

Abstract

An uncomfortable yet critical question arises: can self-help efforts aimed at resolving personal issues paradoxically generate or exacerbate the very problems they seek to address? This study examines the applicability of the behavioral addiction model to maladaptive forms of self-help. Across five empirical studies, results revealed a mismatch between the model of behavioral addiction and problematic self-help, with no evidence supporting the existence of a hypothetical "self-help addiction." Subsequent research involving six additional studies identified distinct domains of manifestation and informed the development of a psychometric instrument, the Self-Help Inventory (SHI), designed to measure self-help practices and differentiate between their adaptive and maladaptive variants. These findings challenge conventional assumptions about behavioral addiction paradigms while providing a tool for assessing the dual nature of self-help.

Keywords: behavioural addiction; self-regulation; maladaptive behaviour; self-help; self-help groups; self-improvement