

PREDICTORS OF ONLINE GAMES ADDICTION AMONG STUDENTS IN A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY- COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS

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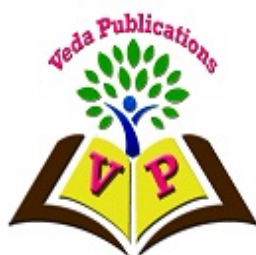
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Abstract



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The rapid growth of the internet and technology has paved the way for the emergence of online games, capturing the attention of individuals worldwide, including students hence the study investigated the predictors of online games addiction among students in Lagos State University, Ojo. A descriptive survey design was used. With the aid of the predictors of online games addiction questionnaire (POGAQ), the study critically researched age, gender, trouble factor, success factor, and economic factor as predictors of online games addiction among students in Lagos State University, Ojo. The sample for the study comprised 120 randomly selected students from different faculties and departments in Lagos State University, Ojo. The study stated two research questions and hypotheses; the reliability 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 results of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between predictors and online games addiction among students in Lagos State University, Ojo. Also, it showed that the trouble, success, and economic factors are the strongest and statistically significant predictors of online game addiction among students in Lagos State University, Ojo. Therefore, It was recommended that the University counselling centres assist the students in understanding the negative effects of these factors on their health, academic advancement, and family interactions

Keywords: *Predictors of online game addiction, Challenges, Success, Economic gain, Gender, Counselling.*

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Introduction

Recently, internet use has become a daily routine among the youth. This served as a means of obtaining information for both private and general use. The era of the internet is continuously developing with both positive and negative impacts on young adults in the process of using the medium through which they share knowledge, communicate, shop, chat, and play games. The Internet has become cheaper for people to access information, yet some information could cause inevitable changes in their conduct and habits (Akinoglu, 2002; Stansberry et al., 2019).

One of the clear pieces of evidence of technological development is the internet. By using the internet, individuals can do many things, such as browse, chat, watch videos on YouTube, or play online games. At this time, online games have become one of the primary forms of entertainment for teenagers (Yeung & Chui, 2018). Someone who often plays online games may have had an attachment to the games being played, so it is difficult to control himself. They must play longer to reach or maintain the symbols behind the avatars in online gaming. A character in the game will stand out and be respected if the character has a high level with exclusive equipment, so they are required to pursue a high level or have a lot of money to be able to buy items to improve the appearance of their avatar. They do not realise they have long played games to experience online game addiction (Kharisma et al., 2020; Kiatsakared & Chen, 2022).

Although gaming is a pleasant activity that can have educational implications (Pontes et al., 2020) for a subgroup of game players, excessive gaming 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 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. Kaya (2013) states that online game addicts spend hours and days in online games at the expense of other resource-based and time-bound aspects of their lives.

Literature Review

According to Ahn and Randall (2008), game addiction is based on the definition of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health as a psychological or physical dependence on something. Individuals with game addiction can thus be said to have a psychological dependence on massively multiplayer online games or to exhibit excessive or compulsive use of computer and video games. Similarly, Video gaming is a topical issue among students with attendant psychosocial and economic impact.

Online game addictions are similar to other addictions in terms of the amount of time spent playing, the strong emotional attachment to the activity, and the patterns of social difficulties experienced by gaming addicts. As with other addictions, gaming addicts become preoccupied with game-playing, and it disrupts family and other areas of life. Someone

addicted to video games will often avoid sleeping or eating proper meals to continue gaming. While the short-term effects of this may include hunger and fatigue, it could eventually lead to a sleep disorder or diet-related health issues (Kaya, 2013)

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Those who isolate themselves from others to play video games may miss out on some family and other social events, outings with friends, or other events in the short term. If this continues to be a pattern for an extended period, however, people with an addiction might find themselves without any friends at all. (Kaya, 2013). Other long-term effects of video game addiction are the financial, academic, and occupational consequences involved. Video game equipment can be expensive, especially when factoring in recurring costs such as the high-speed Internet connection required for online multiplayer games. 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).

There are many different factors in video game addiction. One of the main reasons that video games can become so addictive, however, is they are designed to be that way. Video game designers, like anyone else trying to make a profit, are always looking for ways to get more people playing their games. They accomplish this by making a game challenging enough to keep you returning for more but not so hard that the player eventually gives up. In other words, success for a gamer often feels just out of reach. American Addiction Centers, Inc (2022)

As with any other addiction, video game addiction has warning signs. It is essential to know how to recognize these signs if you or someone you care about is an avid gamer. According to the Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery, these symptoms can be both emotional and physical. American Addiction Centers, Inc (2022)

Some of the emotional signs or symptoms of video game addiction include:

- I. Feelings of restlessness or irritability when unable to play
- II. Preoccupation with thoughts of previous online activity or anticipation of the following online session
- III. Lying to friends or family members regarding the amount of time spent playing
- IV. Isolation from others to spend more time gaming

Some of the physical signs or symptoms of video game addiction include:

- I. Fatigue
- II. Migraines due to intense concentration or eye strain
- III. Carpal tunnel syndrome caused by the overuse of a controller or computer mouse

IV. Poor personal hygiene

There are some adverse effects of playing this video game;

- I. it increases aggressive behaviour as a consequence of playing violent games (Anderson and Bushman, 2001).
- II. it is excessive games cause functional and psychological damage, which leads to a few cases of problematic game and game addiction (for example, Király, Nagygyörgy, Griffiths, and Demetrovics, 2014).
- III. the involvement in games online and psychosocial results causes inconsistent relation and psychosocial results, namely self-esteem, loneliness, and social competence (Kaye, Kowert, and Quinn, 2017).

The challenge with videogame addiction is that “videogame playing ... shares many similarities with gambling” (Griffiths & Wood, 2000, p.199). Fisher (1994) had earlier reported that video game playing might lead to a behavioural pattern akin to gambling addiction. It was believed that problems arising from excessive video game use tend to look like dependence syndromes. Interestingly, the similarity between video game addiction and other addictive behaviour has been reported to be stronger than had been previously thought (Gentile et al., 2011), with people with an addiction manifesting similar results of effects of video game addiction as in other substance addictions (Beranuy et al., 2013).

According to Young (1996), computer and internet addiction has negative influences on people’s family, academic, and business lives. It is known that the Internet also causes problems in interpersonal relationships. The research showed that internet addicts have relationship problems and spend limited time with others around them

Research 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. Gaming corporations are now taking advantage of gaming 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 to 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 an extended period, however, people with an addiction 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

Emotional responses associated with in-game rewards and video game completion encourage players to seek out them and begin playing new games, thus initiating a never-ending cycle of playing behaviour. Other common cognitive beliefs among problem video game players include thoughts about gaining power and status through the game, mentally escaping from the real world, and thinking of the computer as a companion or “electronic friend.”

Therefore, this study examines the prevalence of Online game addiction among Students at Lagos State University. Specifically, the study intends to;

1. Examine the effect of predictors of online game addiction among students at Lagos State University
2. Consider how gender will affect online gaming addiction among students at Lagos State University

Research Question

To aid the study, two research questions were asked:

1. What are the predictors of online game addiction among students in a Nigerian university?
2. Is age a factor in online gaming addiction among students at Lagos State University?

Hypotheses

Also, two research hypotheses were raised and tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between predictors and online game addiction of students in a Nigerian University
2. Gender, Age, Trouble factor, Success factor, and Economic gain factors will not significantly predict online game addiction of students in a Nigerian University

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey was adopted for the study as it aimed at determining those factors that are responsible for online game addiction and to test if there exists any significant correlation between the variables of the study.

Population

This study consisted of all students of Lagos State University (involving faculties and departments).

Sample / Participants / Group

A convenient sample of one hundred and twenty (120) participants was used for this study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. This was achieved by approaching individuals within the selected departments to obtain the information needed for this study.

Instrument and Procedures

A well-structured questionnaire titled “Predictors of Online Games Addiction Questionnaire” (POGAQ) 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, department, and so on. 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 Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation, and percentages and inferential statistics of multiple regression analysis and ANOVA at a 0.05 significant level.

Research Results

This section presents the results of the findings. The presentation follows the order in which the research questions and hypotheses were presented at a 0,05 significance level.

Table 1

Research Question 1: What are the predictors of online games addiction among students in a Nigerian university?

Table 1: Predictors

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Economic Gains	38	31.7	31.7
Trouble Factor	30	25.0	56.7
Success Factor	27	22.5	79.2
Valid Gender	14	11.7	90.8
Age	11	9.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

Table 1 shows the percentages and number of respondents that agreed on the predictors of online games addiction among students as follows: economic gains factor - 31.7 % of respondents (38 students), trouble factor – 25.0 % of respondents (30 students); success factor – 22.5 % of respondents (30 students); gender – 11.7 % of respondents (30 students) as well as age – 9.2 % of respondents (11 students).

N	Mea	Std.	Std.	95% Confidence	Mini	Maxi
n	Devia	Error	Interval for Mean	mum	mum	
	tion			Lower	Upper	
				Bound	Bound	

16-18 years	10	70.8 0	11.06 3	3.499	62.89	78.71	51	82
18-21 years	55	75.9 5	12.27 7	1.655	72.63	79.26	54	96
Above 21 years	55	75.2 2	11.21 8	1.513	72.19	78.25	53	92
Total	120	75.1 8	11.68 9	1.067	73.07	77.30	51	96

Research Question 2: Is age a factor in online gaming addiction among students in Lagos State University?

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of how age and Online Games Addiction among students

Table 2 reveals that the mean and standard deviation of respondents whose age range is 16-18 years are: 70.80 and 11.063; the mean and standard deviation of respondents with age range of 18-21 years are: 75.95 and 12.277 while that of respondents who are above 21 years of age are 75.22 and 11.218 respectively. This shows that their means are very close. This implies that age may not be a factor in online games addiction among students in Lagos State University

Hypothesis 1. There is no significant relationship between predictors and online games addiction among students in a Nigerian University

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	1.000 ^a	.999	.999	.273

a. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Gain Factor, Age, Gender, Success Factor, Trouble Factor

From table 3, it was observed that the R stood at 1.000. This implies that there is a strong positive correlation between the variables. Also, the R² is 0.999 which is the proportion of variation in the dependent variable and it explains 99.9 % of the variability of the dependent variable - that is online games addiction of students.

Table 4: ANOVA of predictors of online games addiction

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	16251.465	5	3250.293	43584.899	.000 ^b
Residual	8.501	114	.075		
Total	16259.967	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Online Games Addiction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Gain, Age, Gender, Success Factor, Trouble Factor

The table 4 shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F_{(5, 114)} = 43584.899$, and that the p-value = 0.000. Since the p-value of the F-ratio is less than 0.0, this implies that the regression model is a good fit for the data. The correlation is significant at 0.05 level, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between predictors and online games addiction among students in a Nigerian University.

Hypothesis 2: Gender, Age, Trouble factor, Success factor, and Economic gain factors, will not

significantly predict online games addiction of students in a Nigerian University.

Table 5: showing Coefficients of online games addiction of students

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	-.455	.256		
Age	-.019	.040	-.001	-.477	.634
Gender	.093	.064	.004	1.467	.145
1 Trouble Factor	.998	.009	.368	113.443	.000
Success Factor	1.012	.008	.349	130.112	.000
Economic Gain	1.005	.007	.477	147.346	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Online Games Addiction

From table 5, the predictors of online games addiction of students in the Nigerian University are: age, gender, trouble factor, success factor and economic factor. But the result shows that trouble factor, success factor and economic factor are statistically significant and are the strongest predictors of online games addiction of students in the Nigerian University. Their correlations were significant at 0.05 level, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, these three independent variables were the main predictors of online games addiction of students in a Nigerian University.

Discussion

The result showed that there is significant relationship between predictors and online games addiction of students in a Nigerian University. This is in line with the statement that someone who often plays online games will have an attachment to the games being played so that it is difficult to control himself. They feel the need to play longer when they want to reach or maintain the symbols behind the avatars in online gaming. A character in the game will stand out and be respected if the character has a high level with exclusive equipment, so, they are required to pursue a high level or have a lot of money to be able to buy items to improve the appearance of their avatar. They do not realise that they have spent a long-time playing game so they can experience online game addiction (Kharisma et al., 2020).

Online game addictions are similar to other addictions in terms of the amount of time spent playing, the strong emotional attachment to the activity, and the patterns of social difficulties experienced by gaming addicts. As with other addictions, gaming addicts become preoccupied with game-playing, and it disrupts family and other areas of life. Like someone addicted to video games will often avoid sleeping or eating proper meals in order to continue gaming. While the short-term effects of this may include hunger and fatigue, it could eventually lead to a sleep disorder or diet-related health issues (Kaya, 2013)

On the second hypothesis, the result shows that trouble factor, success factor and economic factor are statistically significant and are the strongest predictors of online games addiction of students in the Nigerian University. This is in line the literature which stated that there are many different causes factor into video game addiction. One of the main reasons that video games can become so addictive, however, is they are designed to be that way. Video game designers, like anyone else trying to make a profit, are always looking for ways to get more people playing their games. They accomplish this by making a game just challenging enough to keep you coming back for more but not so hard that the player eventually gives up. In other words, success for a gamer often feels just out of reach. American Addiction Centers, Inc (2022)

Implications for Counselling

Online games addiction as a problem behaviour is an emerging issue among Lagos State University students that is likely to have associations with poor social functioning, poor academic performance, and maladaptive coping mechanisms.

The school counsellor is therefore saddled with the responsibility to:

- a. assist the students in knowing the pros and cons of online games addiction to their health, academic advancement, association, and family interaction to avoid its consequences
- b. understand the types of video games that are on the market (i.e., MMORPG, solo play, etc.) and be able to recognize when video game overuse is an issue.
- c. provide counseling services to deal with this online games problem to help students or as a preventive step to prevent its negative impact.

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