Smart Phone Game Overindulgence and Game Addiction Awareness in Five-Year-Old Children

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between individual characteristics, smart phone game overindulgence, and awareness of smart phone game addiction in five-year-old children. A pilot survey and main survey were conducted. A questionnaire was given to 400 parents with five-year-old children. The data from 239 participants were analyzed using correlational analysis and regression analysis. According to the results, younger children were more likely to overindulge in smart phone games. Older children were more aware of smart phone game addiction and could concentrate more on the game. The findings explain the relationship between the individual characteristics of children and their smart phone game overindulgence and smart phone game addiction awareness. It is suggested that it is necessary to educate young children about how to prevent smart phone game overindulgence and how to keep themselves from smart phone game addiction by making rules, learning about prevention, and playing sports.

Keywords: smart phone game, game addict, overindulgence, game addiction awareness

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According to a recent survey of children’s Internet use (Korean Communications Commissions and Korea Internet Security Agency, 2009), 61.8% of 3- to 5-year-old children use the Internet. The survey indicates that the main purpose of preschoolers’ Internet use is for video games and amusement. Because of a consistent increase of dual-income families and their permissive attitude, an increasing number of children do not receive any guidance for appropriate Internet usage. This lack of guidance leads to the possibility of children being exposed not just to educational content and games but also to harmful games and inappropriate Internet content (Jung & Uhm, 2006). In such cases, children are vulnerable to suggestive content, and as they are poor at self-regulation, they easily become addicted and overindulge in children’s Internet games (Kang, 2008).

Uhm (2006) investigated five-year-old children’s actual use of computer games and found that 69.6% spend time using computer games after school, 14% after dinner, and 11.1% all of the time. This finding demonstrates the reality that most children prefer playing computer games to playing outside. Kang (2005) also researched five-year-old children’s Internet game use and reported that 73.8% enjoy online games. Of her study participants, 22.7% began online gaming under the age of three years. About half (47.7%) responded that they play games for over for one hour or for over half an hour at a time and 33.1% play for more than one hour at a time. In summary, of the children who enjoy Internet gaming, 80.8% spend more than half an hour a day playing online games.

If five-year-old children are consistently exposed to excessively violent and suggestive games, the development of their language ability and social skills can be delayed. There is also a link to problems with physical development and growth rate. For example, the influence of inappropriate gaming can bring on aprosexia (Lee, 2009). Jung (2007) described some cases that were referred. In one case, when the parents got rid of the computer mouse, the child stole a moneybox from the house to buy a new one for gaming for more than four hours per day. In another case, a child who originally had been creative and good at science, lost interest and ability due to game addiction. Furthermore, a case was reported in which a boy truanted from school to play computer games all the day after deceiving his parents with ease. From three- to five-years-old, children easily overindulge in games, lacking self-control. For this reason, parental guidance is important for children’s game-playing.

Traditional forms of media, such as radio and television, are relatively limited in their effect on the senses, which is chiefly hearing and/or vision. However, computer games have recently overcome this limitation by extending the ways of stimulating the senses, such as using tactile and kinesthetic inputs in multi-sense systems (Park, 2007).

The emergence of various mobile media has promoted the production of devices that have