PREVALENCE AND FORMS OF INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG YOUTHS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

A contact with contemporary youth will depict the extent to which they are attached to mobile devices which they relied on for various day-to-day affair regardless of where they ar. The extreme use of internet could lead to a disorder called internet addiction. This study examines the prevalence and forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara state considering the influence of gender and age. A descriptive survey research method was employed for the study. A total of 378 students in three universities across the senatorial districts of Kwara state participated in the study. Data were collected by a three-part questionnaire. Inferential statistics of t-test and ANOVA were used for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that 6.9% of the sample is severely addicted to internet; while 30.7 % are prone to addiction. The forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara are cyber-related addiction, computer addiction, Net compulsion and cyber sexual addiction in varying degrees. There was significant age difference in the prevalence of internet addiction. Similarly, significant gender and age differences occurred in the forms of internet addiction. Based on the findings it was recommended among others, that counsellors should develop strategies to handle internet addiction among the youths and work collaboratively with school administrators and teachers to identify and assist students with or prone to internet addiction before it will have devastating consequences on the addicts and the society at large.

Keywords: Forms, Internet addiction, Prevalence, Youth.

Introduction

Progress in technology especially in the area of information and communication has no doubt improved livelihood and has brought dexterity in human day-to-day activities in all areas. However, the tremendous advantage of modern communication technologies and the increasing roles they played in social life has led to their excessive

use and consequently threatening safe social life (Maysam & Mohammad, 2014). With the evolvement of technology and the creation of the Internet, the cyber world has created a tradition of on-line communication and virtual connectivity. The use of computer systems and the increasing access to internet in the past few decades have led to changes in the way people live and there is increase in the manner in which people rely on internet for all important activities. Significant and abundant information are made available just as users click online (Ashish, Choo, Sureswaran & Nibras, 2013). Internet supersedes other contemporary media, due to its attractiveness and assorted facilities. In contrast to its advantages, extreme use of internet can generate chaos in social and individual accomplishments and lead to the condition called internet addiction (Ashish, Choo, Sureswaran & Nibras, 2013).

According to Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary (2016) addiction is a strong and harmful need to regularly do something (such as gamble) or engage in certain activities. Internet addiction is compulsive need for and use of internet to play games, watch pornography or shop online. It is broadly defined as the persistent compulsive use of a substance or engagement in an act known by the user to be harmful or that which has harmful effects such as loss of money, sleep or productivity. The addicted person temporarily forgets problematic situation and or bothering issues, and he does not think about his problems the moment he engaged in addicted act. Such individuals can experience security, peace, success, attachment, and intimacy even if they are temporary and artificial. As the person experiencing addiction feels pleasantly, his addiction intensifies (Qara-Aqaji, 2006).

Young, Pistner, O'Mara and Buchanan (2000) described internet addiction as an umbrella term covering an array of conduct and instinct management problems. Internet addiction are in various form and the subset include; cyber-sexual addiction, cyber – relational addiction, net compulsions, information overload and computer addiction etc. Cyber-sexual addiction which ensue in individuals who are frequently preoccupied with viewing, downloading and dealing with online offensive materials or are interested in grown-up imaginary role – play chat rooms (Shaw & Black, 2008). Internet pornography viewing has been reported to be rising in Western societies (Carroll, Padilla – Walker, Nelson, Olson, Barry, Madsen, 2008). In line with this increase, the mental health practitioners has perceived serious upsurge in challenging internet smut use (Warden, Phillips & Ogloff, 2004; Manning, 2006; Owens, Behun, Manning & Reid, 2012). Sexual addiction therapists are reporting numerical growth of people in need of treatment (Lee, 2011). Since internet has turned the entire continent into a global village, this assertion cannot be disregarded for Nigeria.

Cyber – relational addiction encompasses addiction to all modes of social networking- face-book, online dating services such as UniformDating.com along with many other communication platforms. Saisan, Smith, Robinson and Segal (2014) stated that virtually, online friends start to attract more communication and prominence over time so the person becoming more significant than real – life family and companions causing addiction to the relationship.

Net Compulsion comprises range of behaviours, such as online betting, shopping or stock transaction. This could lead to severe economic deficit, relational and career disruptions. It is a kind of internet addiction that often led into financial and job related problems (Saisan, Smith, Robinson & Segal, 2014). Information Overload on the other hand, involves compulsive craving to get lot of information through acute web browsing and database search. This entails individual devoting excessive amount of time exploring, collecting and ordering data. Computer addiction refers to a situation in which individuals obsessively involved in some forms of cyber activities such as gaming. Most computers are furnished with pre – programmed games and people devote lot of their time playing these games at the expense of work performance or family obligations.

Internet addiction is one of the individual and social problems of internet overindulgence. In recent time, increasing level of internet addictions has been reported among the various users of internet which could be considered as one type of behavioural addiction (Holden, 2011). Inquiries in some states in Nigeria have recorded alarming prevalence rates between 2.5 per cent and 10.2 per cent. For instance, Chinatu – Nwankwo (2015) carried out a research on the prevalence of internet addiction among medical students in Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria. Overall analysis of subjects with internet addiction showed that 2.5 per cent of respondents had severe internet addiction. The result of the study of Okwaraji, Aguwa, Onyebueke and Arinze-Onyia and Shiweobi-Eze (2015) which was conducted on the prevalence of internet addiction and depression in Enugu, South – east, Nigeria also revealed that 29.0 per cent of respondents showed mild internet addiction, 20.0 per cent showed moderate internet addiction, while 10.2 per cent had severe internet addiction. Also gender and age showed significant differences in internet addiction and depression. Similarly, Ikenna and Wole (2014) reported the prevalence of 3.3 per cent in a male to female ratio of approximately 3:1 among the adolescents of University of Ibadan in a study conducted on prevalence and determinants of internet addiction.

A lot of empirical studies have established the influence of gender on internet addiction (Scherer, 1997; Griffiths, 1998; Morahan-Martin & Schumacker, 2000). For instance, Morahan-Martin and Schumacker (2000) reported that males were more prone than females to be addicted to online activities (12% *vs.* 3%), whereas females were more likely than males to have no symptoms (28% *vs.* 26%) or have limited symptoms (69% *vs.* 61%) of behavioural pathology. Conversely, researchers such as Brenner (1997), Young (1998), and Griffiths (1998) found inconsistent results in their studies. In the study of Brenner (1997), men and women did not differ in either time spent online or number of related problems experienced. Young (1998) reported that her sample of Internet Dependents revealed more females than male (239 females and 157 males).

On the forms of internet addiction in relation to gender, Young (1998) realised that men tend to explore superior activities or content online. The author found that common online games that rely particularly on power, authority, supremacy, domination, and/or aggression appeal to more males than females. Contrarily, women pursue close companions and opt for undisclosed communication in which they can conceal their

appearance(s). Virtual communities offered women a feeling of belonging and the potential to express and experience their feelings in an exclusive and conducive ways. Whereas men are likely to delve into sexual fantasies online, women tend to search romance in cyberspace.

Researchers such as Leung (2004), Yang and Tung (2007), Sahin (2011) reported varying influence of age on internet addiction. Leung (2004) Yang and Tuang (2007) found that younger internet users were more likely to be addictive users, similarly, Sahin (2011) reported that respondents belonging to the age group of 19 and below scored high on internet addiction level than other age group. Contrarily, Tsitsika, Tzavela and Mavromati (2012) reported that older adolescents are more likely to exhibit dysfunctional internet behaviour. However, Kesaraporn (2011) found no statistically significant difference among age group. Having contact with youths especially in cities across Kwara State reflects how attached they are to their mobile devices and the extent to which they are engaged with them on the road: walking, riding or driving, in classroom, restroom among others. With this regard, this study focused on prevalence and forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study focused on prevalence and forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State, Nigeria. This study also investigated whether variables of gender and age influenced the prevalence and forms of internet addiction. The study provides answers to the following questions

Research Questions

- What is the rate of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State?
- What are the common forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

H_{o1}: there is no significant gender difference in the prevalence of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State

H_{o2}: there is no significant age difference in the prevalence of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State

H_{o3}: there is no significant gender difference in the forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State

H_{o4}: there is no significant age difference in the forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised all the youths in tertiary institutions in Kwara State while the target population consist of all the students in the three selected universities in Kwara State. Three hundred and eighty respondents participated in the study. The samples were drawn

from University of Ilorin (Kwara Central), Kwara State University, Malete (Kwara North) and Land Mark University, Omunaran (Kwara South) in varying proportion (200, 120 & 80 respectively). The samples were also stratified on the basis of gender and age. Data were collected by a three – parts questionnaire: Socio – demographic Information, Items Identifying Forms of Internet Addiction and Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Young (1996). The first two sections were designed by the researchers and the last section was adopted from Young (1996). The questionnaire was validated by three experts from Department of Counsellor Education while test re-test method was employed to test the reliability of the instrument. The two sets of scores obtained from the administration of the two tests were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation which yielded coefficient of 0.72. The questionnaire measured five forms of internet addiction using twenty items ranging from Computer addiction, Information overload, Cyber – sexual addiction, Cyber – relational addiction and Net compulsion. Questionnaire also measured Internet Addiction in mild, moderate and severe level with five (5) points Likert-type rating scale which each of them was scored from 1 to 5:

1 = Rarely (R); 2 = Occasionally (O);
3 = Frequently (F); 4 = Often (OF) and 5 = Always (A).

The score between 20 – 39 points means Mild internet addiction; 40 – 69 points indicate moderate addiction; and 70 – 100 points' means severe addiction to internet. Finally, the t – test was used to test hypotheses 1 and 3, while ANOVA was used to test hypotheses 3 and 4, at 0.05 levels of significance.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents based on Gender and Age

Variable	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender		
Male	197	52.1
Female	181	47.9
Total	378	100
Age		
Below 15 years	12	3.2
15 years – 29 years	329	87.0
30 years & above	37	9.8
Total	378	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on age and gender. The result showed that 197(52.1 percent) of the respondents were male students while 181(47.9 percent) were female students. Also 12 (3.2 percent) were below 15years, 329 (87.0 percent) were between 15 -29 years while 37 (9.8 percent) were 30 years and above.

Research Question 1: What is the rate of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State?

Table 2: Rate of Internet Addiction of the Respondents

Level of Addiction	Point	Frequency Count	Percentage
Mild	20-39	236	62.4
Moderate	40-69	116	30.7
Severe	70-100	26	6.9
	Total	**378**	**100**

Table 2 reveals the rate of internet addiction among youths in Kwara state. Results indicates that 62.4 per cent of the respondents have mild level of internet addiction, 30.7 per cent have moderate level of internet addiction while 26 respondents corresponding to 6.9% of the sample are severely addicted to the internet.

Research Question 2: What are the common forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State?

Table 3: Forms and Rank order of Internet Addiction among youths

S/N	Forms	Mean	Rank
1	**Information Overload**	3.11	1st
2	**Cyber-related Addiction**	2.88	2nd
3	**Computer Addiction**	2.68	3rd
4	**Net Compulsion**	2.19	4th
5	**Cyber Sexual**	1.76	5th

Table 3 shows the rank order analysis of different forms of addiction among youths in Kwara state. The result indicated that the commonest form of addiction engaged by youth in Kwara state is information overload which ranked 1st with a weighted mean score of 3.11, followed by cyber-related addiction ranked 2nd with a weighted mean of 2.88 and

computer addiction which ranked 3rd with a weighted mean score of 2.68, followed by Net compulsion ranked 4th with a weighted mean score of 2.19 and finally cyber sexual addiction ranked 5th with a weighted mean score of 1.76.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant gender difference in the prevalence of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State.

Table 4: Means and t- value of the Respondents' Rate of internet Addiction based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	Calc. t-value	Crit. t-value	Sig.
Male	197	46.45	13.075	376	.311	1.96	.578
Female	181	46.02	13.645				

Significant at .05

Table 6 shows a calculated t-value of .311 and a critical t-value of 1.96. The calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant gender difference on the prevalence of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant age difference in the prevalence of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State.

Table 5: ANOVA of the Respondents' Rate of Internet Addiction based on Age

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	Calc. F-value	Crit. F-value	Sig
Between group	2019.532	2	1009.766	5.824	3.00	.003
Within group	65022.077	375	173.392			
Total	**67041.608**	**377**				

**Significant at .05*

Table 7 shows the calculated F-value of 5.824 and a critical F-value of 3.00. The calculated F-value is greater than the critical F-value and significant 0.003 alpha level, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant age difference in the rate of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State. Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used as a post-hoc test to show the age group that contribute to difference noted in the ANOVA result.

Table 6: Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing Differences in the Respondents' Rate of Internet Addiction based on Age

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Age
A	329	47.09	1	15-29 years
B	12	43.92	2	below 15 years
C	37	39.43	3	30 years & above

Table 6 shows the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicating the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 5. Group 1 (15-29 years) with a mean score of 47.09 significantly differed from Group 2 with the mean score of 43.92 but also significantly differed from Group 3 with a mean score of 39.43. All the groups differed from one another but the significant difference noted was as a result of Group 1 (15-29 years). Hence the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 5 was as a result of respondents who were 15-29 years of age thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant gender difference in the forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State.

Table 7: Means and t- value of Respondents on forms of internet Addiction based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	DF	Calc t-value	Crit. t-value	Sig.
Male	197	53.63	7.106	376	3.65	1.96	.035
Female	181	50.76	8.161				

**Significant at .05*

Table 7 shows a calculated t-value of 3.65 and a critical t-value of 1.96. The calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value and significant at 0.035 alpha level, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is significant gender difference in the forms of internet addiction of youths in Kwara State.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant age difference in the forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Respondents' Internet Addiction based on Age

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	Calc. F-value	Crit. F-value	Sig.
Between group	395.922	2	197.961	3.333	3.00	.037
Within group	22269.697	375	59.386			
Total	22665.619	377				

**Significant at .05*

Table 8 shows the calculated F-value of 3.333 and a critical F-value of 3.00. The calculated F-value is greater than the critical F-value and significant at 0.037 alpha levels, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is significant age difference in the forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara. Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used as a post-hoc test to show the age group that contribute to difference noted in the ANOVA result.

Table 9: Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing age differences in the Respondents' Forms of Internet Addiction

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Age
A	37	54.22	1	30 years and above
B	329	52.20	2	15-29 years
C	12	47.67	3	Below 15 years

Table 9 shows the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicating the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 8. Group 1 (30 years and above) with a mean score of 54.22 significantly differed from Group 2 (15-29 years) with the mean score of 52.20 but also significantly differed from Group 3 (Below 15 years) with a mean score of 47.67. All the groups differed from one another but the significant difference noted was as a result of Group 1 (30 years and above). Hence the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on table 8 was as a result of respondents who were 30 years and above years of age thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

Based on the data collected and the analysis of result, the findings of the study revealed that cases of internet addiction prevalent among youths in Kwara state. Twenty-six of the respondents (6.9%) indicate severe addiction, this is similar to previous research findings such as Tsitsika et al. (2014) which found that internet addiction affect

approximately 7.9% to 22.8% of adolescents addicted to internet. The finding is similar to that of Okwaraji et al (2015) who found 10.2% internet addiction among youth in Enugu. The low rate of internet addiction could be due to poor electricity supply and limited internet access in Nigeria. Youths in Kwara state may yet reach higher level of internet addiction as more people have greater access to internet.

On forms of internet addiction, information overload comes first with mean score of (3.11), followed by cyber related addiction (2.88) computer addiction (2.68), Net compulsion (2.19) and the least common form is cyber sexual (1.76). This is similar to findings of Tsitsika, Tzavela and Mavromati (2012), whose study on internet addictive behaviours on adolescents revealed that social networking ranked first (cyber-related addiction), followed by gambling (Net compulsion) and gaming (computer addiction). This finding is also in line with Dreier, Tzavela, Wolifling, Mavromati, Duven, Karakitsou, Macarie, Veldhuis, Wojcik, Halapi, Sigursteinsdottir, Oliaga and Tsitsika (2013) who asserted that internet plays vital roles in assisting adolescents meet their developmental characteristics of satisfying their curiosity for: getting answers to a wide range of questions, attaining fast and the most up-to-date information, keeping in touch with existing and new contacts as well as having fun.

Hypothesis one reveals no gender difference in the prevalence of internet addiction. This shows that both male and female are on the same page in term of internet addiction. The findings corroborate Brenner's (1997) and Young's (1996) findings. In their separate studies, Brenner (1997) reported that internet users irrespective of their gender were similar with reference to online time and related problems. Young (1996) found that females are more addicted to internet than males. This however varied from the findings of Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) and Kesaraporn (2011). Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) reported that more male students (12%) were addicted to internet compared to females (3%). The difference in the findings is due to method of analysis; most of the studies that indicated gender difference relied on descriptive analysis.

Hypothesis two shows significant difference in the prevalence of internet addiction on the basis of age. The post-hoc test revealed that respondents between the ages of 15-29 were more addicted to internet than other age groups. This finding is in line with that of Leung (2004), Yang and Tung (2007) who found age significant in predicting internet addiction. In their own study, younger internet users were more likely to be addictive users. Sahin (2011) also reported that respondents belonging to age group of 19 and below scored high on internet addiction levels than other age group. Tsitsika, Tzavela and Mavromati (2012) found opposite age influence, they reported that older adolescents are more likely to exhibit dysfunctional internet behaviour. However, the finding is not in line with that of Kesaraporn (2011), though the demographic data in her work showed that large number of respondents (5.7%) who are fifteen years old fall under the category of addictive internet users, followed by the group of 17 year old (3.7%), then the groups of 18 year old (3.6%), but there was no statistically significant difference of respondents who were 30 years and above years of age among the age group. The difference noted in

Kesaraporn (2011) study compared to this is due to the fact that all the different age group in the former study were encompassing the age group of 15-29 years used in this study in which they all have no significant difference in their level of addiction.

Hypothesis three reveals gender difference in the forms of internet addiction among youth in Kwara state. Male respondents are addicted to many forms of internet activities than females as revealed in their mean scores (53.63 vs 50.76) respectively. This is similar to Tsitsika et al. (2012) findings who found more boys than girls exposed to sexual images. There is also significant age difference in the forms of internet addiction. Respondent who are 30 years and above are responsible for the difference noted. Pontes, Szabo and Griffiths (2015) found that internet addicts preferred certain forms of online activities which include: processing general information and news, social networking and using e-mail and online chatting.

Hypothesis four reveals age difference in the forms of internet addiction among youth in Kwara state. Respondents who were 30 years and above contributed to the significant difference noted in the result. The finding of the study may be due to the fact that respondents in this age bracket are likely to use internet for specific and less addictive activities such as mailing and handling work related issues unlike other group of respondents who are exposed to different activities that are predisposing to addiction such as chatting, video conferencing, social networking, downloading music and videos.

The finding of this study is in line with the submissions of Kabiatko (2013) who found that age is a significant factor that influence the use of information and communication especially the internet. The author categorises the respondent into two age groups, that is, the millennia generation (respondents who are born after 1980) and older respondents and compared the two groups to determine their use of ICT and the forms of internet use. The author found that the millennia generation group has some typical behaviour which is different from those of the older respondents.

Similarly the result is in line with the earlier findings of Akande (2008) whose research on the IPOD generation revealed that respondents from millennia generation differ in terms of forms of forms of internet use than the and older generation (digital immigrants). He further described respondents of millennia generation as people who are phone addicted and internet savy. The author posited that millennial generation use internet for chatting, downloading music as well as playing games which are all forms of internet addiction and that the digital immigrant use internet significantly for mailing and looking up for scholarly information .

Conclusion

The major findings from this study are:

- That 6.9% of youths in Kwara state Nigeria are severely addicted to internet, 30.7% are moderately addicted to internet and could be at risk of severe addiction
- The most common forms of internet addiction found among youths in Kwara State are: information overload, cyber-related addiction and computer addiction

- No gender influence in the prevalence of internet addiction, however, there is significant age difference
- There is gender and age differences in the forms of internet addiction among youths in Kwara State

Implication of Findings

Considering the fact that 6.9 per cent of the sample are severely addicted to internet, about 30.7 per cent who are moderately addicted to internet could be at risk of severe addiction, there is the need to develop counselling strategies to analyse the problem of internet addiction and in turn structure programmes to achieve positive change in behaviour using various counselling approaches such as peer counselling, Rational-Emotive-Behaviour Therapy, Client-Centred Approach among others such that when individuals or their relatives realise the danger in the in the addiction and request counselling, strategies would have been developed and tested.

Recommendations

- Counsellors should develop strategies to identify youths of different ages and gender that are addicted to the internet with the aim of assisting them.
- Counsellors should design strategies to assist youths who are addicted to internet on how to handle the situation especially on cyber-related and computer addiction
- Counsellor should encourage the formation of club that will promote safe and responsible internet use among students (e.g. peer counselling)
- School administrators, teachers and school counsellors should work collaboratively to identify and assist students with or prone to internet addiction before it will have devastating consequences on the addicts and the society at large.

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