

A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Intervention Programme for Excessive Internet Use among Young Adults

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Abstract : Excessive use of the Internet has become a cause for concern in many countries, including Malaysia. Such behaviour is reported to be more prevalent amongst young adults who are reported to be spending large amount of time on the Internet. The present study has three objectives. First one is designing a manual-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) programme to reduce problematic Internet use among young adults in Malaysia. Second one is examining the effectiveness of a manual-based CBT programme at the pilot study stage. Thirdly, the programme focuses on reducing the level of stress and anxiety in problematic Internet users. We adopted CBT with single subject experimental design method. A total of six participants completed the entire program. They were asked to report their daily Internet use and software was installed on their devices to record actual use. The data collection involved three time frame measurements: T1 (baseline), T2 (immediately during the last session of the intervention sessions), and T3 (follow-up). Three scales were used to measure the effectiveness of the program: Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scales (DASS), Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS), and Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire (PIUQ). The results revealed that the intervention programme has significantly improved two dimensions of problematic Internet use which were obsession and control disorder. The participants' mental health also showed a deduction in means scores for depression, anxiety and stress with depression showing the greatest improvement after the intervention programme. The participants' social anxiety showed a slight deduction in means scores. We concluded that the intervention programme designed was effective. However, its limitations need to be addressed in future research.

Keywords : excessive internet use, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), psychological well-being, young adults

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