Understanding Internet Addiction

Definition of Internet Addiction

Internet addiction (IA) was first proposed by Young (1998), referred to as problematic Internet use, computer addicts, Internet use disorder, or excessive Internet use (Caplan, 2002; Van Rooij & Prause, 2014; Young, 1998). Conceptualizations of IA have adhered to two distinct explanations: (a) it is a broad term that covers a wide variety of behavioral and impulse-control problems (Young, 1999), and (b) “many of these excessive users are not ‘Internet addicts’ but just use the Internet excessively as a medium to fuel other addictions” (Griffiths, 2003, p. 416). Although IA has not been included in the spectrum of addictive disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-V) or the International Classification of Diseases Tenth Edition (ICD-10), there is a rapid increasing concern with respect to its risk factors (Choi et al., 2015; Hyun et al., 2015).

Internet Addiction Symptoms

- Negative effects on your school or job performance
- Reduced involvement with your family or friends
- Loss of interest in other hobbies or pursuits
- Feelings of anxiety or depression when you’re away from your computer
- When not on your computer, you spend most of your time thinking about getting back to it
- Angry or defensive reaction when someone comments on your behavior
- Taking steps to hide the extent of your computer/Internet use

People with IAD may spend excessive amounts of time engaged in the following activities online:
- Gaming
- Gambling
- Shopping for merchandise
- “Shopping” for relationships on dating sites
- Social media

Our Study Findings

- Gender as well as acculturative Stress, including discrimination, homesickness, hate, and cultural shock significantly predict Internet addiction among international college students.

Our Study Participants

Of the 93 participants, 63 (67.7%) were male, 28 (30.1%) were female, and 2 (2.2%) were unknown. Ages ranged from 22 to 40 years old (M = 28.62, SD = 3.69). Regarding race/ethnicity, eight (8.6%) were Caucasian, five (5.4%) were African American, 63 (67.7%) were Asian, and 12 (12.9%) were biracial. 38 (40.9%) were undergraduates and 55 (59.1%) were master’s students. Participants were from a total of 27 countries. The top three countries were India (n = 21), China (n = 9), and Sri Lanka (n = 6).

References