



Compare the Effectiveness of Pornography Addiction Recovery Training and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy on Academic Procrastination, Psychological Flexibility and Academic Self-efficacy of Male Adolescents

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of pornography addiction recovery training and cognitive-behavioral therapy on academic procrastination, cognitive flexibility, and academic self-efficacy among male adolescents. The research method was a quasi-experimental three-group design with pre-test, post-test, and a two-month follow-up. The statistical population included all male adolescents with pornography addiction in Esfahan during spring and summer of 2024. The sample consisted of 60 individuals who met the inclusion criteria, selected through purposive sampling and randomly assigned to three groups. In this study, the Academic Procrastination Scale (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), Psychological Flexibility Scale (Akbari et al., 2021), and Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (Morgan & Jinks, 1990) were used. Data were analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA in SPSS version 26. Findings showed significant differences between mean scores in pre-test and the two subsequent stages, indicating meaningful changes in mean scores compared to pre-test. The follow-up stage showed no significant difference with post-test ($p > 0.05$), indicating stability of changes. Mean score differences in procrastination ($p < 0.05$), flexibility, and self-efficacy ($p < 0.01$) between both treatment groups and control group were significant, confirming effectiveness of both treatments. The only significant difference between the two treatment groups was in cognitive flexibility ($p < 0.05$). It appears that the specific training on cognitive flexibility regarding pornography consumption tendencies and its underlying factors, which was included in the fourth session of this program, played a significant role. Furthermore, since this program addressed combined behavioral-emotional and behavioral-social strategies in the seventh and eighth sessions and discussed the role of spirituality in the ninth session, it ultimately provided adolescents with more comprehensive strategies for enhancing psychological flexibility.

Keywords: Academic self-efficacy, Academic procrastination, Addiction, Pornography, Psychological flexibility.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Given the importance of adolescence and the pervasive influence of the Internet in their daily lives, this digital exposure has provided adolescents with premature access to adult experiences. One of the major concerns of parents is the risk of pornography

addiction, which can expose adolescents to various dangers for which they are not developmentally prepared. Enhancing psychological flexibility and self-efficacy can help adolescents establish a balance between essential life tasks and pleasure-seeking impulses, thus preventing academic procrastination and motivating them toward educational and career goals. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of a pornography addiction recovery training program and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) on academic procrastination, psychological flexibility, and academic self-efficacy among male adolescents, to determine whether there are differences between these two interventions in improving the target variables.

Method

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with three groups, including two experimental groups and one control group, following a pre-test, post-test, and two-month follow-up structure. The statistical population included all male adolescents with pornography addiction in Isfahan during the spring and summer of 2024. Sixty eligible participants were selected through purposive sampling and randomly assigned into three groups of 15–20 individuals each. Inclusion criteria consisted of the ability to attend treatment sessions, absence of psychiatric medication use (verified through an initial interview), age 15 years or older, absence of severe neuropsychological disorders such as depression, and obtaining above-average scores on the Pornography Addiction Questionnaire. Exclusion criteria included simultaneous participation in other psychotherapy programs, absence from more than two sessions, and parental refusal to consent to the adolescent's participation.

After recruitment and random assignment, all participants completed a pre-test. The first experimental group received the pornography addiction recovery training program (10 sessions, 75 minutes each), and the second experimental group underwent cognitive-behavioral therapy (9 sessions, 75 minutes each). Post-tests were administered immediately after the interventions, followed by a two-month follow-up assessment.

The instruments used included: Solomon and Rothblum's (1984) Academic Procrastination Questionnaire, Akbari et al.'s (2021) Psychological Flexibility Scale, and Morgan and Jinks' (1990) Academic Self-Efficacy Scale. Data were analyzed using repeated-measures ANOVA in SPSS version 26.

Results

According to the results, no significant differences were found among the three groups in demographic variables, indicating that the groups were homogeneous in age and baseline characteristics ($p > 0.05$). Equality of variance–covariance matrices was confirmed for the subcomponents of acceptance, productivity, and psychological flexibility. The Mauchly's test of sphericity was not significant for the components of acceptance, productivity, psychological flexibility, concern about imperfection, and perfectionism in physical appearance ($p > 0.05$). However, the results were significant for academic procrastination, avoidance, and academic self-efficacy ($p < 0.05$).

For the within-subject effects, the time factor was significant for academic procrastination ($F = 167.965$, $df = 1.200$), and the time $\times$ group interaction ($F = 40.853$, $df = 2.400$) was also significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating meaningful differences across time and between groups. Pairwise comparisons revealed significant improvements between pre-test and post-test and between post-test and follow-up ($p < 0.01$), whereas no significant differences were observed between post-test and follow-up ($p > 0.05$).

Furthermore, both interventions significantly reduced academic procrastination and increased academic self-efficacy and acceptance compared with the control group ($p < 0.05$). However, only the pornography recovery training program showed a significant superiority over CBT in enhancing psychological flexibility ($p < 0.01$). Overall, both interventions demonstrated significant effectiveness compared to the control group ($p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$).

Conclusion

The findings revealed that both interventions—pornography addiction recovery training and CBT were effective in reducing academic procrastination, consistent with the studies of Aini & Hashemi (2022) and Eguiani et al. (2020). This outcome can be attributed to the interventions' focus on identifying and restructuring maladaptive cognitions. By recognizing and challenging dysfunctional thoughts such as "I can never do this" or "I need to feel motivated before I start," adolescents learned to adopt more balanced and goal-directed perspectives toward their academic responsibilities. The results also showed that both treatments improved psychological flexibility, aligning with Tavakoli et al. (2020). Since both programs are rooted in cognitive-behavioral principles, they help adolescents challenge rigid thinking patterns, reduce avoidance behaviors, and manage emotional responses more adaptively. Similarly, Bõthe et al. (2020) found that CBT, mindfulness, and psychosocial interventions effectively reduced pornography use and improved self-efficacy.

The limitations of the present study include the short two-month follow-up, the sensitivity and stigma surrounding pornography-related issues, and the difficulty in identifying adolescents with such problems due to reliance on self-reporting. Future research should explore contextual factors contributing to adolescent pornography addiction over longer follow-up periods, and develop educational programs for parents and teachers to enhance early detection and intervention for at-risk youth.