



Internet Addiction and Pornography Consumption as Correlates of Students' Psychological Wellbeing

Michael O. Ezenwa
*Nnaemeka, Ifeoma J.

Department of Psychology
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

*E-mail: ifeomannaemeka@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined internet addiction and pornography consumption as correlates of students' psychological wellbeing. A total of three hundred and sixty-one (361) Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Students served as participants in the study. They were selected using random sampling techniques. The participants consist of one hundred and seventy-two (47.6%) females and one hundred and eighty-nine (52.4%) males with their ages ranging from 16-23 years ($M = 20$ years, $SD = 1.85$). Self-rated measures that include the Psychological Well-Being (RPWS) Scale, Short Version of Internet Addiction Test, and Pornography Consumption Inventory (1992) were completed by the participants to generate data for the study. The result of the Pearson product-moment correlation test showed that both internet addiction and pornographic consumption had significant negative correlation with psychological wellbeing, $r(359) = -.637, p < .05$ and $r(359) = -.570, p < .05$ respectively. The two hypotheses were confirmed and thus implicated internet addiction and pornographic consumption as factors with a negative relationship with the psychological wellbeing of undergraduates. Based on the findings of this study, practical recommendations were made.

Keywords: *Internet addiction, Pornography Consumption, Psychological well-being.*

Introduction

Psychological well-being benefits young adults for a healthy and adjusted life, making it an essential aspect of their university/college years. The entry period into the university tallies youthfulness and exploration. It is also characterized by many stressors, which demand the ability to make informed choices and take responsibility for their actions. Stressors and challenges can make college life frequently present with chaotic moments; students are exposed to the challenges of young adulthood, lifestyles practices, mental and social issues of life and are expected to cope with the trauma and challenges it poses. Over the past five years, the stress of university students has increased, which has dramatically affected students' well-being (Chao, 2012). Students with less than favourable psychological well-being were more likely to engage in harmful activities such as alcohol use, sedentary behaviour, and likes. Studies have recorded life dissatisfaction and suicidal behaviour in students who have poor well-being (Chao, 2012). The study will contribute to a better understanding of college students' psychological well-being and the variables that may impact it.

These factors include physical and social factors. The physical factors may include lack of physical pain, while the social factors may include good social support and good interpersonal relationships (WHO, 2002). Psychological well-being is a positive and sustainable condition that allows individuals, groups or nations to thrive and flourish (Huppert, Baylis & Keverne, 2005). According to Keyes (2006), psychological well-being is a feeling of satisfaction and happiness with one's activities, the ability to meet the demands involved in one's daily life, and having a sense of personal purpose and meaning. The importance of psychological well-being in the life of an undergraduate and the consequences as previewed earlier have enabled us to explore critical variables capable of militating the development and maintenance of stable psychological well-being.

Why there are many factors capable of infringing on the quality of psychological wellbeing of undergraduates, this study will limit its scope to two renaissance factors: internet addiction and

pornography consumption. This is because firstly, all most 95% of the students have internet access and sees the internet as a symbol of belongingness and is now relatively affordable and available everywhere, such as homes, offices, and schools (Ellore et al., 2014), and its connectivity has improved tremendously. Secondly, the internet comes with many packages that entice the youth to keep on visiting since more traffic means more money for these business owners. Thirdly, the importance of internet usage cannot be overemphasized. Its negative impacts cannot also be overlooked because some of these students use the internet for non-academic purposes such as gaming and social networking, thus culminating in the loss of study schedules (Singh et al., 2013). Much soft- and hard-core porn are now freely distributed on the internet, which many youths may want to experience. These pornography materials are highly addictive (Benedek & Brown, 1999). Therefore, the present study will explore if internet addiction and pornography consumption correlate with psychological well-being.

College students present with a high level of vulnerability for internet addiction. Rapid growth and easy access to the internet have influenced their life. Internet addiction is described as an impulse control disorder. Most Internet users develop an emotional attachment to on-line friends and activities they create on their computer screens. Aside from the numerous benefits of this technological tool, the problem of overuse and the resulting 'Addiction' is becoming increasingly apparent. Using the internet has various benefits; it increases productivity in various aspects of life, educational and business, medical and enhances good communication. However, there are many disadvantages caused by internet use which brings a lot of risk to the individual and society. People spend more time on Internet games, which reduces everyday social interactions. Also, unhealthy information from the internet can disrupt students' mental health, knowing that their physical and mental development is still not matured. Hence, their emotional and self-regulation need to be improved (Mun, 2015).

Many evidence links internet addiction to poor psychological wellbeing, but little attention seems to be paid to pornography that pervades everywhere. Many places and centres offer pornographic materials that young adults can easily access. The phone and public cybercafés are being used by some students who adopt these opportunities to indirectly increase their sexual knowledge and experiences (Ikpe, 2004). They also confirmed that these films and pornography these teenagers watch tend to make them pornography addicts. Pornography is the explicit description of sexual activity intended to stimulate erotic, emotional feelings, covering all types of material such as explicit literature (electronic or print), photography, films, and videotapes with varying sexual content. Itzin (2003) classified pornography into three sets: the sexually explicit and violent, the sexually explicit and nonviolent, but subordinating and dehumanising, and the sexually explicit, nonviolent, and non-subordinating based upon mutuality.

The negative effect of pornography on its viewers' feelings, attitudes, and sexual behaviour is a cause for concern. Concerns have been expressed that pornography gives a distorted, poor image of female and male sexuality; it violates the idea of freedom and justice. According to Rogala and Tyden (2003), some individuals who consume pornography admit that it has negatively impacted their lives by increasing their feelings of anxiety and depression and creating conflict within their intimate relationships (Paul, 2005). Others who spend excessive time viewing it experience problems with work, studies, finances, and even sexual fulfilment. Pornography consumption is used as a method of escape from unpleasant life experiences, whether present or past (Paul, 2005; McGeady, 2000). However, the worry of the present study is whether internet addiction and pornography consumption among college students influence their psychological well-being. Against this background, this study sought to investigate the extent to which students' pornography consumption and internet addiction correlate with their psychological well-being in Nnamdi Azikiwe university undergraduate.

Statement of the Problem

University students face a unique set of circumstances, which can play an intricate role in manifesting psychological problems. Psychological problems among university students can lead to adverse outcomes, such as physical illness, antisocial or risky behaviour, attrition and poor academic performance, and suicidal behaviour. The stress that comes with some learning activities in the university is quite burdensome and makes students develop an escape route (habit) to cope with the situations. Students engage in drugs and alcohol to cope with challenges they face with their academics. As much as the internet increases productivity, it can also help cover up a lot of weaknesses. Studies also showed that the internet was often used as a coping mechanism to avoid real-life problems (Young, 1999). Moreover, researchers found that adolescents often use the internet to escape issues rather than find suitable ways of resolving issues. Various factors can predict students' psychological well-being, but this study will focus on internet addiction and pornography. To solve the problem identified in this study, this study would seek to answer the following questions:

1. Will internet addiction have a significant correlation with psychological wellbeing among students?
2. Will pornography consumption significantly correlate with students' psychological well-being?
- 3.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine whether internet addiction, pornography consumption, and psychological wellbeing would have a significant correlation. Specifically, the study will seek:

1. To examine whether internet addiction would significantly correlate with psychological wellbeing among students.
2. To examine whether pornography consumption would significantly correlate with psychological wellbeing among students.

Review of Related Empirical Literature

Cardak (2013) examined the relationship between Internet addiction and psychological well-being with 479 university students. The results showed that students with higher levels of Internet addiction are more likely to be low in psychological well-being, demonstrating that psychological well-being was affected by Internet addiction negatively. Also, Sharma and Sharma (2018) studied 461 college students using the internet for at least six months to determine the relationship between internet addiction and PWB among college students. The result showed that internet addiction was significantly negatively correlated to PWB ($r = -0.572$, $P < 0.01$) and subdimensions of PWB. Rehman et al. (2016) also found out using a sample of 100 students studying in various colleges of Kashmir (Srinagar and Ganderbal) that a significant negative correlation exists between internet addiction psychological well-being among the youths of Kashmir. Conversely, Pal (2017), who also examined the relationship between problematic internet use and psychological well-being among upper high school students in Sweden, found a slight positive correlation between personal growth and purpose in life (components of psychological well-being) related to problematic internet use. Camilleri et al. (2021) explored the potential relationship between compulsive use of pornography and mental health in university students. The study sample consisted of university students ($N = 1031$; 34% male, 66% female). The results indicated that compulsive pornography use significantly affected all three mental health parameters in both sexes. Additionally, in an earlier study by Kühn and Gallinat (2014), they discovered that pornography is linked with reward-seeking behaviour. It can even affect the volume of grey matter in specific brain areas and decrease connectivity between portions of the brain.

Hypotheses

1. Internet addiction will significantly correlate with students' psychological wellbeing.
2. Pornography consumption will have a significant correlation with students' psychological well being

Method

Participants

A total of three hundred and sixty-one (361) Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Students served as participants in the study. They were conveniently selected. They consist of one hundred and seventy-two (47.6%) females and eighty-nine (52.4%) males. Their age ranged from 16-23 years. Their mean age was 20years with a standard deviation of 1.85: Their Faculty's data shows that one hundred and five Students (29.1%) were drawn from social sciences, thirty-nine (10.8%) from management sciences, fifty-four (15%) were of law faculty, one hundred and one (28%) were from art faculty, sixty-two (17.2%) were from natural sciences.

Instruments

The first instrument adopted for the study was Ryff's Psychological Well-Being (RPWS) Scales scale, a 42 items scale developed by Ryff's (1989), designed to measure autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. It consists of six items subscale, and it has a 6-point response format: Strongly disagree=1, Slightly disagree=2, Disagree=3, Agree=4, Slightly agree=5 to Strongly disagree=6. The instrument generally is highly reliable, with Cronbach alpha internal consistency value of .55-79=autonomy, .74=environmental mastery, .62-78=personal growth, .55=positive relations, .42-84=purpose in life, and .66-87=self-acceptance as was determined by Ryff (1989). The use of this scale in this study was adopted through a reliability test, and a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient analysis of .67 was confirmed.

The second instrument adopted was the Short Version of Young's Internet Addiction Test: A 12 items scale. Young (1998) was constructed to assess excessive or pathological Internet use. It has a 5-Point response format "never" =1, "rarely" =2, "sometimes"=3, "often"=4 and "very often"=5. It has two subscales: "loss of control/time management" and "craving/social problems. The subscales have six items each; both subscales have good reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .876 and .836). The reliability for the overall score is also good (Cronbach's Alpha = .89). The use of this scale in

this study was adopted through a reliability test, and a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient analysis of .83 was confirmed.

The third instrument adopted was Pornography Consumption Inventory (1992), developed by Reid et al. (2011), a 15 items scale with a 5-point scale format of “Never like Me=1, Rarely like Me=2, Somewhat like Me=3, Often like Me=4, Very Often like Me=5”. The scale has four subscales: emotional avoidance, sexual curiosity, excitement seeking and sexual pleasure. The emotional avoidance scale has five scales (2,3,10,12,15); Sexual Curiosity has four scales (1,4,8,13); Excitement Seeking has three scales (5,6,11) while Sexual Pleasure has three (7,9, 14). Reliability analysis of the scale showed high internal reliability for the overall scale ($\alpha = .93$) and for all four subscales: Emotional Avoidance, $\alpha = .95$; Sexual

Curiosity, $\alpha = .89$; Excitement Seeking, $\alpha = .85$; and Sexual Pleasure, $\alpha = .90$; and high test-retest reliability over a 4-week interval ($r = .87$). The scale’s construct validity was evidenced in the second sample of hypersexual patients using confirmatory factor analysis, yielding acceptable goodness of fit: Emotional Avoidance = .87; Sexual Curiosity = .95; Excitement Seeking, = .47; Sexual Pleasure, = .97. A Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .96 was confirmed for the present study.

Design and Statistics

The study is a survey study, and a correlation design was adopted. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient statistics were used to analyse the data. This is because; it is geared towards ascertaining the relationships between or among variables

Result

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of study variables

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>N</i>
AGE	20	1.85	361
FACULTY			361
Psychological Wellbeing	165.55	15.77	361
Internet Addiction	39.72	9.98	361
Pornographic Consumption	29.83	7.820	361

The result in Table 1 revealed that the mean age of the participants is 20 years (SD= 1.85), psychological well-being of the participants

averaged at 165. 5, while the mean score of the respondents on internet addiction and pornographic consumption stood at 39.7 and 29.8, respectively.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients of the study variables, namely psychological wellbeing, internet addiction and pornographic consumption.

	<i>PSYCH-Well</i>	<i>Internet Addiction</i>	<i>PORN-Consume</i>
PSYCH-Well	1		
Internet Addiction	-.637**	1	

Note: ** $p < .01$; PSYCH-Well: Psychological well-being; PORN-Consume: Pornographic consumption

The correlation result shown in Table 2 shows that internet addiction correlated negatively with psychological well-being, $r(359) = -.637$, $p < .05$, indicating that as internet addiction scores increase,

psychological well-being scores will decrease. Also, the same kind of relation exists between pornographic consumption and psychological wellbeing, $r(359) = -.570$, $p < .05$. The result

confirmed the two hypotheses and thus implicated internet addiction and pornographic consumption as factors with a negative relationship with the psychological wellbeing of undergraduates.

Discussion

The study examined internet addiction and pornography consumption as correlates students' psychological wellbeing. The result of the study confirmed the two hypotheses and thus implicated internet addiction and pornographic consumption as factors with a negative relationship with the psychological wellbeing of undergraduates.

The first finding in the study indicated that internet addiction has a significant negative correlation with psychological wellbeing. The result is in line with previous findings (e.g., Çardak, 2013; Rehman et al., 2016; Sharma et al., 2018). This finding indicates that high internet consumption students will significantly decrease their psychological well-being. This finding is not in agreement with the findings of Pal (2017), who also examined the relationship between problematic internet use and psychological wellbeing among upper high school students in Sweden. His study revealed small positive correlations in personal growth and purpose in life (components of psychological well-being) related to problematic internet use.

The study's second finding in line with hypothesis two, which states that pornography consumption will significantly correlate with psychological well-being, was also confirmed. This shows that pornography consumption has a significant correlation with psychological wellbeing. The finding is in line with the findings of Ma (2018), who assess the relationships of exposure to online pornography to subsequent psychological well-being (depression and life satisfaction) and sexual permissive attitudes and (b) to explore whether these relationships differ by nature of exposure. It is also in tandem with the findings of Doornwaard et al. (2016), who investigated whether factors from three distinct psychosocial domains (i.e., psychological well-being, sexual interests/behaviours, and impulsive-psychopathic personality) predicted symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material among adolescent boys. The results from this negative

binomial regression show lower levels of global self-esteem and higher levels of excessive sexual interest concurrently predicted boys' symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material.

Implications of the Study

The outcome of this research has some critical implications. It identified two significant factors associated with the psychological well-being of university students. These findings, therefore, provide valuable insight into which students are more likely to suffer from poor psychological well-being, which represents a first step in raising awareness about and understanding this issue and could therefore help educationalists, counsellors, psychologists and university authorities to understand the complexity of the psychological issues students face.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that through intervention-based counselling sessions that students be examined to know psychological well-being index and that a programme that involves psychological intervention for internet addiction and pornography consumption to control for their adverse effects.

Conclusion

The study examined the correlation between internet addiction, pornography consumption, and students' psychological well-being. The study concludes that there is a significant correlation between internet addiction, pornography consumption, and psychological wellbeing.

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