



Research Report

Differences between specific and generalized problematic Internet uses according to gender, age, time spent online and psychopathological symptoms



Stéphanie Laconi*, Nathalie Tricard, Henri Chabrol

Octogone, Centre d'Études et de Recherches en Psychopathologie (EA 4156), Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, Toulouse, France

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Keywords:

Problematic Internet use
Internet addiction
Addictive behaviors
Psychopathological symptoms

ABSTRACT

Internet addiction has been the subject of numerous studies, but definitions, classification and terminologies for this phenomenon diverge. Thus, it appears important to distinguish Generalized Problematic Internet Use (GPIU) and Specific Problematic Internet Uses (SPIU). Our main objective was to explore the relationships between GPIU, SPIU and psychopathological symptoms according to gender and age category. A sample of 378 participants aged between 18 and 65 years old ($M = 24.4$, $SD = 8.3$) completed a set of questionnaires measuring GPIU, SPIU related to communication, video and music, information seeking, work, sex, gaming, gambling, shopping, and time spent online, depressive symptoms, self-esteem and satisfaction with life. Correlations and regressions analysis revealed significant relationships between GPIU and our variables, except for $SPIU_{\text{gambling}}$, with many differences between males and females and between adults and young adults. $SPIU_{\text{com}}$ was a significant predictor of GPIU among our four groups, $SPIU_{\text{info}}$, $SPIU_{\text{gaming}}$ and depressive symptoms were significant among women, men and young adults, and $SPIU_{\text{video}}$ and time spent online were also significant among women and young adults. To our knowledge, this study is the first to explore so many SPIU, particularly in a sample of French adults. More important, our results contribute to the advance of the field of PIU by highlighting differences between each PIU, variables that should be seriously considered in future research.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

For several years, Internet addiction is the subject of many researches and debates worldwide. On the one hand, the term “addiction” has been repeatedly criticized (Pezoa-Jares, Espinoza-Luna, & Vasquez-Medina, 2012; Rehbein & Mößle, 2013), allowing the emergence of new terminologies less controversial such as problematic, pathological, excessive or compulsive Internet use, all describing the same phenomenon (Adièle & Olatokun, 2014; Lee et al., 2013). Among these terms, Problematic Internet Use (PIU) seems to be the most popular (Hsu & Shih, 2013) and thus will be primarily used in this article. On the other hand, no definition or criteria have been consensually recognized (Durkee et al., 2012; Lortie & Guitton, 2013). Early definitions characterized PIU as an inappropriate use of the Internet causing a significant impact on the psychological, social, professional, or school dimensions

(Beard & Wolf, 2001) due to an inability to cut down or control this use (Young, 1998). Besides, time spent online for recreational purposes is regularly explored in PIU assessment (Lopez-Fernandez, Freixa-Blanxart, & Honrubia-Serrano, 2013; Tonioni et al., 2012) and appears in some case like a risk factor (Frangos, Frangos, & Kiohos, 2010).

PIU is generally considered to be an impulse control disorder or an addiction similar to those associated with substances (Pezoa-Jares et al., 2012; Spada, 2014) and is grouped in the category of behavioral addictions, which can also be called technological addictions (Adièle & Olatokun, 2014; Chóliz, Echeburúa, & Labrador, 2012) or pathological technology use (King, Delfabbro, Zwaans, & Kaptis, 2013). It can be defined as any behavior operating in both producing pleasure and reducing painful affects, causing negative health consequences, and being associated with unsuccessful attempts to stop or control this behavior (Goodman, 2008; Karim & Chaudhri, 2012). Many behaviors tend to be grouped in this category (e.g., related to gambling, gaming, buying, working, exercising or sexual behaviors). Among those behaviors, most of them can be performed online and then, can lead to a PIU (Montag et al., 2014).

* Corresponding author at: Pavillon de la Recherche – Bureau R31, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 5, Allées Antonio Machado, 31058 Toulouse Cedex, France. Tel.: +33 06 29 44 18 68.

E-mail address: stephanie.laconi@univ-tlse2.fr (S. Laconi).

Therefore, some authors have proposed categories of PIU, the most known being Davis and Young's classifications. Based on empirical data, Young, Pistner, O'Mara, and Buchanan (2000) divided PIU into five subtypes which were cybersexual addiction, cyber-relationship addiction, net compulsions (i.e., gambling, shopping, trading), information overload and computer addiction (i.e., gaming) while Davis (2001), based on a theoretical cognitive and behavioral model, proposed two categories: Generalized Problematic Internet Use (GPIU) and Specific Problematic Internet Use (SPIU). While SPIU encompasses every specific online behavior, GPIU has been defined as "a multidimensional overuse of the Internet itself" (Caplan, 2002, p. 556) where the problematic use does not concern any specific online activity (Davis, 2001; Montag et al., 2014). In other words, SPIU could be considered as addictions on the Internet and GPIU as an addiction to the Internet (Griffiths & Pontes, 2014). Many authors have adopted this conception of PIU (Caplan, 2010; Montag et al., 2014; Pawlikowski, Nader, Burger, Stieger, & Brand, 2012; Sebena, Orosova, & Benka, 2013) or a similar one (e.g., primary and secondary problems) (Greenfield, 1999).

Some recent studies focused on those online addictive behaviors, particularly related to video gaming (King et al., 2013), gambling (Guertler et al., 2014), sex (Shaughnessy, Byers, & Thornton, 2011), shopping (Rose & Dhandayudham, 2014) or communication and social networking (Mazer & Ledbetter, 2012). Indeed, some behaviors could present a particularly addictive potential, such as online problematic behaviors related to sex, gaming, gambling (Guertler et al., 2014) or social networking (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011), and could foster the development of a PIU or a Generalized Problematic Internet Use (GPIU) (Adièle & Olatokun, 2014; Kuss, Griffiths, Karila, & Billieux, 2014; Wallace & Masiak, 2011). However, while a growing number of authors suggests to differentiate GPIU from each SPIU (Carli et al., 2011; Durkee et al., 2012; Griffiths, 2013; Kuss, van Rooij, Shorter, Griffiths, & van de Mheen, 2013; Montag et al., 2014; Pawlikowski, Nader, et al., 2012; Rehbein & Mößle, 2013; Tonioni et al., 2014), some SPIU have rarely been evaluated (e.g., related to online problematic working, information seeking or watching and downloading video or music).

Adolescents and young adults Internet users appear to be particularly at risk of developing a GPIU (Chakraborty, Basu, & Vijaya Kumar, 2010; Kuss, van Rooij et al., 2013; Özcan & Gokcearslan, 2013) but few researches focused on older adults (Ko, Yen, Yen, Chen, & Chen, 2012). Moreover, even if studies on GPIU mostly retrieved a higher prevalence among men (Carli et al., 2011; Pezoa-Jares et al., 2012), some have shown no difference (Carli et al., 2011; Greenfield, 1999; Kuss, Griffiths, Binder, 2013) or higher prevalence among women (King et al., 2013; Rehbein & Mößle, 2013). Some studies on SPIU showed that women present more SPIU related to social networking (Rehbein & Mößle, 2013) or online shopping (Rose & Dhandayudham, 2014) while men present more SPIU related to sex (Rehbein & Mößle, 2013), video gaming (King et al., 2013) and gambling (Tsitsika, Cristelis, Janikian, Kormas, & Kafetzis, 2011). This two SPIU (i.e., SPIU_{sex} and SPIU_{gaming}) have been more widely explored and could explain that men appear as more Internet addicts than women but the emergence of some SPIU (e.g., related to online communication, shopping, watching video or listening music) could influence some recent prevalence differences and highlights the need of evaluating differences between males and females.

Many psychopathological symptoms have been associated with GPIU among several population, including depressive symptoms (Tonioni et al., 2012), low self-esteem (Kim & Davis, 2009) or dissatisfaction with life (Cao, Sun, Wan, Hao, & Tao, 2011), respectively among samples of psychiatric patients ($n = 33$; $M = 24$; $SD = 11$; $SR = 15$), university students ($n = 635$; $M = n/a$; $SD = n/a$; $SR = 0.7$), and adolescents and young adults ($n = 15,538$; $M = 16$; $SD = 3$;

$SR = 1$). SPIU inherently share common criteria with GPIU (Carli et al., 2011; Rehbein & Mößle, 2013), they also tend to concern many users and, in some cases, been associated with specific psychopathological symptoms (Pawlikowski, Nader, et al., 2012). Shyness and life dissatisfaction were significant predictors of SPIU_{gaming} (i.e., online video game addiction) but not of SPIU_{sex} (i.e., cybersex addiction) according to this study performed among three samples of young adults with SPIU_{sex} and SPIU_{gaming} ($n = 116$; $M = 24$; $SD = 4$; $SR = 7$), only SPIU_{gaming} ($n = 69$; $M = 25$; $SD = 8$; $SR = 0.3$) and only SPIU_{sex} ($n = 134$; $M = 26$; $SD = 8$; $SR = 4$). Moreover, SPIU_{sex} and SPIU_{gaming} have been respectively associated with symptoms of depression, behavioral and drug addictions among adults (Griffiths, 2012) and low self-esteem among adolescents (van Rooij, 2011). Yet, the other SPIU have been little studied including their relationships with psychopathological symptoms, particularly by taking gender and age into account. To our knowledge, there is no study which evaluated more than three SPIU at the same time, making general comparison between every PIU impossible. Moreover, methodological differences in PIU researches are well known to impede comparison between studies (Carli et al., 2011; Chakraborty et al., 2010; Shaw & Black, 2008). At last, few studies have been conducted in French samples and particularly in French adult samples. Yet, Internet addiction seems as prevalent in France as in other European countries, at least among adolescents (Durkee et al., 2012; Kuss, van Rooij et al., 2013).

The main goal of our study was to explore the relationships between GPIU, SPIU, time spent online and psychopathological variables by distinguishing men, women, young adults (18–30 years old) and adults (31–65 years old). Then, our objective was to investigate scores and means of psychopathological symptoms and time spent online among participants according to the presence and/or the absence of GPIU and SPIU.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The study included 378 participants (21% male; $n = 75$) who completed an online survey. Age ranged from 18 to 65 with mean age (SD) = 24.4(8.3). The participants consisted of 223 students (59%), 90 active students (24%), 43 active adults (11%) and 22 inactive adults (6%). Among them, 87% ($n = 328$) were young adults (between 18 and 30 years old) and 13% ($n = 50$) had more than 30 years old.

2.2. Procedure

Participants were recruited online between October 2013 and January 2014, through Facebook and a numeric platform available to every university student from first to fifth level of study of the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail. All participants were informed of the confidentiality and the anonymity of their responses, and agreed (by ticking the appropriate box) to give their free and informed consent. This study has been performed in accordance with the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments, that's the reason why only participants who gave their consents were included in the study. As the main goal of this study was to make an exhaustive exploration of several PIU in adults, inclusion criteria were also being aged over 18 years and having completed all the scales.

2.3. Measures

The Generalized Problematic Internet Use (GPIU) has been assessed with the Internet Addiction Test (Khazaal et al., 2008;

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6838341>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6838341>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)