills and lack of problem-solving skills. Finally, it is suggested that wisdom-therapy methods be used to nurture wisdom in students and put them on the wisdom path in education which can be a good solution to treat behavioral problems in students, especially internet addiction, which has become very popular in recent years. As a practical recommendation to educational officials, it can be suggested that it is better to use wisdom-training as in-service programs for teachers and to teach teachers various techniques of wisdom-training, so that, when necessary, the teachers can use this method to solve students' problems.

Funding

This research did not receive any fund from the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

Acknowledgements

We want to thank the participants of the study who helped us to conduct this study.

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest declared.

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