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PREDICTIVE POWER OF PORNOGRAPHIC ADDICTION ON SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT OF UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the predictive power of pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the extent to which pornographic addiction predicts the school adjustment of university undergraduates and developed a regression model for predicting school adjustment. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 148,712 undergraduate students enrolled in federal universities in South-East Nigeria during the 2024/2025 academic session. A sample of 1,148 undergraduate students was selected using a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using the Pornographic Addiction Scale (PAS), adapted from a standardized instrument, and the School Adjustment Scale (SAS). The instruments were face-validated by three experts from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of 0.79 and 0.74 were obtained for the PAS and SAS, respectively, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Data were collected electronically through Google Forms and analysed using simple linear regression at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that pornographic addiction significantly predicted the school adjustment of university undergraduates. The regression analysis showed a significant negative predictive relationship, indicating that higher levels of pornographic addiction were associated with lower levels of school adjustment among undergraduate students. The regression model further demonstrated that pornographic addiction accounted for a significant proportion of the variation in students' school adjustment. The study concluded that pornographic addiction is a significant negative predictor of school adjustment among university undergraduates in South-East Nigeria. The study recommended that universities should strengthen counselling and psychological support services, implement comprehensive digital wellness and responsible internet use programmes, establish early identification and intervention mechanisms for students experiencing compulsive pornography use, and promote mental health initiatives aimed at enhancing students' emotional well-being and facilitating positive school adjustment.

Keywords: Pornographic Addiction, School Adjustment, University Undergraduates, Predictive Power, South-East Nigeria.

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Introduction

School adjustment is an essential aspect of students' success in higher education because it reflects how effectively they adapt to the academic, social, emotional, and institutional demands of university life. University education presents students with numerous developmental and environmental challenges, including increased academic workload, greater independence, new social relationships, and reduced parental supervision. Successfully adjusting to these demands enhances academic performance, emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, and overall educational attainment. Conversely, poor school adjustment often results in academic failure, emotional distress, absenteeism, behavioural problems, and withdrawal from university activities.

According to Arah (2020) and Wang and Degol (2020), school adjustment refers to students' ability to develop the competencies required to cope successfully with the academic, social, emotional, and institutional demands of the school environment. Similarly, Hirschfield et al. (2020) defined school adjustment as the extent to which students successfully meet the expectations of teachers, peers, and the educational institution while maintaining psychological well-being. Ladd et al. (2022) viewed school adjustment as the ability to navigate academic and social challenges effectively while developing the skills necessary for personal growth and educational success. Consequently, school adjustment in this study refers to the extent to which university undergraduates in South-East Nigeria effectively cope with academic responsibilities, establish positive interpersonal relationships, comply with institutional expectations, and maintain psychological stability throughout their university education.

School adjustment is multidimensional. Fernandez-Lasarte et al. (2020) identified academic, social, emotional, and institutional adjustment as the major dimensions of successful adaptation to school. Academic adjustment involves students' ability to cope with coursework, meet learning objectives, and achieve satisfactory academic performance (Pekrun et al., 2009; Wang & Degol, 2020). Social adjustment concerns students' ability to establish healthy interpersonal relationships, cooperate with peers, and participate meaningfully in campus life (Leon et al., 2021). Emotional adjustment involves regulating emotions, coping effectively with stress, and maintaining psychological well-being despite academic and personal challenges (Arah, 2025; Martin-Ruiz et al., 2023). Institutional adjustment refers to students' acceptance of university rules, values, policies, and expectations while actively participating in university activities. These dimensions collectively determine how successfully students adapt to university life and were therefore considered in the present study.

Despite its importance, many university undergraduates experience difficulties

adjusting to school because of various psychological, behavioural, and environmental challenges. Poor school adjustment has been associated with reduced academic achievement (Symonds et al., 2022), poor classroom engagement (Fernandez-Lasarte et al., 2020), increased dropout tendencies (Ladd et al., 2021), depression and anxiety (Green et al., 2020), social isolation (Mella et al., 2021), and poor career outcomes after graduation (Ladd et al., 2022). These consequences suggest that identifying behavioural factors capable of predicting school adjustment has become increasingly important for university administrators, counsellors, and educational psychologists.

One behavioural factor receiving increasing scholarly attention is pornographic addiction. The rapid expansion of internet access, smartphone ownership, and social media platforms has made sexually explicit materials readily available to university students. Although occasional exposure to pornography may not necessarily constitute a problem, repeated and compulsive consumption may gradually develop into behavioural addiction capable of interfering with normal academic and psychosocial functioning (Arah, 2017; Bőthe et al., 2020). University undergraduates are particularly vulnerable because they often experience greater autonomy, academic pressure, loneliness, and reduced parental supervision, making pornography an easily accessible coping mechanism for stress and emotional discomfort (Wolters & Brady, 2021).

Pornographic addiction refers to the compulsive and uncontrollable consumption of sexually explicit materials despite experiencing negative psychological, academic, social, or emotional consequences. Duffy et al. (2016) defined pornographic addiction as a repetitive pattern of pornography consumption characterized by craving, impaired control, and continued use despite adverse consequences. Similarly, Ugese et al. (2024) described pornographic addiction as a behavioural addiction in which individuals become psychologically dependent on sexually explicit materials for emotional regulation or sexual gratification, resulting in impaired daily functioning. Franklin (2021) further explained that pornographic addiction is characterized by tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, compulsive viewing, and disruption of academic responsibilities, interpersonal relationships, and emotional well-being.

Growing empirical evidence suggests that excessive pornography consumption may significantly interfere with students' ability to adjust successfully to university life. Frequent pornography use has been associated with reduced concentration, procrastination, poor time management, sleep disturbances, emotional instability, diminished academic motivation, and declining classroom participation (Mestre-Bach & Potenza, 2023; Wolters & Brady, 2021). Students addicted to pornography often devote considerable time to viewing explicit materials at the expense of studying,

attending lectures, participating in extracurricular activities, and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships. Such behavioural patterns may reduce their capacity to cope effectively with university demands, thereby resulting in poor school adjustment.

Pornographic addiction may also affect students' emotional and social adjustment. Excessive pornography consumption has been linked to anxiety, depression, guilt, loneliness, low self-esteem, emotional dysregulation, and social withdrawal (Grubbs et al., 2022). These psychological difficulties may reduce students' ability to establish meaningful friendships, interact positively with lecturers, participate in group learning activities, and integrate successfully into university life. Furthermore, compulsive pornography use may distort perceptions of intimacy and relationships, thereby affecting interpersonal functioning and social adjustment.

From a cognitive perspective, pornography addiction has been associated with impaired attention, reduced working memory, diminished self-control, and poor decision-making (Kühn et al., 2022; Rost et al., 2022). These cognitive impairments may negatively affect students' ability to concentrate during lectures, complete assignments promptly, prepare adequately for examinations, and achieve academic success. Consequently, students experiencing pornography addiction may struggle to satisfy the academic expectations necessary for successful school adjustment.

The relationship between pornographic addiction and school adjustment can also be explained using behavioural learning principles. Repeated exposure to rewarding pornographic content may reinforce compulsive viewing behaviour, gradually replacing productive academic habits with maladaptive coping strategies. As addiction progresses, students may experience increasing difficulty controlling their behaviour despite recognizing its harmful consequences. This may eventually interfere with academic engagement, emotional stability, and institutional commitment, thereby reducing overall school adjustment.

Given the increasing prevalence of internet-enabled devices among university students and the growing accessibility of sexually explicit materials, understanding the predictive influence of pornographic addiction on school adjustment has become an important educational concern. Identifying this relationship will provide valuable evidence for counsellors, university administrators, psychologists, and policy makers in designing preventive interventions, counselling programmes, digital wellness initiatives, and behavioural modification strategies aimed at promoting healthier lifestyles and improving students' successful adjustment to university life. Such evidence provides the rationale for examining the predictive power of pornographic addiction

on the school adjustment of university undergraduates in South-East Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the predictive power of pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates?

Hypothesis

There is no significant predictive power of pornographic addiction on school adjustment of university undergraduates

Research Method

The research employed a correlational survey design to examine the predictive influence of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on university undergraduates' sexual behaviour and school adjustment. The design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to investigate naturally occurring relationships among variables without manipulating any of them. It further allowed the determination of how much variation in sexual behaviour and school adjustment could be explained by the predictor variables.

The study was carried out in South-East Nigeria, comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States**.** The zone hosts several federal universities with diverse undergraduate populations drawn from different socio-cultural backgrounds, making it suitable for investigating behavioural and psychological issues among university students. The population consisted of 148,712 undergraduate students enrolled in federal universities within the South-East geopolitical zone during the 2024/2025 academic session. These students represented the target population because they possessed the characteristics required for investigating the study variables.

Using a multistage sampling technique, the researcher selected 1,148 undergraduate students for participation in the study. Although Taro Yamane's formula produced a minimum sample size of 399 respondents, the sample was increased substantially to improve precision, enhance statistical power, and ensure better representation of the population.

Two instruments were utilized for data collection, namely the Pornographic Addiction Scale (PAS) and School Adjustment Scale (SAS)**.** While the PTS was specifically developed by the researcher from literature, the remaining instrument, SAS, was adapted from validated scale reported in previous empirical studies. The instruments contained structured Likert-scale items designed to measure the respective variables objectively. The instruments were subjected to face validation by three specialists from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their observations improved the wording, relevance, organization, and clarity of the items before the instruments were finally administered. To determine reliability, the instruments were pilot-tested using 50 undergraduate students from South-South Nigeria. Cronbach Alpha coefficients of 0.76 and 0.74 were obtained

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for the two instruments respectively, confirming satisfactory internal consistency. Questionnaires were administered electronically using Google Forms**.** The online links were circulated through WhatsApp and other social media platforms with the assistance of students' representatives. This method enhanced accessibility, protected respondents' anonymity, and increased the likelihood of obtaining sincere responses on highly sensitive issues. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. Simple Linear Regression was used in the data analyses. Decisions on hypothesis testing were based on the 0.05 significance level**,** while relationship strength was interpreted using Schober et al.'s (2018) correlation guidelines.

Presentation and Interpretation of Data

Research Question: What is the predictive power of pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates?

Table 1: *Regression analysis of the Predictive power of pornographic addiction on the school adjustmentof university undergraduates?*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	N
1	.411[a]	.169	.168	8.55195	1148

a. Predictors: (Constant), Pono_ Addict
b. Criterion Variable: Sch_ Adjust

Hypothesis: There is no significant predictive power of pornographic addiction on school adjustment of university undergraduates

Table 2: *Test of significance for the predictive power of pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	80.520	.643		125.272	.000
	Pono_ Addict	-.652	.043	-.411	-15.244	.000

Table 1 presents the regression analysis of the predictive power of pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates. The result yielded a correlation coefficient (R = 0.411), indicating a moderate relationship between pornographic addiction and school adjustment. The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2 = 0.168) shows that 16.8% of the variation in school adjustment among

university undergraduates is explained by pornographic addiction, while the remaining 83.2% is attributable to other factors not included in the model. This indicates that pornographic addiction is a meaningful predictor of school adjustment among university undergraduates.

Table 2 presents the test of significance for the predictive power of pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates. The result produced a t-value of -15.244 with an associated probability value (p = .000). Since the probability value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The finding therefore indicates that pornographic addiction negatively and significantly predicts the school adjustment of university undergraduates. The negative standardized beta coefficient (β = -0.411) implies that an increase in pornographic addiction is associated with a decrease in school adjustment. In other words, university undergraduates with higher levels of pornographic addiction are more likely to experience poorer academic, social, emotional, and institutional adjustment than those with lower levels of pornographic addiction. This suggests that excessive pornography use may hinder students' ability to cope effectively with the demands of university life.

Summary of the Findings

The study found that:

- Pornographic addiction had a moderate predictive relationship with school adjustment among university undergraduates (R = 0.411).
- Pornographic addiction explained 16.8% of the variation in university undergraduates' school adjustment (R^2 = 0.168).
- Pornographic addiction negatively and significantly predicted school adjustment (β = -0.411, t = -15.244, p < 0.05).

University undergraduates with higher levels of pornographic addiction were more likely to experience poor school adjustment than those with lower levels of pornographic addiction.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that pornographic addiction significantly predicted the school adjustment of university undergraduates. The regression analysis showed that pornographic addiction accounted for 16.8% of the variation in students' school adjustment (R^2 = 0.168), while the regression coefficient indicated a significant negative predictive relationship (β = -0.411, t = -15.244, p < 0.05). This implies that university undergraduates with higher levels of pornographic addiction were more likely to experience poor school adjustment than those with lower levels of pornographic addiction.

The observed negative relationship may be attributed to the disruptive effects of excessive pornography consumption on

students' academic, emotional, and social functioning. Students who spend considerable time viewing pornographic materials often devote less time to academic activities, resulting in poor study habits, reduced concentration, absenteeism, and declining academic commitment. Excessive pornography use may also contribute to emotional problems such as guilt, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, all of which can interfere with students' ability to cope effectively with the demands of university life. Furthermore, compulsive pornography use may reduce students' participation in healthy social interactions, extracurricular activities, and meaningful peer relationships, thereby affecting their overall adjustment to the university environment.

The finding is consistent with the self-regulation theory, which posits that individuals who experience difficulty controlling impulsive behaviours are more likely to encounter challenges in fulfilling important life responsibilities. Students addicted to pornography may experience diminished self-control, making it difficult to balance academic responsibilities with excessive online sexual activities, thereby reducing their capacity to adjust successfully to university life.

The finding of this study agrees with Ohuakanwa et al. (2012), who found a significant negative relationship between pornography addiction and psychosocial as well as academic adjustment among university students in Lagos State. Similarly, the finding supports Ikechukwu (2020), who reported that addiction to online pornography distracted students from academic activities and contributed to poor school adjustment among in-school adolescents in Imo State. The finding is also in line with Rostam (2023), who found that university students addicted to pornography exhibited higher levels of anxiety and depression, which adversely affected their adjustment to university life. However, the finding differs from Benjamin et al. (2019), who reported no significant relationship between sexual media exposure and students' academic engagement among college students in the Philippines. The difference may be attributed to variations in the study population, cultural context, instruments used, and analytical techniques.

Overall, the present study demonstrates that pornographic addiction is an important predictor of university undergraduates' school adjustment. Although other factors may also contribute to students' adjustment, reducing problematic pornography use could significantly improve students' academic engagement, emotional well-being, and social adaptation within the university environment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that pornographic addiction is a significant predictor of school adjustment among university undergraduates. The study established that increased levels of pornographic addiction are associated with poorer adjustment to the academic, social,

and emotional demands of university life. Although pornographic addiction accounted for 16.8% of the variation in school adjustment, its significant negative influence suggests that excessive pornography consumption undermines students' ability to function effectively within the university environment. Therefore, efforts aimed at reducing pornographic addiction among university students are likely to promote better school adjustment, improve academic engagement, and enhance students' overall psychological and social well-being.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. University management should strengthen counselling and psychological support services by organizing regular awareness programmes, seminars, and confidential counselling sessions to educate students on the adverse effects of pornographic addiction on their academic performance and school adjustment.
2. Parents, lecturers, and student affairs personnel should work collaboratively to promote healthy internet use, self-control, and responsible digital behaviour among undergraduates through mentorship programmes and continuous guidance.
3. University counselling centres should develop early identification and intervention programmes for students exhibiting signs of compulsive pornography use by providing cognitive-behavioural counselling, stress management training, and other evidence-based interventions to improve students' adjustment to university life.

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