



## POVERTY AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AS PREDICTORS OF ONLINE GAMES ADDICTION AMONG STUDENTS IN LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY, OJO – COUNSELLING FOR SKILL ACQUISITION

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### Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between poverty, demographic variables and online game addiction among students in Lagos State University: counselling for skill acquisition. Poverty, often characterized by limited financial resources may lead students to seek solace and entertainment in online games. Using online games addiction questionnaire, the research adopted a descriptive design to seek information about poverty, demographic variables and online game addiction among students in Lagos State University, Ojo: counselling for skill acquisition. Sample for the study consisted of 120 students from 3 faculties in Lagos State University, Ojo that were randomly selected from Education, Science and Arts. The instrument reliability coefficient using Cronbach's Alpha test was 0.78. The instrument was administered on an individual basis and data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and percentages as well as inferential statistics of multiple regression analysis and ANOVA for stated hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between poverty, demographic variables and online game addiction among students in Lagos State University, Ojo. Counselling interventions include cognitive-behavioural therapy, family-based interventions and skill-acquisition programs

### Keywords:

Adolescents, Online games addiction, Poverty, Demographic variables, Counselling for skill acquisition

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## Introduction

Changes and reforms in the field of technology are inevitable. One of the clear evidence of technological development is the internet. By using the internet, individuals can do many things, such as browsing, chatting, watching videos on YouTube, or playing online games. At this time, online games have become one of the main entertainment, including for teenagers (Yeung & Chui, 2018). Someone who often plays online games will have an attachment to the games being played so it is difficult to control himself. They do not realize that they have spent a long-time playing games so they can experience online game addiction (Kharisma, *et al* 2020). Online game addiction is therefore defined as the problematic, compulsive engagement in online games that results in significant impairment to an individual's ability to function in various life domains over a prolonged period.

Online gaming prevalence rates are unknown, with studies ranging from 0.7 percent to 27.5 percent (Mihara & Higuchi, 2017), 0.7 percent to 15.6 percent (Feng et al., 2017), 0.6 percent to 50.0 percent and 1.2 percent to 5.9 percent (Paulus et al., 2018; Sugaya et al., 2019). Stevens et al. (2020) utilised meta-analytic approaches to find that the global prevalence of online gaming was 3.05 percent, but when their analysis was limited to studies that fulfilled more stringent sample criteria, the percentage was reduced to 1.96 percent.

Previous research (Novrialdy, 2019) has shown that adolescents are often more vulnerable to online games addiction compared to adults. The adolescent period is characterized by instability and a tendency to be easily influenced by new things. School-age children spend around 20-23 hours per week playing online games. Individuals who excessively engage in online gaming may experience internet gaming disorder, where excessive and prolonged gaming patterns lead to individuals spending 8-10 hours per day sitting in front of a computer screen and playing online games (Dwi & Wardhani, 2022).

According to Hyun (2015), there are risk factors such as sex and age, cognitive factors, psychopathological conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and social interaction such as family environment, social anxiety, self-esteem which are associated with online game addiction

The study conducted by Ginige (2017), indicates that online games addiction is more prevalent in Asian countries and primarily affects males aged 12-20. Several pieces of evidence suggest that internet addiction tends to emerge during late childhood/early adolescence. The age of 13-34 years represents the middle stage of adolescence, where at this age teenagers are more inclined to try new things, become more sensitive, start searching for their identity, and are easily influenced by their environment, contributing to a higher risk of online gaming addiction

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

Online game addiction has now gone beyond the dimension of providing an avenue for individuals to spend their leisure to a full-blown gaming industry worth billions of dollars. Game corporations are now taking advantage of games addictions to exploit game addicts by incorporating payment channels as part of the game modules through



which users can make online payments to elevate their enjoyment of the game or boost their chances of success in the game.

Excessive online gaming can lead to a behaviour-based addiction which describes an individual's actions that are performed repeatedly and result in damage in one's psychology, body, and social adaptation skills. Those who isolate themselves from others to play video games may miss out on family events, outings with friends, or other events in the short-term. If this continues to be a pattern for a long period, however, addicts might find themselves without any friends at all. These games can also be very time-consuming, leaving addicted gamers with less time to focus on their education or career. King & Delfabbro, (2018)

### Literature Review

One of the digital technologies that are currently in existence is online games. Online game games are currently booming among adolescents worldwide, even tournaments/competitions are held to play them, which are integrated into the players' social networks. Internet addiction (IA) is currently considered a global problem with possible implications for mental health (De Pasquale, *et al* 2020)

Excessive games results in syndromes that have been associated with addictive behaviours (Wang et al., 2019). Excessive online gaming can lead to a behaviour-based addiction which describes an individual's actions that are performed repeatedly and result in damage to one's psychology, body, and social adaptation skills. In this sense, addiction can be considered a condition that affects society adversely in physical, mental, and behavioural aspects.

Online game addiction will cause various negative effects on students, such as an increased risk of mood disorders, damaged social relationships, aggressiveness, personality changes, high and hyperactive anxiety levels, psychomotor disorders, health problems, antisocial behaviour, academic decline, and damage to interpersonal relationships (McCauley Ohannessian 2018; Karaca *et al.*, 2020).

Among adolescents, online game addiction has been reported to disrupt mental health, increase depression, anxiety, and psychoticism, disrupt family relationships (De Pasquale et al., 2020), lower quality of life (Beranuy et al., 2020), increase social phobia (Wei et al., 2012), lower school performance, and improve sleep deprivation (Chamarro et al., 2020; Király et al., 2015). In short, online gaming addiction negatively affects adolescents' lives in different areas (Grifths, 2022; Haberlin & Atkin, 2022).

Similarly, those who isolate themselves from others to play video games may miss out on family events, outings with friends, or other events in the short term. If this continues to be a pattern for a long period, however, addicts might find themselves without any friends at all. Other long-term effects of video game addiction to consider are the financial, academic and occupational consequences involved. These games can also be very time-consuming, leaving addicted gamers with less time to focus on their education or career (American Addiction Centres, 2022)

Studies that have considered gender differences suggest that males and females share several risk factors for IAD, such as impulsivity/sensation seeking (Koo & Kwon, 2014; Li, Ren, et al., 2021; Mottram & Fleming, 2009), as



well as other factors, such as sleep problems (Shen et al., 2021) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms (Ko et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2021).

Generally, males tend to be more drawn to video game playing than females (Faulkner, Irving, Adlaf & Turner, 2014). Male gender is principally positively associated with video game addiction (Wittek et al., 2015). Lucas and Sherry (2004) sampled 544 college students comprising 57.5 % females (313) and 42.5% males (231) and their results showed that more males (88.3%) played games every week than females (54.6%) even though 15% more females were sampled. Authors tend to also observe a preponderance of males as players of video games than females in their samples even after eliminating nonplayers. For instance, Puri and Pugliese (2012) after eliminating nonplayers from their samples, examined the 175 responses they sampled and found that “133 (76%) were males and 42 (24%) were females” (P. 349). The preponderance of males in video game addiction was highlighted further in a study by Lucas and Sherry (2004) who reported that women have been found to play video games less than males by averaging 4.2 hours weekly play while males averaged 11 hours weekly play

A systematic review of 14 studies across six countries found that problematic smartphone use was a risk factor for poor sleep quality, as well as anxiety and depression; however, only two of these studies included participants over the age of 27 (Yang, *et al* 2020). Targeted studies of internet gaming addiction, which has been linked to internet addiction more generally, have found similar associations with poor mental health and other affective characteristics. Liu et al. (2018) found a positive association between internet game addiction and depression among Chinese college students.

The increasing demand for playing online games shows that adolescents try to satisfy some of their psychological needs via the internet (Shen et al., 2013; Turan, 2021). One longitudinal study found that problematic online gaming and satisfaction of basic psychological needs were positively associated (Yu et al., 2015). It has also been reported that adolescents whose basic psychological needs were not met and whose perceived social support was low had high levels of gaming addiction (Yıldırım & Zeren, 2021). This study therefore aims at examining the Predisposition of Adolescents in a Nigerian University to Online Games Addiction: Counselling for National Growth and Development. Specifically, the study intends to;

- examine how predisposed Nigerian university students are to online games addiction
- determine age as a factor in the predisposition of students in a Nigerian university to online games addiction

### Research Question

To aid the study, two research questions were asked:

- i. How predisposed are students in a Nigerian university to online games addiction as a result of poverty?
- ii. Is age a factor in the predisposition of students in a Nigerian university to online games addiction?

### Hypotheses

Two research hypotheses were raised and tested:



- i. There is no significant difference between male and female students' predisposition to online games addiction in a Nigerian University.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the predisposition of students in a Nigerian University to online games addiction based on their age.

### Method

A descriptive survey was adopted for the study as it aimed at determining the predisposition of students in a Nigerian University to online games addiction. This study was carried out among all students in Lagos State University, Ojo campus, Lagos State, Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 154 participants who were selected using purposive sampling technique from different departments in Lagos State University (LASU), Ojo, Lagos State. A well-structured questionnaire titled “**Online Games Addiction Questionnaire**” (OGAQ) was used to collect data for the study and consisted of 5 sections. **Section A** of the instrument comprised items that measure the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants including age, gender, faculty and department **Section B** of the scale comprised of items on Online Games Addiction. The scale is of Likert-5 type (5=absolutely agree, 1=absolutely disagree, 2=disagree, 3=indecisive, 4=agree,), and has three subscales of online gaming addiction scale (troubles, success, economic gain). Data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and percentages as well as inferential statistics of t-test and ANOVA

### Results

**Research Question 1.** How predisposed are students in a Nigerian university to online games addiction?

**Table 1: Predisposition Levels students in a Nigerian university to online games addiction**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	29	18.8	18.8
	Mild	43	27.9	46.8
	Highly	82	53.2	100.0
	Total	154	100.0	

Table 1 shows that the predisposition level of 18.8 % of respondents which correspond to 29 students is low; the predisposition level of 27.9 % of respondents which correspond to 43 students is mild while the predisposition level of 53.2 % of respondents which correspond to 82 students is very high. This result revealed that more than half of the respondents are highly predisposed to online games addiction. Hence, this could hamper national development and it is a serious concern to all stakeholders.

**Research Question 2.** Is age a factor in the predisposition of students in a Nigerian university to online games addiction?



**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of age factor in the predisposition of students in a Nigerian university to online games addiction**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confid. Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
16-17 Years	42	53.33	12.231	1.887	49.52	57.14
18-19 Years	70	51.20	16.318	1.950	47.31	55.09
Above 19 Years	42	52.86	12.804	1.976	48.87	56.85
Total	154	52.23	14.319	1.154	49.95	54.51

Table 2 reveals that the mean and standard deviation of respondents whose age range are 16-17 years are: 53.33 and 12.231; mean and standard deviation of respondents with age range of 18-19 years are: 51.20 and 16.318 while that of respondents who are above 19 years of age are 52.86 and 12.804 respectively. This shows that their means are very close. This implies that age may not be a factor in the predisposition of students to online games addiction.

**Hypothesis 1.** There is no significant difference between male and female students' predisposition to online games addiction in a Nigerian University.

**Table 3: Group Statistics of gender on online games addiction among students**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OGAS	Male	85	52.06	16.082	1.744
	Female	69	51.01	14.468	1.742

From Table 3, the mean and standard deviation of male respondents are: 52.06 and 16.082, while the mean and standard deviation of female respondents are: 51.01 and 14.468 respectively. This shows that there is little difference in their means. But to ascertain whether the difference is significant or not, the t-test was performed as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Independent Samples Test difference between male and female students' predisposition to online games addiction**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Difference	
OGAS	Equal variances Assumed	.652	.416	.419	152	.634	1.044	2.492	
	Equal variances not assumed			.424	150.363	.632	1.044	2.465	



From Table 4, the independent t-test conducted revealed that  $df=152$ ,  $F=0.652$ , and  $p = 0.634$ . Since the p-value of the F-ratio which is 0.634 is greater than 0.05, then there is no statistically significant difference between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. In other words, there is no significant difference between male and female students' predisposition to online games addiction in a Nigerian University. This implies that both male and female students are inclined and predisposed to online games addiction in the same proportion.

**Hypothesis 2.** There is no significant difference in the predisposition of students in a Nigerian University to online games addiction on the basis of their age

**Table 5: ANOVA of age on students' predisposition to online games addiction in a Nigerian University.**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	141.908	2	70.954	.343	.710
Within Groups	31227.676	151	206.806		
Total	31369.584	153			

Table 5 shows that  $F_{(2, 151)} = 0.343$  and that  $p = 0.710$ . Since that p-value of the F-ratio which is 0.710 is greater than 0.05, then there is no statistically significant difference between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. In other words, there is no significant difference in the predisposition of students in a Nigerian University to online games addiction on the basis of their age. This means that students of any age group could be predisposed and inclined to online games addiction.

### Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis one result revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students' predisposition to online games addiction in a Nigerian University. This implies that both male and female students are inclined and predisposed to online games addiction in the same proportion. This is in line with research indicating that females tend to use the internet predominantly for social interactions (Peris et al., 2020), while males engage in activities more predictive of IAD, such as pornography, cybersex, and online gaming (Hassan et al., 2020; Kiraly ' et al., 2014; Tsumura et al., 2017)

Studies that have considered gender differences suggest that males and females share several risk factors for Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD), such as impulsivity/sensation seeking (Koo & Kwon, 2014; Li, Ren, et al., 2021; Mottram & Fleming, 2009), as well as other factors, such as sleep problems (Shen et al., 2021) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms (Ko et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2021).

The second hypothesis also revealed that there is no significant difference in the predisposition of students in a Nigerian University to online games addiction based on their age. This means that students of any age group





could be predisposed and inclined to online games addiction. This implies that online gaming addiction does not influence by age, this is in line with Pramudia & Wardani (2018) they desire to achieve high scores in games, feeling of killing boredom, and leading to lack of self-control.

Poverty can influence online game addiction in several ways:

- i. Escapism: Some individuals from impoverished backgrounds may turn to online games as a form of escape from their daily challenges and stressors.
- ii. Affordability: The accessibility of free-to-play online games can make them particularly attractive to individuals with limited financial resources.
- iii. Peer Influence: Students from lower-income backgrounds may be influenced by their peers to engage in online gaming activities as they seek low-cost entertainment options

### **Counselling for Skill Acquisition**

Counselling interventions play a crucial role in addressing online game addiction among students. These interventions may include:

- i. Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT): CBT will help students identify and modify problematic thought patterns and behaviours related to gaming.
- ii. Family-Based Interventions: Involving the family in counselling will provide a support system for students struggling with addiction.
- iii. Skill Acquisition Programmes: Counselling can focus on helping students develop alternative skills and interests to replace excessive gaming.
- iv. Psychoeducation: Providing students with information about the risks of online game addiction and healthy gaming habits can be an essential part of counselling.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, online game addiction among students is a complex issue influenced by various factors, including poverty and demographic variables. Counselling interventions that address these factors and promote skill acquisition can play a vital role in mitigating addiction risks. Further research is needed to understand the specific dynamics of this issue in the context of Lagos State University and develop targeted interventions.





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