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# Exploring Mindfulness to Mitigate IT Addiction

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## ABSTRACT

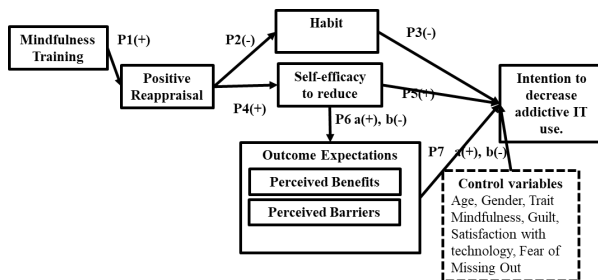
This paper develops a research model to explore how mindfulness interventions can help to mitigate IT addiction. The paper integrates mindfulness-to-meaning theory with social cognitive theory to propose a research model that will be empirically investigated in a series of studies.

## Keywords

IT Addiction, Mitigation, Mindfulness, Intervention, Training, Problematic Use

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research-in-progress paper explores how mindfulness interventions can help to mitigate IT addictions in individuals. Reviewing the literature, we find several mitigation strategies (e.g., therapy, self-help, monitoring, policies and education, social support, technology aided mitigation, medication) used to tackle IT addiction. Among the various strategies identified, this study focuses and expands on mindfulness. Mindfulness-based interventions help to change the inherent reward value of the behavior (Garland & Howard, 2018), which then impacts the habitual and impulsive nature of the behavior. We develop a research model (Figure 1) that examines the relationship between mindfulness interventions and intentions toward addictive IT behaviors.



**Figure 1. Mindfulness Training Reducing Addictive IT Behaviors**

To develop our model, we draw on two theoretical perspectives: mindfulness-to-meaning theory (Garland et al., 2015) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). In the model we propose that training promotes positive reappraisal in individuals. The positive reappraisal helps

individuals to disengage from habitual behaviors and to make more conscious decisions. The positive reappraisal also influences self-efficacy judgements in individuals to tackle technology related addictive behavior, thereby enabling them to break habits. Consequently, this positively influences the intentions to decrease addictive IT use.

We intend to test the model with mixed methods (interviews and randomized experiments). Participants will be adults who self-identify as addicted to IT and want to reduce their usage. They will be recruited through advertisements in social media platforms and with fliers posted around the university. For the experiments, the online mindfulness intervention will consist of psychoeducation, mindful breathing exercises, group discussion on craving, attention reorientation, and IT addiction. In contrast, control group participants will be given online materials to read concerning reducing IT addiction. The constructs from my model will be adapted from existing literature. Interviews will be conducted with willing participants both prior to and after the experiments. Pre-experiment interviews will help to determine the pertinent difficulties that such individuals face when trying to reduce their use. These insights will help to inform the design of the experiments. Post-experiment interviews will help to ascertain whether the mindfulness intervention benefited individuals in tackling compulsive use and may point out other explanations for the findings.

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