ABSTRACT

INTERNET USAGE, SELF-EFFICACY, AND

PROACTIVE COPING SKILLS

By

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This quantitative study examined the relationship between problematic Internet usage, self-efficacy, and proactive coping skills. This study compared demographic characteristics against three scales: Compulsive Internet Use Scale, General Self-Efficacy Scale, and Proactive Coping Subscale. A total of 146 Internet users over the age of 18 participated in this study. The results found a significant correlation between gender and, age, and ethnicity and proactive coping skills. There was also a significant relationship between age and compulsive Internet use. Compulsive Internet use was negatively correlated with proactive coping, suggesting improved proactive coping skills will lead to a lower level of compulsive Internet use.

INTERNET USAGE, SELF-EFFICACY, AND PROACTIVE COPING SKILLS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER Page

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The rapidly increasing number of households with access to the Internet illustrates the degree of pervasiveness this relatively new technology has achieved. In 2011, 80% of adult Americans had 24-hour access to the Internet in their homes (Morales, 2013). Worldwide 32% of adults had access, which was 11% more than only 5 years ago (Morales, 2013). In 2014, there are numerous different avenues in which the Internet is used in daily life: desktop computers, laptops, smart phones, bank machines, tablets, and game consoles.

Personal computers and smart phones allow individuals to use the Internet for a multitude of functions (Beutel et al., 2011) from personal interests such as shopping, chatting, social networking and checking e-mail, to the more structured activities of joining a conference call, conducting electronic research, and taking an online course. With so many uses of the Internet, the subject of Internet overuse, compulsion, and addiction has become an area of interest for researchers (Weinstein & Lejoyeaux, 2010).

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the associations between the levels of Internet usage, self-efficacy, and proactive coping skills among adults, 18 and over, in the United States. Specifically, this study sought to explore the following research questions:

1. Do compulsive Internet use, general self-efficacy, and proactive coping differ by age, gender, ethnicity, student status and employment status?

2. Is there an association between self-efficacy and compulsive Internet use?

3. Is there an association between the level of proactive coping skills an individual has and compulsive Internet use?

4. Is there a difference between individuals who choose to participate in a form of self-care (meditation, journaling, exercise or spirituality) and those who do not in their levels of compulsive Internet usage, general self-efficacy, and proactive coping?

There is a gap in the literature as this topic intersects with self-efficacy in achievement of personal goals. Albert Bandura was the first to posit that self-efficacy is the internalized confidence to act in order to reach projected ends (1977). The concept of self-efficacy has been explored as individuals' internalized perceptions of competence in their ability to handle life-situations they encounter (Luszczynska, Scholz, & Schwarzer, 2005). When self-efficacy is demonstrated, individuals are able to change their responses to stimuli, minimize impulsiveness and move more effectively toward goal attainment.

Excessive Internet use is a symptom and can lead to problematic Internet usage, compulsive Internet use, or Internet addiction. While Internet addiction is not currently a diagnosis listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, it is mentioned as an area for continued study (5th ed.; *DSM-V*; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). There is not an internationally agreed upon definition of Internet addiction or overuse, but the majority of current research follows four general behavioral guidelines that are similar to the behavioral addiction diagnoses that are currently in the *DSM-5*. These four categories of behavior are (a) using more than necessary, and

becoming disoriented regarding time restraints and neglect of bodily needs; (b) having a difficult time when away from the computer; (c) building a tolerance, needing more time, equipment, or programs; and (d) negative consequences as a result of Internet use (Block, 2008; Kwon, Chung-Suk, & Lee, 2011).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the terms compulsive Internet use, problematic Internet use, cyberloafing, and excessive Internet use are all used to refer to Internet usage that is not appropriate for the given amount of time or circumstance.

Compulsive Internet use: Internet use that continues despite causing impairment to individuals or their social, professional, or educational networks (Meerkerk, Van Den Eijnden, Vermulst, & Garretsen, 2009).

Internet usage: Includes but is not limited to smartphone applications, watching television and movies online, surfing websites, checking e-mail, chatting, social networking, texting and any other behavior that requires the use of the internet.

Proactive coping skills: Behaviors that can eliminate stress before it happens, such as: planning, self-determined goal setting, goal visualization, organization, and striving for improvement (Greenglass, Schwarzer, Jakubiec, Fiksenbaum, & Taubert, 1999).

Self-care: Behaviors an individual chooses to participate in that are meant to help maintain one's well-being and personal health, such as meditation, exercise, religious or spiritual activity, or journaling.

Self-efficacy: The internalized confidence to act in order to reach projected ends (Bandura, 1977); individuals' internalized perceptions of competence in their ability to handle life-situations they encounter (Luszczynska et al., 2005).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Uncontrolled use of the Internet is considered an addiction by many in the mental health community (Oktan, 2011). So-called Internet addicts exhibit behaviors similar to those of previously studied addictions (Oktan, 2011). While Internet addiction is not yet classified in the *DSM-5*, it is listed in the appendix as a disorder needing further study (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A problematic user engages in Internet usage to the exclusion of other commitments and interests (Weinstein & Lejoyeaux, 2010). Problematic Internet use, healthy Internet use, and behaviors and traits associated with the two are to be explored in this chapter.

Internet Usage and Productivity

The Internet avails the user of nearly unlimited opportunities to find information, interact with others, and acquire goods and services (Beutel et al., 2011). There are both benefits and drawbacks to this constant availability: becoming distracted from one's original intention is a drawback many employers may be interested in. A study by Messarra, Karkoulian, and McCarthy (2011) on Internet usage in the workplace found an increase in workplace satisfaction when employees were allowed to use the Internet without policies restricting personal, or non-work related, usage in place. At the same time, policies restricting Internet usage were effective in reducing the amount of time

employees spent “cyberloafing,” or using the Internet for non-work related purposes, but restricted employees reported a reduced level of workplace satisfaction. A reduced level of workplace satisfaction has been correlated with a reduction in productivity (Messarra et al., 2011; Vitak, Crouse, & LaRose, 2011).

Several studies mirror the Messarra et al. study, indicating that some cyberloafing is actually beneficial to workers' productivity (Coker, 2011; Lim & Chen, 2012; Vitak et al., 2011). Coker (2011), using a scale to measure productivity with 25 being the lowest level of productivity and 125 being the highest, found the difference in productivity to be 70.3 versus 64.7 among cyberloafers versus non-cyberloafers, respectively. Vitak et al. (2011) found that when Internet usage was a routine practice at participants' place of employment, they were more likely to cyberloaf by shopping online, reading blogs, and watching videos, along with carrying out their work duties. In addition to this, the researchers found a correlation between employees' beliefs about technology and cyberloafing behaviors: the employees who believed technology improved their ability to work productively were more likely to send personal e-mails, texts, instant messages, and to even write blogs (Vitak et al., 2011).

The Coker (2011) study found the effect employer set limitations on Workplace Internet Leisure Browsing (WILB) had on employees' productivity, concentration, and motivation at work. Employees who participated in WILB, or cyberloafing, and who were not obsessive-compulsive in their use, showed an increase in motivation and concentration throughout the day (Coker, 2011). The researcher likened WILB to taking breaks in long lectures, or stopping the car every so often on a long drive. Coker also found among study participants there was a threshold of 12% of their time at work being

spent on WILB before it was negatively correlated with productivity.

A study of adolescent students found that those who participated in more outdoor and family leisure activities were less likely to develop a problematic relationship with the Internet (Lin, Lin, & Wu, 2009). Adolescents whose parents monitored their usage more often tested negatively for problematic Internet usage, illustrating that when an outside figure takes control and enforces effective time management, thus better coping skills, the adolescent is more likely to stay on task (Lin et al., 2009). A similar result was found by Messarra et al. (2011) who found that less cyberloafing occurred when there was a policy prohibiting personal Internet usage, though it was at the cost of workplace satisfaction.

Conscientiousness, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Regulation

Individuals who have a hard time regulating their level of Internet usage, transitioning from a small amount of cyberloafing to a greater amount, show a lower level of conscientiousness (Wagner, Barnes, Lim, & Ferris, 2012). In their study on sleep deprivation, conscientiousness, and cyberloafing, Wagner et al. (2012) found a significant correlation between individuals who rated as more conscientious—which in this study was defined as disciplined, dutiful, prone to self-efficacy and showing a higher level of self-regulation–and the ability to become less influenced by a loss of sleep. In the first portion of their study, the researchers collected Internet usage data over 5 years on the Mondays following the initiation of Daylight Savings Time (DST), when an hour of sleep is lost over the weekend, and found a 3.1% increase in entertainment related searches and a 6.4% increase overall compared to the Monday previous and the Monday after DST. To further test their hypothesis, the researchers conducted a study of undergraduates by

giving them sleep monitors, measuring their conscientiousness, and having them watch a computer based lecture. They found the individuals with higher levels of conscientiousness, thus greater self-regulation, were less inclined to cyberloaf while they were supposed to be watching a computer-based lecture, despite any lost or disturbed sleep they experienced (Wagner et al., 2012).

A study illustrating the relationship between academic self-efficacy, procrastination, and problematic Internet usage found that there was a negative correlation between academic self-efficacy and problematic Internet usage, but not between procrastination and self-efficacy, nor between procrastination and problematic Internet usage (Odaci, 2011). This research isolates the positive trait, academic self-efficacy, as an important factor in problematic Internet usage and shows that a negative coping skill, procrastination, is not as problematic as hypothesized (Odaci, 2011).

Other researchers have also found a connection between self-regulation and problematic Internet usage (Beutal et al., 2011; Kim, LaRose, & Peng, 2009; Oktan, 2011). A German study found that 9.3% of their study participants experienced a negative consequence as a result of their problematic Internet use (Beutal et al. 2011). These problematic users most frequently experienced consequences in their workplace, recreational activities, relationships with friends and family, and financial issues according to the survey (Beutal et al., 2011). The problematic users also displayed a tendency toward negative emotion avoidance (Beutal et al., 2011).

A study by LaRose and Eastin (2004) attempted to readdress the prevailing paradigm on media attendance since the birth of the Internet: they attempted to identify more clearly what behaviors, circumstances, traits, and factors led to an individual's

relationship with the media. The researchers incorporated the Internet more accurately into the current media attendance model due to its pervasive availability and different use pattern compared to other forms of media (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). When outcome expectations, or what the participant expected to happen when using the media, were measured, versus purely gratifications, what the participant reported after the act of using the media, the ability to predict Internet attendance increased significantly (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). Self-efficacy was also found to be a significant predictor of Internet usage (Eastin & LaRose, 2000). In their study, LaRose and Eastin (2004) attempted to decipher whether unexpected Internet use was a matter of habit or an issue of deficient self-regulation. The researchers found that both habit strength and deficient self-regulation correlated with Internet usage, and they were able to distinguish the two as separate issues, measuring separate behaviors (LaRose & Eastin, 2004).

Similar to LaRose and Eastin, a researcher found that college students who tested as lower in self-control were more prone to participate in leisure activities that resulted in greater levels of instant gratification, versus long-term benefits, in their unstructured time (Panek, 2014). In this study, instant gratification was found to be associated with time spent specifically on social networking sites (SNS) and watching videos online (Panek, 2014). The users who demonstrated lower self-control did show an awareness that their self-control deficit led to their Internet overuse (Panek, 2014). While it seems apparent that low self-control would lead to a greater desire for instant gratification, Panek (2014) found that only online video viewing, and not SNS engagement, was correlated with less time spent on schoolwork. Perhaps the video viewing was more disruptive because it

required a viewer to pay attention to only one screen, whereas visiting an SNS does not require full attendance.

A study by Freeman and Muraven (2010) found that the closer an individual was to completing a task, the more disruptive and detrimental an interruption became. The self-control needed to stop working on a specific task was more taxing on individuals performing a task that was near completion than on individuals that were not as close to completing their goal (Freeman & Muraven, 2010). The researchers also found that the desire to pursue a goal increased the closer the goal became (Freeman & Muraven, 2010). Evidence that an individual's resources become depleted by interruption was found when the participants who were closest to goal completion were asked to do a subsequent task; they showed more difficulty completing their goal than those who were interrupted early on, thus further away from, their first attempt at goal attainment (Freeman & Muraven, 2010). These findings may indicate that a person's self-resources regarding the Internet become more depleted when they are presented with numerous interruptions while they are attempting to complete a task online. This could be in the form of receiving an e-mail, a text, or an instant message—all common interruptions when online. These interruptions may tax an individual's self-efficacy and self-control, thus making it more difficult for them to carry out their original intentions.

Coping Skills

Oktan found a correlation between emotional management skills and problematic Internet usage (2011). Participants in Oktan's study were surveyed for their emotional management skills and problematic Internet usage, resulting in a correlation being found between poor emotional management skills (i.e., coping skills, physical reactions, anger

management) and levels of Internet addiction. When emotional management skills were low, levels of problematic Internet usage were high.

Emotional management in the form of avoidant coping skills, and their contribution to problematic Internet usage, was also studied by several other researchers (Kwon et al., 2011; Li, Wang & Wang, 2009; Milani, Osualdella, & Di Blasio, 2009). Kwon et al. (2011) studied middle school students with problematic Internet usage, in the form of Internet gaming, using surveys to measure their gaming addiction levels, current negative mood, and escape from self. Participants with higher levels of gaming addiction experienced difficulty coping with their negative moods, which was correlated with a tendency to escape, or avoid, their emotional situation. In escaping, the problematic users did not have to deal with themselves and face their dissatisfaction with their negative mood (Kwon et al., 2011).

Li et al., (2009) found similar results by surveying college students for their level of problematic Internet usage, student stress, and coping style. In their study, the researchers found that the frequency of daily stressors, such as academic, work-related, and daily hassles, was greater among those displaying problematic Internet usage (Li et al., 2009). They also found that escapist coping styles involving fantasy, withdrawal, rationalization, and self-blame had a positive correlation with problematic Internet usage. Conversely, students with a high problem-solving coping score, showed a negative correlation with problematic Internet usage (Li et al., 2009).

Similarly, an Iranian study seeking to find the correlation between attachment style, coping strategy, mental health and Internet addiction found that respondents who demonstrated a problem solving coping strategy–a proactive way of addressing stressors–

were less likely to experience Internet addiction (Khosroshahi & Nosrat Abad, 2012). These researchers and others have also found that participants who relied more on emotional and avoidant coping strategies were more likely to fall under the problematic Internet usage umbrella (Deatherage, Servaty-Seib, & Aksoz, 2014; Fang, 2010; Hetzel-Riggin & Pritchard, 2011; Khosroshahi & Nosrat Abad, 2012). In addition to these variables, Khosroshahi and Nosrat Abad (2012) found that mental health and attachment style were also predictors of Internet addiction.

A Turkish study on patients being treated for Internet addiction similarly found that coping styles and skills were a notable factor in influencing Internet addiction (Senormanci, Konkan, Guclu, & Senormanci, 2014). They also found that many of the coping strategies that were considered to be associated with Internet addiction, such as behavioral disengagement, denial, and dysfunctional coping in general, were also positively correlated with coping strategies (Senormanci et al., 2014). The researchers found that planning, turning to religion, and use of instrumental and emotional social support, among other positive coping strategies were found in the control group made up of the non-addicted (Senormanci et al., 2014).

The studies that attempted to measure and correlate coping methods to problematic Internet use are all providing congruent results, indicating that there is a significant correlation between avoidant coping and problematic Internet use. This suggests that proactive coping skill employment may be associated with "normal" levels of Internet usage.

Loneliness and Social Skills

The relationship between loneliness and problematic Internet usage, and between

social skills and problematic Internet usage, has been studied by several researchers. When attempting to deduce whether or not a person compulsively uses the Internet because they are lonely or if they are lonely because they compulsively use the Internet, Kim et al. (2009) found that loneliness likely leads to problematic usage, but problematic usage deepens the state of loneliness. This result was repeated by Fang (2010), when studying the difference, if any, between men and women, and their problematic Internet usage. Fang found that loneliness, in addition to several other variables, was an effective predictor of problematic Internet usage for both males and females.

Kim et al. (2009) also found a significant correlation between individuals with deficient social skills and their Internet use. Individuals that rated as having lower levels of social skills offline were more likely to prefer online interaction. They also found that those who prefer online interaction have a greater incidence of loneliness and problematic Internet use (Kim et al., 2009). The researchers posited that these findings suggest deficient social skills and compulsive Internet use indicate lower levels of self-regulation (Kim et al., 2009).

An Italian study similarly found that problematic Internet users were more likely to have poorer interpersonal relationships in comparison with non-problematic users (Milani et al., 2009). They concluded that the overall quality of interpersonal relationships and cognitive coping strategies were accurate predictors of problematic Internet use levels (Milani et al., 2009). Khosroshahi and Nosrat Abad(2012) found that avoidant and insecure attachment styles were correlated with Internet addiction.

A study by Gentzler, Oberhauser, Westerman, and Nadorff (2011) found that college students who used SNS, in addition to other forms of communication, for

communicating with the parent they are closest to, reported greater levels of loneliness. The SNS users reported more loneliness despite ultimately communicating more frequently with their parent than those who did not use SNS to communicate with their parent (Gentzler et al., 2011). In addition to loneliness, these students also scored significantly higher in anxious attachment and reported more relationship conflict with their parent than the students who did not use SNS to communicate with their chosen parent (Gentzler et al., 2011). The students who spoke on the phone with their parent, without additional SNS communication, reported the converse; they showed significantly lower levels of anxious attachment and conflict than those who communicated with SNS. The students who only spoke on the phone with their parents also reported greater satisfaction, intimacy, support, and instrumental aid in their relationships with their parent.

Well-Being and Mental Health

As a corollary to loneliness and social skills, overall well-being has been shown to be a predicting factor in compulsive Internet use (Kraut et al., 1998; Nimrod, 2013). One study challenged the "Internet Paradox," a theory conceptualized during the early days of widespread Internet use. The study found that even though the Internet is used for social interaction, the more an individual uses the Internet as a whole, the greater likelihood they are to develop social isolation and depression (Nimrod, 2013). The researcher found that the Internet Paradox was too broad and ignored the specific ways the Internet could be used for social needs (Nimrod, 2013). In Nimrod's study (2013), members of 16 different online depression support communities were surveyed in an attempt to measure the users perceived benefits. The researcher found that, while the levels of depression

were reportedly the same among all 631 users, the individuals who fell into the "heavy user" category perceived greater benefits than "light users" (Nimrod, 2013). The heavy support community users reported receiving emotional support online and experiencing benefits when they were offline (Nimrod, 2013).

Another study that sought to challenge the notion that high levels of Internet use were inherently associated with problematic use found that individuals who maintained a blog showed significant improvement on several measures of well-being (Boniel-Nissim & Barak, 2013). The researchers randomly assigned adolescents to six different groups, with five groups assigned to writing about the following: social difficulties in a blog open to responses, social difficulties in a blog closed to responses, general subjects in blog open to responses, general subjects in blog closed to responses, and social difficulties in a private diary on a personal computer. A sixth group was not assigned any writing. The researchers found that the four groups that were assigned to blog showed significantly more improvement and significantly lower levels of distress as measured by self-report and expert-based judgments (Boniel-Nissim & Barak, 2013).

In contrast, and in line with the Internet Paradox, several studies have found a positive relationship between problematic Internet use and mental health disturbances (Hetzel-Riggin & Pritchard, 2011; Khosroshahi & Nosrat Abad, 2012; Senormanci et al., 2014). In a study on problematic Internet use and its relationship between psychological distress, coping style and body esteem, researchers found that phobic anxiety for males and depression for females were accurate predictors of problematic Internet use (Hetzel-Riggin & Pritchard, 2011). Individuals in treatment for Internet addiction also had nearly triple the score on the Beck Depression Inventory versus the control group with an

average score of 16.5 versus 6 (Senormanci et al., 2014). They found that Internet addiction had the strongest relationship with depression. The study was conducted on all males, which suggests that depression is a predictor of problematic Internet use for males as well as females (Senormanci et al., 2014).

A study of college students seeking to decipher the difference between problematic Internet users and non-problematic users found that instead of focusing on how much time an individual spent online, paying attention to their specific activity choices revealed significant results (Su-Yen & Jeng-Yi, 2010). Su-Yen and Jeng-Yi (2010) found several categories of heavy users, which included users who used the Internet for more than 33.81 hours per week. Heavy users were classified by using the benchmark of one standard deviation above the mean. Among female heavy users, the authors found three distinct categories, with the group that spent the most time information seeking, for academic and non-academic purposes, had the highest average academic grades, which was significantly higher than female non-heavy users. These information-seeking female heavy users also had significantly higher depression scores than the female non-heavy users. The other category of female heavy users with significant results were the gamers: they had the lowest academic grades, highest scores on the loneliness scale, and greater levels of physical illness and depression than all of the other heavy users and the non-heavy users (Su-Yen & Jeng-Yi, 2010). Male heavy users who engaged in gaming online also had significantly lower grades than all other users (Su-Yen & Jeng-Yi, 2010).

Offline Participation and Internet Use

As Boniel-Nissim and Barak (2013) and Nimrod (2013) have demonstrated,

specific Internet activities produced positive outcomes that individuals benefited from even when they are offline. A study seeking to understand the relationship between participants' membership to Facebook groups and their offline participation found that participants who were members of Facebook groups were looking for one of four things: socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, or information (Valenzuela, Park, Kee, 2009). Individuals who used Facebook groups for informational purposes had a higher correlation to offline civic and political activity than the other three categories (Valenzuela et al., 2009). The researchers also found that the levels of life satisfaction were higher among the individuals who participated in civic activities (Valenzuela et al., 2009).

Zhou, Fong, and Tan (2014) found that "advanced" users, or those who use the Internet for a broad variety of activities, were generally more active during their leisure time. Specifically, they spent more time reading books, dining in restaurants, and visiting relatives or friends (Zhou et al., 2014).

Vergeer and Pelzer (2009) conducted a telephone survey in the Netherlands and found that there was a difference in persons who use the Internet for work-related purposes versus non-work-related purposes. They also found that the non-work users had a slightly smaller offline network size and spent less time on their offline network than the only-work users (Verger & Pelzer, 2009). The persons who had a larger offline network size perceived themselves to have more social support, whereas the persons who had a larger online network size did not perceive having more social support. Overall, the researchers found that online and offline network size were positively correlated,

suggesting they complemented each other, instead of replacing one another (Vergeer & Pelzer, 2009).

Demographic Differences

Of the studies evaluated for the current research, several of them reported the relationship between gender and problematic Internet use. Eight studies found that males were more prone to problematic Internet usage than females (Beutal et al., 2011; Fang, 2010; Lim & Chen, 2012; Messarra et al., 2011; Morsunbul, 2014; Senormanci et al., 2014; Vitak et al., 2011; Zhou, Fong, & Tan, 2014). Several studies (Su-Yen & Jeng-Yi, 2010; Hetzel-Riggin & Pritchard, 2011) found undergraduate males and females to have similar levels of problematic Internet usage overall, though they reported different psychological stressors as predictors for problematic Internet use.

Two studies also found persons 30 years old and younger to have higher rates of problematic Internet usage (Beutal et al., 2011; Messarra et al., 2011). Vitak et al. (2011) found younger men specifically more likely to exhibit problematic Internet usage than older women. The majority of the research presented in the present chapter was conducted using participants that were under the age of 25, leaving a dearth of data on the Internet usage among persons older than 25 years of age. Another study (Vergeer & Pelzer, 2009) found that the average age of non-work-related purpose users was nearly 20 years younger than the average age of persons who used the Internet for solely work-related purposes at 34.7 versus 53.4 years of age, respectively.

Salient Themes in Previous Research

A salient theme found in the author's review of the literature was self-regulation, in its various forms, and/or healthy coping skills—or their absence—when faced with

stress, influencing the presence of problematic Internet usage (Beutal et al., 2011; Coker, 2011; Deatherage et al., 2014; Fang, 2010; Hetzel-Riggin & Pritchard, 2011; Khosroshahi & Nosrat Abad, 2012; Kim et al., 2009; Kwon et al., 2011; LaRose & Eastin, 2004; Li et al., 2009; Lim & Chen, 2012; Lin et al., 2009; Messarra et al., 2011; Milani et al., 2009; Odaci, 2011; Oktan, 2011; Panek, 2014; Senormanci et al., 2014). A similar theme was conscientiousness and self-efficacy as accurate predictors of individuals' susceptibility to problematic Internet usage (Odaci, 2011; Oktan, 2011; Wagner et al., 2012). Healthy coping skills, which involve planning and emotional regulation, and conscientiousness and self-efficacy, which involve discipline and goal achievement, are both behaviors that involve self-control. Self-control is an important ingredient in self-efficacy, especially as it pertains to achieving personal goals, where there is no one to monitor achievement with the exemption of the individual attempting to achieve. The relationship between Internet usage, and self-efficacy is a relatively new area of interest, as demonstrated by the lack of research, particularly as it concerns personal goals and their achievement.

Conclusions for Current Research

These results suggest that there can be direct and measurable benefits when individuals engage in proactive coping behaviors along with their Internet usage. The present research study seeks to link together the themes of self-efficacy, proactive coping, and problematic Internet use. As noted above, there are numerous studies detailing the presence of dysfunctional coping skills, but very little information on the presence of proactive coping skills, which are closely linked to self-efficacy. The previous research suggests that there will be a positive correlation between self-efficacy and proactive

coping skills, and a negative correlation between self-efficacy and problematic Internet usage, as well as a negative correlation between proactive coping skills and problematic Internet usage. A study done in Thailand on the effects of meditation found that mindfulness meditation was positively associated with emotional intelligence, which is in turn positively associated with self-efficacy (Charoensukmongkol, 2014). Because the Internet has become a steadfast entity in the world, it would be beneficial to find a way to reduce the traits that are positively correlated with problematic Internet usage by employing traits that are negatively correlated with problematic Internet usage, such as meditation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This study was descriptive in nature, using a quantitative design. The study attempted to examine the relationship between compulsive Internet use, self-efficacy, and personal goal achievement. This quantitative study utilized primary data that was collected through a self-administered Internet survey website, www.esurveycreator.com.

Sampling

The population studied was adults, 18 years of age and older, who had used the Internet in the month prior to taking the survey. Participants were recruited using snowball sampling, a nonprobability sampling procedure. The researcher recruited participants through Facebook and e-mail. Participants were recruited through Facebook by posting a link to the survey on the researcher's Facebook wall, encouraging viewers to take the survey and share the link by posting it to their own Facebook walls. Below is the script posted to the researcher's Facebook wall:

> Hi!
>
> Do you have ten minutes to complete a survey for me? I am finishing my Master's degree in Social Work. For my thesis, I am studying the relationship between levels of Internet use and proactive personal skills and characteristics. If you received this e-mail, we identified you as a qualified participant (18+, able to read English, and have used the Internet in the past month). The survey is 38 questions, plus a few demographic questions and should take about ten minutes to complete. Please follow this link for more information: https://www.esurvey creator.com/s/NinasThesisSurvey
>
> If you have any questions, reply to this message, or email me at XXXXXX.

XXXXXXXX@student.csulb.edu.

Thank you!!!

Nina

The researcher also created a similar e-mail message with the survey link and sent it to no more than five prospective participants per day. The researcher encouraged recipients to forward the message to no more than five of their contacts who met the sampling criteria, or to post the survey to their Facebook wall. The researcher received responses from 146 survey participants.

Study Instrument

Once participants decided to participate in the study, they were administered three scales and several demographic questions. One scale used was the Compulsive Internet Use Scale (CIUS), which is a 14-question valid, reliable, and internally consistent scale that is based off of gambling addiction criteria but applied to the Internet (Meerkerk et al., 2009). The CIUS is answered on a 5-point Likert scale, with 0 representing "never" and 4 representing "very often." Sample questions include: "Do you find it difficult to stop using the Internet when you are offline?" and "Do you neglect your daily obligations (work, school, or family life) because you prefer to go on the Internet?" The Cronbach's alpha for the CIUS was .88, showing good reliability.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) is a ten-question scale that measures self-efficacy, and has demonstrated validity along with reliability in samples from over 23 nations (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). The GSE is answered on a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "not true at all" and 4 representing "exactly true." Sample questions from the GSE include: "I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard

enough," and "When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions." The Cronbach's alpha was .80.

The final scale that was used was the Proactive Coping Subscale (PCS), which is a 14-question subscale, of the Proactive Coping Inventory, but has been validated as a stand-alone scale with high internal consistency (Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999). The PCS measures autonomous goal setting with self-regulatory goal attainment. The PCS uses a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "not at all true" and 4 representing "completely true." Sample questions from the PCS include: "After attaining a goal, I look for another, more challenging one" and " I visualize my dreams and try to achieve them." The Cronbach's alpha for the PCS was .79. See Appendix A for scales and demographic questionnaire.

The means, standard deviations, ranges, and Cronbach's alphas for Compulsive Internet Use (CIUS), General Self-Efficacy (GSE), and Proactive Coping (PCS) scales are reported in Table 2. The range of observed scores in this study was from 0 to 43. The mean score observed for the CIUS was 15.6 (*SD* = 9.0). The GSE's scores ranged from 19 to 40. The mean score observed for GSE was 33.4 (*SD* =3.6). The PCS had a range of scores from 25 to 54, with a mean of 44.4 (*SD* = 5.2) and a standard.

TABLE 1. Reliability of Scales: CIUS, GSE, and PCS

Instrument	Possible Range	Observed Range	*M*	*SD*	Alpha
CIUS	0-56	0-43	15.6	9.0	.876
GSE	10-40	19-40	33.4	3.6	.800
PCS	14-56	25-54	44.4	5.2	.786

Data Collection Method

Data collection began in October of 2014 upon receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was completed by the end of October 2014. Approximately 50 first contact e-mails were sent to potential survey participants by the researcher. The researcher also posted an abridged initial contact script to her Facebook wall.

In the initial contact script, the researcher requested participants to forward the survey to five of their contacts or to post it to their Facebook wall. Participants were given a link to a survey, which was hosted by a website formatted for survey hosting (www.esurveycreator.com). The participant was asked to read and agree to a consent letter (found in Appendix A). Participants had to agree to the consent letter, as indicated by clicking "yes," before moving on to the survey. The data was collected and analyzed beginning November 2014.

Data Analysis

The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the collected data. A frequency distribution was run for each of the variables. The variables were analyzed using an independent groups t-test and bivariate correlations due to the use of nominal and interval/ratio level variables. The researcher also ran one-way ANOVAs. These analyses were executed to discover whether there was a significant relationship among compulsive Internet use, proactive coping skills, and self-efficacy, and demographic variables.

In order to clarify the data, the researcher recoded several demographic

possibilities into one category when there were only one or two indicating the original answer choice, such as location.

Social Work Ethics

Participants of this study were voluntary and were required to acknowledge agreement of the informed consent form electronically before beginning the survey. Confidentiality was protected through the survey hosting website, ensuring that the data from participants' surveys was not identifiable to a specific computer or location. Participants were informed of their right to skip any question or terminate the survey at any time. The researcher provided contact information for the IRB, herself, and the advising faculty member, should participants have any questions.

Relevance to Social Work with Older Adults and Families

This research is relevant to the Older Adults and Families concentration of the Master of Social Work program because it addresses a compulsive behavior, self-efficacy, and coping skills, which affect mental health and quality of life. It is specifically relevant to adults because adults are not provided the structured life that most kids live with under their parents' guidance. This lack of structure leaves adults to need more self-efficacy in order to thrive and achieve the success that they want. This study is relevant to social work and a multicultural social work practice in that the majority of Americans of every class and culture have access to the Internet and use it on a daily basis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study examined the responses of adults 18 years of age and older who use the Internet by using the following scales: Compulsive Internet Use Scale, General Self-Efficacy scale, and the Proactive Coping Subscale of the Proactive Coping Inventory.

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 146 surveys were completed, with 24 surveys not being usable due to incomplete or missing information, making the sample size $N = 122$. Table 1 presents a demographic profile of the study participants. The entire sample included adults 18 years of age and older, with an age range between 18 and 75 years old. Half (54.9%) of the participants were between the ages of 26 and 35. The majority (79.5%) of the participants were female. Nearly half (47.5%) of the participants reported living in California.

The majority (56.6%) of the participants were not students. More than half (54.1%) of the participants were employed full-time, with just under a quarter (22.1%) of the participants reporting part-time employment. Eighteen percent of the participants were not employed, and 5.7% were stay at home parents. The majority (60.7%) of participants classified themselves as Caucasians/Whites. The second highest ethnic group reported were Latinos/as (13.9%), followed by African American, Asian, Native

American, or Pacific Islander (13.1%), and participants selecting "more than one" ethnicity (12.3%).

Almost half (46.7%) of the participants reported that they had received a Bachelor's degree. Thirty-one percent of the participants had achieved an Associate's degree or less, and 22.2% of participants reported receiving a Master's or Doctorate degree.

Regarding weekly self-care activities, exercising was the most popular (79.5%), followed by meditation (23.8%), religious or spiritual practices (20.5%), and journaling (18.9%).

TABLE 2. Demographic Characteristics Recoded ($N = 122$)

Characteristics	*n*	%
Gender		
Female	97	79.5
Male	25	20.5
Ages		
18-25	11	9.0
26-35	67	54.9
36-45	18	14.8
46-55	8	6.6
56-75	18	14.7
Student		
Yes	53	43.4
No	69	56.6
Employment Status		
Full-time	66	54.1
Part-time	27	22.1
Not-employed	22	18.0
Stay at home parent	7	5.7

TABLE 2. Continued

Characteristics	*n*	%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	74	60.7
Latino/a	17	13.9
African-American/Black	2	1.6
Asian	9	7.4
Pacific Islander	3	2.5
Native American	2	1.6
More than one	15	12.3
Highest level of completed education		
High School diploma/GED	6	4.9
Some college	23	18.9
Associate's degree	9	7.4
Bachelor's degree	57	46.7
Master's degree	23	18.9
Doctoral degree	4	3.3
State lived in		
California	58	47.5
Western (AZ/CO/MT / NM/OR/WA)	39	32
Eastern (D.C./FL/IL/MI/ MN/NC/NY/WI)	25	20.5
Meditating		
Yes	29	23.8
No	93	76.2
Writing in journal		
Yes	23	18.9
No	99	81.1
Exercising		
Yes	97	79.5
No	25	20.5
Attending to a religious/spiritual practice		
Yes	25	20.5
No	97	79.5

Differences in Ethnicity, Employment, and Education

The researcher used one-way ANOVA to analyze several demographic variables against the three scales: Compulsive Internet Use Scale (CIUS), General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE), and Proactive Coping Subscale (PCS). The results from the employment status category are presented in Table 3. Participants who reported that they were not employed, or were a stay-at-home parent, had significantly lower scores (M = 42.1, SD 6.6) than part-time (M = 45.5, SD = 4.4) and full-time workers (M = 44.4, SD = 4.8) on the PCS [$F(2, 119) = 3.22$, $p = .044$]. There was no significant relationship between participants'location or education and the PCS. There was a significant relationship found when running one-way ANOVA for ethnicity, with persons who selected "more than one" ethnicity (M = 47.33, SD = 4.8) having significantly [$F(3, 118) = 4.7$, $p = .004$)] higher scores on the PCS than participants who selected Caucasian (M = 42.8, SD = 5.5); Latino (M = 45.9, SD = 3.6); and African American, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander (M = 45.1, SD = 4.6) as shown in Table 4.

Differences Between Gender, Age, Self-Care Activities, and Student Status

The researcher used independent sample t-tests to analyze the relationships between males and females (Table 6), age groups (Table 5), self-care activities (Table 7), and students versus non-students. There was a significant difference between those aged 45 and under and those aged 46 and over for all three scales. The participants who reported being age 45 and under had significantly [$t(120) = 2.15$, $p = .034$)] higher scores on the CIUS (M = 16.1, SD = 9.3), indicating a higher incidence of compulsive Internet use.

TABLE 3. Employment Status and CIUS, GSE, and PCS ($N = 122$)

Scale (Range reported)	*n*	df	Mean(*SD*)	*F*	Sig.
CIUS (0 – 43)		2		1.10	.336
Not employed/Stay at home	29		16.79(9.13)		
Employed part-time	27		16.15(10.69)		
Employed full-time	66		14.06(8.43)		
GSE (19 – 40)		2		1.51	.225
Not employed/Stay at home	29		32.24(4.84)		
Employed part-time	27		33.44(3.65)		
Employed full-time	66		33.65(3.08)		
PCS (25 – 54)		2		3.22	.044*
Not employed/Stay at home	29		42.10(6.61)		
Employed part-time	27		45.48(4.39)		
Employed full-time	66		44.39(4.75)		

* = significant at the .05 level

TABLE 4. Demographic Characteristics Versus CIUS, GSE, and PCS ($N = 122$)

Scale (Reported Range) Ethnicity	*n*	df	Mean(*SD*)	*F*	Sig.
CIUS (0 – 43)		3		.78	.498
Caucasian	74		14.42(8.53)		
Latino/a	17		14.47(10.54)		
Af.Am/Asian/Pac Is./NaAm.	16		17.06(11.58)		
More than one ethnicity	15		17.67(7.59)		
GSE (19 – 40)		3		2.34	.077
Caucasian	74		32.82(3.80)		
Latino/a	17		32.53(3.87)		
Af.Am/Asian/Pac Is./NaAm.	16		35.00(2.73)		
More than one ethnicity	15		34.47(3.42)		
PCS (25 – 54)		3		4.70	.004**
Caucasian	74		42.78(5.45)		
Latino/a	17		45.94(3.61)		
Af.Am/Asian/Pac Is./NaAm.	16		45.13(4.56)		
More than one ethnicity	15		47.33(4.81)		

** = significant at the .005 level

In contrast, participants in the 46 and over age group averaged nearly 5 points less (M = 11.8, SD = 7.7). The GSE scores for the over 46 age group (M = 31.8, SD = 4.7) were nearly 2 points lower on average than the under 45 age group (M = 33.7, SD = 3.3), at $t(120) = 2.4$, $p = .019$. Lastly, the proactive coping scores of the 45 and under age group were an average of just under 3 points higher (M = 44.7, SD = 4.9) than the 46 and over age group (M = 41.9, SD = 6.1), with $t(120) = 2.5$, $p = .016$.

The t-test revealed a significant difference between males and females in their PCS scores [$t(120) = 3.9$, $p = .000$)], with females scoring (M = 45.0, SD = 4.4) an average of over 4 points higher than males (M = 40.6, SD = 7.0), as shown in Table 6.

There was no significant difference between participants reporting meditation, exercising, or attending to a spiritual/religious practice (Table 7). Approaching significance [$t(120) = -1.92$, $p = .057$], participants reporting journal writing, did score four points higher on the CIUS.

TABLE 5. Age Versus CIUS, GSE, and PCS

	N	df	Mean(*SD*)	*t*	Sig. (2-tailed)
CIUS		120		2.15	.034*
	45 and under	96	16.08(9.3)		
	46 and over	26	11.81(7.7)		
GSE		120		2.37	.019*
	45 and under	96	33.68(3.3)		
	46 and over	26	31.77(4.7)		
PCS		120		2.45	.016*
	45 and under	96	44.69(4.9)		
	46 and over	26	41.88(6.1)		

* = significant at the .05 level

TABLE 6. Gender Versus CIUS, GSE, and PCS ($N = 122$)

		N	Mean(*SD*)	*t*	Sig. (2-tailed)
CIUS				-1.25	.215
	Female	97	14.65(8.9)		
	Male	25	17.20(10.1)		
GSE				.89	.374
	Female	97	33.42(3.4)		
	Male	25	32.68(4.8)		
PCS				3.92	.000**
	Female	97	44.99(4.4)		
	Male	25	40.60(7.0)		

** = significant at the .005 level

Comparing the Scales

When running Pearson's *r* correlation (Table 8), the researcher found a significant negative correlation between CIUS and the GSE scores ($r = -.203$, $p = .025$). The researcher also found a significantly positive correlation between PCS and GSE scores ($r = .616$, and $p = .005$). There was no significant correlation found between the GSE and the CIUS.

TABLE 7. Meditation, Journal Writing, Exercising and Attending to Religious/Spiritual Practice

Scale	Attribute	*N*	Mean(*SD*)	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CIUS						
	Meditation	29	16.07(7.81)	-.604	120	.547
	No	93	14.89(9.54)			
	Exercise	97	15.18(8.88)	-.007	120	.994
	No	25	15.16(10.28)			
	Journal	23	18.44(10.30)	-1.922	120	.057
	No	99	14.41(8.73)			
	Spiritual	25	13.76(7.80)	.865	120	.388
	No	97	15.54(9.46)			
GSE						
	Meditation	29	33.69(3.86)	-.696	120	.488
	No	93	31.14(3.67)			
	Exercise	97	33.22(3.84)	.316	120	.753
	No	25	33.48(3.18)			
	Journal	23	33.61(2.71)	-.484	120	.629
	No	99	33.19(3.91)			
	Spiritual	25	33.48(3.49)	-.316	120	.753
	No	97	33.22(3.78)			
PCS						
	Meditation	29	44.66(5.09)	-.659	120	.511
	No	93	43.91(5.35)			
	Exercise	97	44.39(5.27)	-1.247	120	.215
	No	25	42.92(5.26)			
	Journal	23	45.09(4.16)	-1.006	120	.316
	No	99	43.86(5.50)			
	Spiritual	25	44.12(3.70)	-.032	120	.975
	No	97	44.08(5.63)			

TABLE 8. Pearson's *r* Correlation Between Compulsive Internet Use Scale, General Self-Efficacy Scale, and Proactive Coping Subscale (*n* = 122)

	CIUS	GSE	PCS
CIUS	1		
GSE	*r* = -.073 *p* = .424	1	
PCS	*r* = -.203* *p* = .025	*r* = .616** *p* = .005	1

* = significant at the .05 level
** = significant at the .005 level

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary

This study examined the relationship between several demographic variables and compulsive Internet use, self-efficacy, and proactive coping skills among 122 adults over the age of 18. This study found that those in the 46 and over age group had lower levels of compulsive Internet use than their 45 and younger counterparts. Interestingly, the over-46 age group also reported significantly lower levels of self-efficacy and proactive coping, which is inverse to the rest of the sample.

Individuals' identifying themselves as more than one ethnicity showed more proactive coping skills and greater self-efficacy. Individuals who are employed part or full-time also reported higher levels of proactive coping. While not quite statistically significant, this study found that students also had higher levels of proactive coping than non-students.

Even though it was just outside the level of significance, this study found males to be markedly more prone to compulsive Internet use than females, while females had significantly greater levels of proactive coping skills.

The current study found proactive coping to be negatively correlated to compulsive Internet use. Proactive coping scores also showed a positive relationship with self-efficacy scores. While not significant, self-efficacy had a negative correlation

to compulsive Internet use, which was supported indirectly by the relationship between proactive coping being significantly related to self-efficacy scores.

Comparison of Findings with Prior Research

Existing studies have found that persons in the older demographic report significantly lower levels of problematic Internet use (Beutal et al., 2011; Messarra et al., 2011; Vergeer & Pelzer, 2009; Vitak et al., 2011; Zhou et al., 2014). Counter to this study's results, previous studies have found that older participants had greater levels of proactive coping (Bagana, Negovan, & Vanea, 2011).

Previous studies have found that gender influences problematic Internet use, finding that males report higher levels of problematic Internet use (Beutal, et al., 2011: Fang, 2010; Lim & Chen, 2012; Messarra, et al., 2011; Morsunbul, 2014; Senormanci, 2014; Vitak, et al., 2011; Zhou et al., 2014). These results are congruent with this study's findings that males reported higher levels of compulsive Internet use. The present study found females to have significantly higher proactive coping levels. While there is a dearth of research available comparing gender and proactive coping, a previous study also found females to have higher levels of proactive coping skills (Bagana et al., 2011).

This study found a significant negative relationship between proactive coping skills and compulsive Internet usage. Similarly, previous studies have found a significant relationship between coping skills and problematic Internet use (Deatherage et al., 2014; Fang, 2010; Hetzel-Riggin & Pritchard, 2011; Khosrashahi & Nosrat, 2012; Kwon et al., 2011; Li et al., 2009; Milani et al., 2009; Oktan, 2011; Senormanci et al., 2014). Previous research has shown that self-efficacy is correlated negatively with problematic Internet usage (Beutal et al., 2011; Eastin & LaRose, 2000; Kim et al., 2009; LaRose &

Eastin, 2004; Odaci, 2011; Oktan, 2011; Panek, 2014; Wagner et al., 2012). The present study also found self-efficacy to be negatively correlated to compulsive Internet use.

The present study found those who were employed had higher levels of proactive coping skills than those who were not employed or were a stay-at-home parent. A previous study comparing the proactive coping levels and employment found the lowest levels of proactive coping among those reported that they were not employed (Bagana et al., 2011). They also found the highest levels of proactive coping were reported by part-time employees, followed closely by full-time employees.

There is a dearth of research on proactive coping levels and individuals who identify as multi-ethnic, so we were unable to compare our findings against previous research.

Implications for Social Work Practice

Problematic Internet usage will likely remain an issue for people across the world for as long as the Internet exists. Presently, at least 80 percent of American adults have 24-hour Internet access at home, and worldwide, more than 32% of adults have regular access, with that percentage expected to continue to increase (Morales, 2013). Because Internet use is so widespread and pervasive, it is important that social workers recognize the risk factors and behaviors associated with its problematic usage. It is also important to recognize which behaviors are associated with proactive coping skills and self-efficacy, in order to assist with—or even prevent—problematic Internet use behaviors.

The proactive coping element saw the greatest degree of variance among populations. The difference in proactive coping scores among the employed versus non-employed may be explained by the fact that individuals who have a job have obviously

demonstrated a greater degree of proactive coping skills, as evidenced by the fact that they have a job. Having a job also creates more opportunities for an individual to build their proactive coping skill set through repeated use of personal agency. To hold a position with an employer provides an individual with responsibility, and there are usually colleagues who will give feedback and continually offer the employed more opportunities to successfully complete tasks and receive compensation for this behavior. Stay at home parents may also feel rewarded for their time, but they are typically working in a closed system, without intellectual equals or colleagues. The same is likely true for individuals who are not employed: they likely are not engaging regularly in tasks or reward systems that reinforce proactive coping skills. They may be unemployed because they already have less proactive coping skills.

Persons identifying as more than one ethnicity, along with females, may have had to learn proactive coping skills as a way to combat being a member of a marginalized group. Multi-ethnic individuals may feel a level of empowerment regarding outside goals, as they have an insider's perspective into at least two different cultural worlds, perhaps increasing their desire to circumvent stress before it can happen.

Implications for Future Research

It is important to continue expanding the body of knowledge on the Internet's effect on individuals' daily lives. While not pathological, there are many anecdotal articles and stories of individuals spending large amounts of time on the Internet, not remembering what they went there for in the first place. Similar to other behaviors that are intended for leisure, such as alcohol consumption, there can come a point when Internet usage starts to interfere with an individuals job, home life, and personal goals.

There is a need to continue research on the effects of unbridled Internet use, along with programs that can serve as gentle reminders or guideposts for individuals to self-assess their relationship with the Internet. Many employers offer employee assistance programs (EAP) that are in place to help employees maintain mental and emotional health (Office of Personnel Management, 2014). EAPs typically offer programs and confidential referrals for more well-known addictions, such as smoking and alcohol, but those are two behaviors that not everyone chooses to participate in. On the other hand, the Internet is typically seen as a benign, but necessary, resource for everyone. Research shows that employers are already concerned about their employees' levels of cyberslacking, so implementing a training program or an awareness workshop may help employees at work and at home. Programs like RescueTime, Toggl (Toggle OU, 2014), and Time Doctor are all aimed at helping users track their productivity and how much time they spend on websites or other tasks that are not deemed productive, with an option to block sites after a specified amount of time. This type of service allows for some level of web surfing but with limitations.

As the United States' population of multi-ethnic individuals' increases, there is a great opportunity to study the unique characteristics that come along with identifying with more than one ethnicity. Results from the 2010 U.S. Census showed a 32% increase—to 2.9% of the total population—in persons who identify themselves as being two or more races (Jones & Bullock, 2012), and it is likely that that percentage will only increase.

Limitations

This study was limited to the number of participants the researcher was able to contact without the use of large-scale advertising and a greater window of survey time. The sample for this study was limited to persons in the researcher's network, so the sample is not generalizable due to the convenience sampling procedure.

Another limitation of this study was the self-report element of the surveys. Despite the Consent Form informing participants of their anonymity, responses may have been biased due to participants being in the researcher's network.

Another factor that may have skewed results was the imbalance between genders, educational levels, ethnicities, and ages of survey respondents. The majority of the study participants were female, white, age 26 to 35, and had at least a bachelor's degree.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

Compulsive Internet Usage, Self-efficacy, and Proactive Coping Skills

Consent to Participate

I am Janina Zurawski, a master's level social work student at California State University, Long Beach. I am inviting you to participate in a study I am conducting for my thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are over the age of eighteen years old and you have used the Internet in the past month.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between compulsive Internet usage, self-efficacy, and proactive coping skills. The results might offer insight into areas for future research, so that participants and researchers may better understand individuals' relationship with the Internet.

Procedures

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey about your Internet usage, your attitudes and behaviors toward goal achievement, and some demographic information. The survey should take approximately ten minutes to complete.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

The researcher expects there to be minimal risks or discomforts in the completion of this study. There is a possibility that you may find some questions uncomfortable, due to their self-reflective nature. You do not have to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with.

Potential Benefits to Subjects and/or Society

You are not expected to directly benefit from this research. However, you will be contributing to the body of knowledge on Internet research. The researcher hopes that the

information gained from this study will lead to further studies and possibly programs or exercises to aid in Internet self-regulation for those who would like it.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. The study results will be reported in aggregate data, and any identifying information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to skip questions you do not wish to answer without removing yourself as a participant of the study. You may choose to stop the survey at any time. No penalty or loss will occur from failure to participate in this study. Participation or non-participation will not affect any personal relationship you have with the researcher.

Identification of Investigators

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me (Janina Zurawski) at janina.zurawski@student.csulb.edu, or my thesis advisor, Dr. Janaki Santhiveeran, jsanthiv@csulb.edu.

Rights of Research Participants

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions concerning your rights as a participant, please contact the CSULB Office of University Research at (562)985-5314 or research@csulb.edu.

Thank you for your participation!

For those interested in participating in the study, please answer the following:

I am 18 years of age or older. Yes No

I agree to the terms and would like to participate in the study.

Yes No

APPENDIX B

STUDY INSTRUMENTS

Compulsive Internet Use Scale (CIUS)

Please respond to the following questions using a 5-point scale where 0 = never, 1 = seldom, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, and 4 = very often.

How often:	0	1	2	3	4
1. do you find it difficult to stop using the Internet when you are online?					
2. do you continue to use the Internet despite your intention to stop?					
3. do others (e.g., partner, children, parents) say you should use the Internet less?					
4. do you prefer the Internet instead of spending time with others (e.g., partner, children, parents)?					
5. are you short of sleep because of the Internet?					
6. do you think about the Internet, even when not online?					
7. do you look forward to your next Internet session?					
8. do you think you should use the Internet less often?					
9. have you unsuccessfully tried to spend less time on the Internet?					
10. do you rush through your (home) work in order to go on the Internet?					
11. do you neglect your daily obligations (work, school, or family life) because you prefer to go on the Internet?					
12. do you go on the Internet when you are feeling down?					
13. do you use the Internet to escape from your sorrows or get relief from negative feelings?					
14. do you feel restless, frustrated, or irritated when you cannot use the Internet?					

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)

1 = Not true at all 2 = Hardly true 3 = Moderately true 4 = Exactly true	1	2	3	4
1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.				
2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.				
3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.				
4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.				
5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.				
6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.				
7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.				
8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.				
9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.				
10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.				

Proactive Coping Subscale (PCS)

The following statements deal with reactions you may have to various situations. Indicate how true each of these statements is depending on how you feel about the situation. Do this by checking the most appropriate box.

In scoring responses, 1 is assigned to “not at all true,” 2 to “barely true,” 3 to “somewhat true,” and 4 to “completely true.”	1	2	3	4
1. I am a “take charge” person.				
2. I try to let things work out on their own (-)				
3. After attaining a goal, I look for another, more challenging one.				
4. I like challenges and beating the odds.				
5. I visualize my dreams and try to achieve them.				
6. Despite numerous setbacks, I usually succeed in getting what I want.				
7. I try to pinpoint what I need to succeed.				
8. I always try to find a way to work around obstacles; nothing really stops me.				
9. I often see myself failing so I don't get my hopes up too high. (-)				
10. When I apply for a position, I imagine myself filling it.				
11. I turn obstacles into positive experiences.				
12. If someone tells me I can't do something, you can be sure I will do it.				
13. When I experience a problem, I take the initiative in resolving it.				
14. When I have a problem, I usually see myself in a no-win situation. (-)				

(-) = Reverse items

Demographics

1) What is your gender?:

1 Male
2 Female

2) What is your age?

1 18 - 25
2 26 - 35
3 36 - 45
4 46 - 55
5 56 - 65
5 66 - 75
7 76 - 85
8 86 – 95

3) Are you a student?

1 Yes
2 No

4) What is your employment status?:

1 Not employed
2 Part-time
3 Full-time

5) Do you participate in one or more of of the following activities weekly (check all that apply)?:

1 Doing Meditation
2 Writing Journal
3 Exercising
4 Attending to Religious/Spiritual practice

6) What is your ethnicity:

1 Caucasian/White
2 Latino/a
3 African-American/Black
4 Asian
5 Pacific Islander
6 Native American
7 More than one
8 Other (no need to specify)

7) What is your level of education?:

1 H.S. Diploma/GED
2 Some college
3 Associate's degree
4 Bachelor's degree
5 Master's degree
6 Doctoral degree

8) Specify the state in which you live:

1 California
2 Other (please specify)_____

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