Web Therapy for Internet Addicts: A Case Study of Self-Healing by Social Media Addicts in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze how the internet sources are used as therapy treatment (Web Therapy) by internet addicts, especially social media addicts. The method used is qualitative method based on case study perspective. The method used to collect data incorporates indepth interview, observation, and literature study. The informants are nine internet addicts who acknowledge themselves as internet addicts, especially social media addicts not by medical diagnostic as one, and been using internet sources as a treatment to overcome their mental issue. Triangulation is conducted by interviewing a psychology expert. The study results show that (1) The informants admit that internet sources help them reduce stress while under pressure. (2) The informants admitted the initiative comes within themselves to use internet sources in order to reduce stress. (3) There are some ways for informants to identify their personal problems, that is (a) When they feel like they have no one around to talk with, to share their problems with, they use chatting platform to talk with and positive feedbacks from social media. (b) When they encounter negative psychological condition, they need entertainment from internet sources to be relaxed and refresh. (c) When they need contemplation they will look up for some information sources on the internet which might help them to contemplate. (4) To employ self-healing using Web Therapy, the informants choose (a) Entertaining internet sources that can help them laugh and relax (b) Internet sources contain references on how to cope with their problems. (c) Internet sources that can help them to contemplate when encounter problems. (d) Interactive internet media where they can interact and communicate with friends online. (5) The informants prefer social media such as online games with multiple players, youtube, facebook, online forums longue such as kaskus.com and detik.com, and the form of information including games, movies, music, articles on health, food, humor series, chatting, memes, sarcasms, and satyrs (6) The informants agree that although they feel better after using some internet sources as a treatment for self-healing therapy, but it is only temporary not a permanent one. They are also aware of the significant to face their own problems and cope with it. This study results can be the groundwork for libraries to develop Web Therapy services.

Keywords: Web Therapy, Webotherapy, Internet Therapy, Internet Addicts, Internet Addiction, Self-healing, Self-Therapy, Social Media Addicts

Introduction

The main goal of library is to provide information needed by users for all necessity including education, research, self-improvement, recreation or entertainment. As for the recreation or

entertainment purpose, library provides information sources that can help visitors to relax and release their daily stress. This was the beginning of a new services emergence in the library called Bibliotherapy.

Briefly, Bibliotherapy is defined as using reading materials as therapy media or a guidance providing solution to one's personal mental illness through reading. Written materials regarding Bibliotherapy was printed in 1840 for the first time and acknowledged as part of the librarianship in 1904 (Afolayan, 1992). The advancement of internet provides reading materials as an alternative for library in serving Web Therapy services. However, sometimes users want to deal with their own personal mental illness by treating themselves. For instance, users attempt to look for internet sources that can help them reduce their daily stress. This attempt usually based on one's belief that only oneself knows best one's feeling and how to cope with it. In other words, self-healing is doable because of one's belief system that only oneself can be the best cure for oneself.

This paper will discuss some of the research questions as follows: 1). What are the opinions of internet addicts towards self-healing using Web Therapy? 2). How do internet addicts find the initiative to do self-healing using Web Therapy? 3). How do internet addicts identify personal issues that can be solved through self-healing using Web Therapy? 4). What kind of internet sources used by internet addicts to employ self-healing using Web Therapy? 5). What kind of internet media used by internet addicts to employ self-healing using Web Therapy? 6). How are the effects of self-healing using Web Therapy on internet addicts?

This study aims to generate contribution to libraries in developing Web Therapy services. Internet addicts in this study refer to people who acknowledge themselves as internet addicts not by medical diagnostic as one. There are several factors why the informants acknowledge themselves as internet addicts as follows (a) The high rate of internet dependence, specially on social media. (b) The high intensity of internet use on daily basis, specially social media use. (c) The anxiety when they cannot access the internet, specially social media. Self-healing is defined as the informants' attempt to treat themselves in order to cope with their personal issues. Web Therapy is a therapy using internet sources namely texts, pictures, videos, games, sounds, and recordings such as music by reading, watching, listening or even chatting.

Research Method

This study is a qualitative research based on case study perspective. "The case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events," (Yin, 2003). The method used to collect data incorporates in-depth interview, observation, and literature study. The informants are nine persons who acknowledge themselves as internet addicts, specially social media addicts, and has been using internet sources as a treatment to reduce their stress and overcome their mental issue. Triangulation is conducted by interviewing a psychology expert. Data processing and analysis in this research is conducted through the stages as follows: (1) Organize the data (2) Coding of data (3) Analysis of the data (4) Interpretation of data.

Results

The informants admit that internet sources help them reduce their stress while under pressure. They employ self-healing using Web Therapy on their own initiative, but sometimes they get some recommendations from friends. There are some ways for informants to identify which personal problems that can be solved by self-healing using Web Therapy, that is (a) When the problems cannot be discussed with the significant others around them, such as family and friends, then internet is the only solution left. (b) Realizing that the only way to overcome the problems is by talking to others, thus by utilizing chatting feature on the internet, including through social media. (c) Finding oneself more relax and refresh after playing online games, thus games online is a personal escape when under stress or facing difficult problems. (d) When in need of entertainment, then social media such as Facebook is the choice, where they can see and read laughable materials, such as humorous posts, meme,

sarcasm as well as satyr posts. In addition, Youtube is another choice where they are able to watch some dramas or funny videos as well as listen to some music then contemplate on it. (e) When loneliness attacks, they find social media as the remedy to overcome it. As if there are “friends” out there in social media to whom they can share their happy stories, sad or even anger, and are able to understand them. (f) When encounter bad mood, the choices are reading something funny, watching stand up comedy on youtube, or reading some references on how to overcome bad mood on the internet. (g) To a informant that emotionally stable and never encounter emotional matters such as bad mood, internet is used as media to improve one’s knowledge. They regard the internet as their primary information sources thus without it they are information-less.

The types of internet sources used by internet addicts in conducting self-healing using Web Therapy are (a) Laughable reading materials, such as funny or humorous stories. (b) Watching shows that can help them to contemplate. (c) Entertaining songs and movies or videos. (d) References on how to solve one’s problems. (e) Memes, sarcasms, and satyrs. (f) Online games with multiple players. (g) Interaction or communication through chatting features on the internet. The types of internet media frequently used by informants in employing self-healing using Web Therapy including online games with multiple players, youtube, facebook, google, online forum’s lounge such as kaskus.com and detik.com. Meanwhile the form of information including games; movies; music; articles on health, food, and humorous series; chatting; memes; sarcasms; and satyrs.

Conclusion

Derived from the results, it can be concluded that Web Therapy is doable in the attempts to overcome internet addicts’ personal problems. However, a proper therapy needs a therapist, where there is a commitment between the therapist and the client on the problems occurring, how to cope with it, what should be done and how the consequences are. It should be well planned and programmed. Even though self-healing or self-therapy is not an actual therapy, but it is recommended as an initiation stage to reduce negative feelings into positive one. A positive state of mind is a great help for people who need solution for their problems. In other words, the internet usage might give contribution in one’s self-development as long as it is well designed and and conducted, specially for people who need help but unable to access the help from professional. Librarians are fully aware on types of information sources needed and how to utilize it. However, to be a therapist for Web Therapy services, a librarian needs a special skill set as a therapist, such as a know-how skill in identifying someone’s emotional problems. Eventually, a librarian is able to provide solution on a particular emotional problem with a specific internet/web sources therapy.

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