

INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN OYO STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR CYBER COUNSELING

Popoola, Balqis Olabisi

Balqispopoola87@gmail.com

08020947142

Centre for Counselling and Human Development Centre, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

&

Balaji, Hameed Olalekan

lalekanbolaji@gmail.com

08034862624

Science Education Department, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

The internet revolution in this modern age is believed to have substantially impacted every walks of people's life ranging from education, economics, politics, and social fields of lifecycle. The use of digital tools and platforms for communication and collaboration has made it easier for teachers and students to connect and work together. This has led to more flexibility and convenience in the learning process. Excessive internet use can lead to addiction, which can negatively affect a person's physical, mental and social well-being. This is particularly concerning among university undergraduates, as excessive internet use can interfere with their academic performance and overall well-being. This study examined internet addiction among University undergraduates in Oyo State with inferences on cyber counseling. This paper presents concept of internet addiction and prevalence of internet addiction among undergraduates in Oyo State. Also, the paper reviews existing studies on factors influencing internet addiction and outcome of its excessive use among undergraduates. Drawn from this review, the study concludes that Cyber counselors are trained professionals who provide therapy and support for individuals struggling with internet addiction. They may use a variety of techniques, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, to help individuals manage their addiction and improve their overall well-being. The study therefore suggest among others that Cyber counselors should work with universities and other organizations to raise awareness about the risks of internet addiction and to develop programs and policies to help students use the internet in a healthy and balanced way.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, Cyber Counsellors, Undergraduates, Oyo State

Introduction

Internet addiction is an increasingly worrying phenomena affecting people globally especially the youths. Homes, schools, colleges, libraries and internet cafes are the places which are more accessible to internet nowadays. Completing schoolwork, playing online games, reading and writing emails and engaging in real time chatting are the common online activities. A preliminary studies had shown that a

Popoola, B. O. & Bolaji, H. O. (2023). Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implications for Cyber Counseling. *Journal of library, science education and learning technology*, (4)1, 1-17.

large number of children and adolescents with age around 15 to 27 years old have access to the internet and are exposed to the internet at a very early age (Machimbarrena, et. al 2018). It is experiencing tremendous growth and development in its size and numbers of users all over the world. The benefits of the internet have been widely researched and include keeping in touch with friends, making vacation plans, managing finances, assisting with educational needs etc. Pawlikowska, et. al (2022) argued that the internet is believed to play huge role in the daily lives of approximately 40% of the world's population, with more than 5 billion internet users representing 63 percent reported in first quarter of 2022.

It is a fact that most young people spend valuable time on the internet without knowing the negative impact this engagement may have. Aalbers, et. al (2019) averred that teens can spend 8 or more hours a day scrolling through their social media feeds and that seems very normal and can do this for days and months without even questioning whether this form of entertainment is creating problems in other parts of their lives. This they do for several reasons, from taking help for academics in the form of online tuition, to staying connected with their peers and family. Students use the internet to seek and obtain scholarly material and, consequently, knowledge on how successfully they make use of this channel is limited. Lamont, et. al (2020) posited that students' information-seeking ends as they work on their project. The use of the internet is one of the major factors affecting the academic performance and social life of university students. The number of hours spent on the internet affects the grades of students depending on if the internet is used for study purpose or social motive. Most students develop a "pathologic" use of the Internet. Over-involvement with the Internet, or "pathologic Internet use" (PIU) may cause users time-management or health problems, and create conflicts with other daily activities or with people around the users.

Studies have shown that an increase in virtual interaction lessens the amount of face-to-face interaction between people and this in turn may breed social isolation and depression (Fatema et. al 2020; Fardghassemi & Joffe, 2022). Thus, excessive internet use (EIU) has been argued to cause a child to develop internet addiction or compulsive internet use (CIU), which can have several ill effects. It also can result in a range of harmful behaviors such as wrongful use of social media, impulsive online buying, excessive video gaming, and online gaming, collectively termed problematic use of the internet (PUI). Darpinian, Sterling and Aggarwal (2022) liken this excessive use of the internet to an exercise which is good for the body and soul, but over-exercise may have a destructively negative impact on

human health. The internet may be essentially good, but as in other areas of life, too much of a good thing can lead to trouble. However, whether it is at the level of school or family or individual, an efficient way to the over-use problem is of great significance to individual career development, national education development, national talent recruiting, and social economic development.

Concept of Internet Addiction

Internet addiction has received increased attention due to the controversial nature and the possibility that a new kind of compulsive activity is on the rise. Internet addiction is a term used to describe excessive or compulsive use of the internet, typically involving activities such as social media, gaming, and online shopping. It is not currently recognized as a formal disorder in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), but it is considered a behavioral addiction and is being studied by researchers (Lebni, et. al 2020). Symptoms of internet addiction can include neglecting responsibilities and relationships, experiencing withdrawal symptoms when not online, and feeling a sense of euphoria while using the internet.

According to Wang (2019), internet addiction is a contemporary problem brought by easy access to computer and online information. On the other hand, Kurniasanti, et. al (2019) maintained that it is an impulse disorder. People who are easily bored, lonely, shy, depressed and suffering from other addiction are people who are susceptible to internet addiction. Furthermore, some of the characteristic of this problem are similar to those of pathological gambling. With the numerous caveats attached to the use of the internet, there are risks associated with addicted behaviour. Internet addiction can be likened to a gambling habit which is a behavioural addiction and a subset of technological addiction. However, those who are addicted to the internet often time spend more time online and experience excitement while doing so. The internet negatively impacts their lives in areas including education, health, and parental relationships. They use the internet compulsively and exhibit withdrawal symptoms (Amudhan et al. 2021).

Internet addiction can be found at any age and in any social condition, but most of the research major attention has been focuses on adolescent because adolescent seem to be a critical period of addiction vulnerability. Using internet has become one of the most popular leisure-time (Mathew, 2020). The availability of idle time, inadequate parental supervision, and evasion of academic expectations were cited as some of the explanations for this excessive internet use among students. The psychological and developmental aspects that affect adolescents and young adults' beliefs about the causes of their

Popoola, B. O. & Bolaji, H. O. (2023). Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implications for Cyber Counseling. *Journal of library, science education and learning technology*, (4)1, 1-17.

experiences and the things they credit success or failure are frequently thought to make university students more susceptible to internet addiction.

However, the indications of internet addiction include obsessive internet use, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, excessive computer use, and a lack of interest in other things (Chand & Sheth, 2021). Online addiction manifests as an uncontrolled urge to use the internet, the devaluation of time spent offline, severe anxiety and hostility in the event of deprivation, and a steady decline in social and familial life. Internet addiction is the drive to constantly be online. Cheng, et. al (2021) categorized the forms of internet addiction into five major parts which are:

- i. Cybersexual addiction – addiction to adult chat room or cyberporn
- ii. Cyberrelationship addiction – online friendships made in chat rooms or cyberporn
- iii. Net compulsion – compulsive gambling, day trading, or auction shopping
- iv. Information overload – compulsive Web or database surfing
- v. Computer addiction – compulsive game playing or programming

The psychological illness known as "Internet addiction" is linked to excessive Internet use (Berte, Mahamid & Affouneh, 2021). Internet use, particularly social media, has fundamentally altered how teenagers communicate, socialize, establish, and uphold friendships. Living in a digital age has advantages, but there are also dangers. Today's adolescents spend the majority of their spare time engaging with screens because they lack the social skills necessary for social growth. They are also misplaced in a world of unfair comparisons and online bullying, which breeds feelings of worthlessness and shame.

Therefore, the use of social media networks have no doubt impacted greatly on the activities of university students. This is in agreement with Eid, et. al (2020) who reiterated that the success of interactive web utilisation was very much related to the users' attitude toward the social media networks. As a result, many students tend to rely heavily on their phones, which will inevitably lead to even heavier use. Mobile phones are popular among students because it increases their social communication and expand their opportunities for establishing social relationships.

Prevalence of Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates

In modern time, University students are thought to be at a hazardous risk to excessive Internet use worldwide. Internet addiction among these students was established to be associated with different

psychiatric disorders such as depression, stress, anxiety, low self-respect, and low psychosomatic well-being (Abdel-Salam, et. al 2019). International estimates of Internet addiction mostly differ. In a large European study in the year 2019, the prevalence of Internet addiction among adults was between 7.9% and 22.8% (Tóth, et. al 2021). Another study by Su, et. al (2020) in Europe reported a prevalence of Internet addiction of 4.4% among young adults.. Among Korean adolescents, Duong, Liaw and Augustin (2020) found that 1.6% have reported to experience Internet addiction and 38% were liable to Internet addiction. Internet addiction prevalence was 2.6% among adolescents in El-Minia, Upper Egypt, while the prevalence of potential Internet addiction was 18.2% (Nageeb & Al Enzi 2020). Another study conducted among adolescents recruited from private and governmental schools in Cairo, Egypt, revealed a prevalence of 0.8% while that of Saudis are heavier Internet users than others in different countries where most of most of the students in Taif University in Saudi Arabia (98.2%) were using the Internet (Abdel-Salam, 2019).

According to a study by Tus (2020), there is a correlation between students' Grade Point Average (GPA) grades and the average weekly amount of time spent on social media. The study discovered a non-linear relationship between the two variables and came to the conclusion that excessive social media use had a negative impact on students' academic performance. The use of the internet and academic success among English Department students at Zarka University were evaluated by López-Meneses, et. al (2020) and they found that more than 75% of users who used social media for less than 10 hours per week saw an improvement in their academic performance. In a related investigation, Kircaburun, Harris, Calado, and Griffiths (2021) looked into the use of the internet for both academic and non-academic purposes. The study found that computer science students spend more time online than other students do, and there is only a minimal correlation between overall internet usage and time spent online for academic purposes. The association however, between total online time and time spent conducting academic research is small but significant for social science students; it is low for scientific students and is in fact negative.

Internet addiction is a serious problem that can negatively affect a person's academic performance, relationships, and overall well-being. In Nigeria, it appears to be a particularly prevalent issue among university undergraduates. This is in agreement with the work carried out in Ibadan, Oyo state Nigeria by Afolabi, Ilesanmi and Adebayo (2022) which found that problematic internet usage (PIU) among adolescents was associated with diminished family intimacy, subpar academic performance, loss of

Popoola, B. O. & Bolaji, H. O. (2023). Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implications for Cyber Counseling. *Journal of library, science education and learning technology*, (4)1, 1-17.

attention, as well as internet abuse and risky sexual behaviour. The study found among others that internet users in this study access the web predominantly from home, followed by college, and then Internet cafes. The average time of using the Internet was more than 5 hour per day among 40% of the students. However, people who are addicted to internet can develop many types of disorder and one of the disorders that are common for the modern day is Internet Addiction Disorder (IDA). Individuals who are suffering from Internet Addiction Disorder (IDA) can exhibit symptoms such as drawbacks and face consequences that are similar to individual who are addicted to alcohol, gambling, shopping or other compulsive behaviour. It is now believed that there could be widespread addiction to it in particular amongst College and University students.

Internet addiction, also known as problematic internet use, is characterized by excessive mental activity about the internet and a need to use it excessively to achieve satisfaction (Mead and Sharp, 2021). This can lead to problems with relationships, work, and education, and individuals with characteristics such as shyness, depression, and low self-esteem may be more prone to developing internet addiction. The use of social media, online games, and online gambling has been linked to internet addiction. Studies have shown that excessive use of these activities can lead to negative consequences such as sleep disturbances, mood changes, and problems with daily functioning (Andreassen et al., 2012; Herrera et al., 2010; Teke, 2011). Predictions also suggest that internet addiction will become a significant problem in the future, as access to the internet and technology continues to increase.

The Internet is a significant part of college student culture and is often viewed as an important tool for students. It offers many benefits, such as free and unrestricted access, lack of parental oversight, and the ability to manage personal time. Additionally, it can help alleviate academic stress and social isolation. Studies have shown variation in the prevalence of Internet addiction (IA) among adolescents, with higher rates found in Nigeria compared to European countries. For example, a study by Uye, et. al (2022) in Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria in 2022 found that 2.6% of undergraduates were problematic internet users and 18.2% were potential problematic users. Other studies in Ibadan have found that a significant relationship exist between emotional expression and internet addiction and same with emotional utilisation and internet addiction among students (Ogunwuyi & Omoike, 2020); a significant relationship exist between locus of control and internet addiction, significant relationship between self-concept and internet addiction and a joint effect between locus of control, self-concept and internet addiction among university undergraduates in Oyo State Nigeria (Muraina & Popoola, 2022).

In the same vein, Lin (2020) suggests that students who rely heavily on the Internet and have used it for a long time are more likely to be addicted to it. Addicts tend to spend more time on the Internet per week and per session than non-addicts. Factors such as loneliness, self-esteem, and life satisfaction can contribute to Internet addiction, as well as depression, anxiety, and stress. Students who are addicted to the Internet spend more time on it than studying and that the prevalence of Internet addiction is higher among male students than female students, although some studies have found no gender difference.

Thus, the prevalence of internet addiction among undergraduates has increased in recent years. Studies have shown that college students are at a higher risk for internet addiction due to the heavy use of technology in their academic and social lives (Baturay & Toker, 2019; Sert, et. al 2019). Factors such as stress, loneliness, and a lack of social support have also been found to contribute to the development of internet addiction in this population. However, internet addiction is a complex phenomenon and varies across countries, culture, and population groups. Therefore, the prevalence rate might be different in different locations.

Factors Influencing Internet Addiction and Outcome of Its Excessive Use

The use of the internet has greatly increased worldwide in recent years. With over 3 billion people using the internet daily, it has become a significant part of daily life for many people, particularly young people. In Nigeria, the number of active internet subscriptions has also risen, reaching 143.6 million in February 2022 (Alabi, & Olaoye, (2022)). A large portion of mobile phone connections in a given population are held by young adults between the ages of 18 and 24, and that this group, specifically students, may be at a higher risk for internet addiction due to their increased access to and flexibility with the internet. The Internet offers many educational benefits, such as access to a vast amount of information, the ability to connect with others in educational settings, and improved communication between teachers and students. It also enables online learning, which can provide more flexible and accessible education for people around the world (Li, 2022). However, excessive use of the internet and internet addiction can have negative effects on an adolescent's physical, mental, and social well-being. These negative outcomes may include poor performance in school, social isolation, and a disruption of psychosocial development. It is important for parents and caregivers to monitor internet usage and to set appropriate boundaries and guidelines to ensure healthy internet habits.

Popoola, B. O. & Bolaji, H. O. (2023). Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implications for Cyber Counseling. *Journal of library, science education and learning technology*, (4)1, 1-17.

There are several factors that can contribute to students developing a dependence on the Internet. These include the availability of free time, the ease of use of the Internet, the psychological and developmental characteristics of young adulthood, limited or no parental supervision, and the expectation of Internet use for school assignments and projects (Rahmatullah, et. al 2022). Internet addiction (IA) has been linked to various factors, including socio-demographic factors such as a younger age and male gender, as well as reasons for internet use such as seeking new friendships and relationships online, using the internet less for coursework/assignments, visiting pornographic sites, and playing online games. These factors include spending more time on the internet, having constant access to the internet, and the method by which a person accesses the internet (e.g. mobile device vs. desktop computer). However, individuals who spend more time on the internet and have constant access to it may be more likely to develop IA, as well as those who primarily access the internet through mobile devices.

Additionally, studies have shown that certain personality traits, such as impulsivity and sensation-seeking, may also increase the risk of IA (Dodig Hundric, et. al 2023; Xu, et. al 2019). However, it's important to note that IA is a complex behaviour with multiple contributing factors and no single factor can fully explain the development of IA. IA can be problematic and can lead to negative consequences. Internet addiction can have negative effects on an individual's mental health and well-being. This may be associated with depression, anxiety, sleep problems, shyness, social anxiety, and suicidal thoughts, particularly in adolescents. In the same vein, excessive internet addiction (IA) can lead to a range of negative outcomes, both clinically and in terms of substance use. These include insomnia, attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity symptoms, decreased sexual activity, low self-esteem, poor academic performance, smoking, and the development of potentially addictive habits such as drinking alcohol or coffee and taking drugs (Jeong, et. al 2020). Additionally, internet addiction can contribute to the worsening of pre-existing mental health conditions. It is important for individuals who may be struggling with internet addiction to seek help from a mental health professional, who can provide guidance and support for addressing both the addiction and underlying mental health issues.

Cyber Counselling

Cyber counseling, also known as online counseling or e-counseling, is a form of therapy that is delivered over the internet using video conferencing, instant messaging, email, or other digital communication tools (Abdallah Altarawneh & Awwad Alomoush, 2022). It allows individuals to

receive counseling services from the comfort of their own home, without the need to travel to a physical location. Cyber counseling is becoming increasingly popular as it offers convenience and accessibility for individuals who may not have access to traditional in-person counseling services.

Online/cyber counseling has indeed received considerable attention and recognition as a viable counseling delivery strategy. Research has shown that online counseling can be as effective as in-person counseling for a variety of mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety, and stress (Thomas, et. al., 2021; Novella, Ng & Samuolis 2022; Matsumoto, Hamatani & Shimizu, 2021). Additionally, online counseling can also be beneficial in increasing access to counseling services, especially for individuals living in rural or remote areas with limited access to in-person counseling services. It has also been found to be beneficial in providing anonymity, which can be beneficial for people who may not feel comfortable seeking help face to face, or those who may not want others to know they are receiving counseling. Furthermore, the flexibility and convenience offered by online counseling can be beneficial for people with busy schedules, or who have difficulty taking time off work or other responsibilities to attend in-person counseling sessions. It is considered to be a viable alternative to traditional in-person counseling, with its own advantages, and it can be a useful tool in providing mental health services to a larger population (Fernandez, et. al 2021).

Cyber counseling or e-therapy, raises several ethical concerns. One of the main concerns is competence, as online counselors may not have the same level of training or experience as in-person counselors (Earle & Freddolino, 2022). Informed consent is also a concern, as clients may not fully understand the risks and limitations of online counseling. Privacy and security are also major issues, as sensitive information may be vulnerable to hacking or unauthorized access (Stoll, Müller & Trachsel, 2020). It's important for practitioners in the field to be aware of these concerns and to take appropriate measures to address them, such as using secure communication platforms and obtaining informed consent from clients. Access to technology is a major barrier for some individuals who may benefit from online counseling. Not everyone has access to reliable internet or a suitable device to participate in online counseling sessions. Additionally, some individuals may not have the necessary technological skills or literacy to navigate online platforms and communicate with a counselor. This can create a digital divide, where certain individuals are unable to access online counseling services, despite it being a viable option for their mental health needs.

Popoola, B. O. & Bolaji, H. O. (2023). Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implications for Cyber Counseling. *Journal of library, science education and learning technology*, (4)1, 1-17.

In spite of the aforementioned challenges, cyber counseling has been found to be effective in treating a variety of mental health issues. Thomas, et. al (2021) found that online counseling can be just as effective as in-person therapy for conditions such as depression, panic disorder, social anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders. This is due to the flexibility and convenience of online counseling, which allows individuals to access therapy from the comfort of their own home and can be especially beneficial for those who have difficulty accessing traditional in-person therapy. Stoll, Müller and Trachsel (2020) posited that there are unique ethical considerations when engaging in cyber counseling, such as:

- i. **Worker/Practitioner Competence:** Providers must be adequately trained and competent in the use of technology and have the necessary skills to provide effective online counseling.
- ii. **Confidentiality:** Providers must take steps to ensure that client information is kept confidential, such as using secure communication methods and properly storing client information.
- iii. **Technological Difficulties:** Providers must have a plan in place to deal with any technical difficulties that may arise during a session. They should also be able to communicate with clients about these issues and provide a plan of action to continue the session.
- iv. **Informed Consent:** Providers need to ensure that clients understand the risks and benefits of online counseling, including the limits of confidentiality and how to protect their privacy.
- v. **Identify Verification:** Providers need to verify the identity of the clients, to ensure that the person on the other end of the session is who they claim to be.

It is important for providers to stay informed about the laws and regulations regarding online counseling in their jurisdiction and to adhere to professional ethical guidelines.

Theoretical Review

This paper is premised on General Strain Theory (GST) Propounded by Robert Agnew (1992) which is a sociological theory that explains how negative experiences, or strains, can lead to deviant behavior. GST posits that individuals who experience negative events, such as failure to achieve goals, loss of positive stimuli, or exposure to negative stimuli, will experience negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and disappointment. These negative emotions can lead to deviant behaviors such as crime, delinquency, and substance abuse as a means of coping with the strain (Baek, et. al 2019). GST also suggests that individuals who are exposed to more strains, or who lack the means to cope with them, are more likely to engage in deviant behaviour.

GST proposes that individuals may turn to these behaviours as a way to cope with or alleviate the negative emotions caused by the strain. The theory suggest that people who experience strain or stress may feel a sense of pressure and frustration, which can lead to negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, or depression. It can also exacerbate pre-existing mental health conditions. In order to cope with these negative emotions, individuals may turn to deviant or criminal behaviors, such as substance abuse or addiction, as a way to alleviate their emotional distress. The relevance of the theory to the study is in individuals' strain experience in their offline lives, such as stress at work or in their relationships, may turn to the internet as a coping mechanism, which can then lead to addiction. Additionally, the internet can provide a source of positive stimuli, such as social support or access to information, which can be taken away if an individual, becomes addicted, leading to negative emotions and a cycle of addiction.

Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implication for Cyber Counsellings

The adoption of a cognitive behaviour is pertinent by the counselling psychologists in helping the students who are already addicted to identify and change irrational externally oriented thoughts and beliefs which made them to think that factors beyond their control made them to be addicted to the internet. The students should be made to take personal responsibility for their action. Moreover, behavioural scientist can organize seminars, workshop and conferences to sensitize the youths of the need to have realistic and objective self-assessment and self-concept. Family therapy would also benefit students who are addicted to the internet since it can provide them with supportive environment meet other people with the same problem, which often boosts motivation. Self-help groups can be a useful source of education and information.

Enright, Allman-Farinelli and Redfern (2020) accentuated that the magnitude of influence that parenting styles and behaviours exert on youths indicates a clear need for family-centered interventions to remediate students' internet addiction generally. Along with this, a clearly specified conceptual framework to guide family intervention development, implementation, evaluation would be developed by social workers, educators. The counsellor should also organize awareness campaigns should to educate the youth about the debilitating effects of excessive internet usage. Similarly, the counsellor could link up the students with self-help groups - these may help the client School counselors are charged with not only direct service to students with academic, personal/social, and/or career problems,

Popoola, B. O. & Bolaji, H. O. (2023). Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implications for Cyber Counseling. *Journal of library, science education and learning technology*, (4)1, 1-17.

but also are to be responsible for the prevention of maladies by responding to identified evolving social issues that prove to be a danger to students.

However, part of the difficulty in treating students with IA is the identification of the problem and breaking through the denial of the addiction (Major, 2019). He further suggested that identification and prevention programs be initiated, especially in school settings where this duty falls upon administration and student support staff such as school counselors. In order to increase effective preventative intervention programs, a team approach to systematically increase awareness of the issue. Information about the symptoms of IA and referral sources should be readily available to school counselors, administrators, faculty and staff, and parents (School counselors could take the lead on gathering and distributing information about IA and problematic Internet use in their school and community through leadership activities such as workshops and faculty seminars. Teacher and school staff in-services and parental training could be provided periodically. These events should provide basic information about IA, a discussion of warning signs, a simple assessment, and resources, both local and web based.

Succinctly, Internet addiction among university undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria can have significant implications for their mental and physical health, as well as their academic performance. Cyber counseling can be an effective way to help these individuals manage their addiction and reduce its negative effects. Cyber counselors can play an important role in addressing internet addiction among students. They can provide support and guidance to help students develop healthy habits and boundaries around their use of technology. This may include teaching students how to set limits on their screen time, how to balance their online and offline activities, and how to recognize and manage the triggers that lead to excessive internet use. Additionally, cyber counselors can provide counseling and therapy to students who are struggling with addiction, helping them to understand the underlying emotional and psychological factors that contribute to their addiction and to develop strategies for coping with these issues. Overall, the role of cyber counselors is to help students build resilience and self-regulation skills to prevent and manage internet addiction.

Conclusion

Taken from above, it is crystal clear that students use social media for interaction, killing time, entertainment, seeking and sharing of information, socialisation, self-expression, education, surveillance and communication. Internet addiction among students has been shown to negatively

impact their academic performance, mental health, and social relationships. Symptoms of internet addiction include neglecting responsibilities and relationships, spending excessive amounts of time online, and experiencing withdrawal symptoms when not using the internet. Cyber counselors are trained professionals who provide therapy and support for individuals struggling with internet addiction. They may use a variety of techniques, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, to help individuals manage their addiction and improve their overall well-being. Cyber counselors can play a crucial role in addressing this issue by educating students about the dangers of excessive internet use and providing support for those who may be struggling with addiction. This can include counseling, therapy, and developing coping mechanisms for managing internet use. Internet addiction can be treated with extensive collaboration services involving the school counselor, the administration, faculty and staff, and parents in order to positively affect the student body at their schools, utilization of empirically supported proactive strategies and treatments for preventing problems among students whose potential for academic success, personal and social growth, and professional development is under jeopardy through Internet addiction.

Suggestions

The paper suggests that;

- i. Cyber counselors should be aware of the potential for internet addiction among their clients, as well as the specific issues that may arise for college students. This includes difficulties with time management, procrastination, and isolation.
- ii. Cyber counselors should be trained to help students identify and address the underlying psychological and emotional factors that may contribute to internet addiction, such as stress, anxiety, and depression
- iii. Cyber counselors should work with universities and other organizations to raise awareness about the risks of internet addiction and to develop programs and policies to help students use the internet in a healthy and balanced way

References

- Aalbers, G., McNally, R. J., Heeren, A., De Wit, S., & Fried, E. I. (2019). Social media and depression symptoms: A network perspective. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 148(8), 1454.
- Abdallah Altarawneh, A. M., & Awwad Alomoush, R. A. (2022). The reality of E-counseling services in the light of Digital learning from the point of View of Teachers in Jordan. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1-20.
-

Popoola, B. O. & Bolaji, H. O. (2023). Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implications for Cyber Counseling. *Journal of library, science education and learning technology*, (4)1, 1-17.

- Abdel-Salam, D. M., Alrowaili, H. I., Albedaiwi, H. K., Alessa, A. I., & Alfayyadh, H. A. (2019). Prevalence of Internet addiction and its associated factors among female students at Jouf University, Saudi Arabia. *Journal of the Egyptian Public Health Association*, 94(1), 1-8.
- Afolabi, A. A., Ilesanmi, O. S., & Adebayo, A. M. (2022). Prevalence and Pattern of Internet Addiction Among Adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Cureus*, 14(2) 10-22.
- Alabi, A. W., & Olaoye, F. O. (2022). The Effect of Technology Adoption on Financial Inclusion: A Cross-country Panel Analysis between China and Nigeria. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 7(2), 1-11.
- Amudhan, S., Prakasha, H., Mahapatra, P., Burma, A. D., Mishra, V., Sharma, M. K., & Rao, G. N. (2021). Technology addiction among school-going adolescents in India: epidemiological analysis from a cluster survey for strengthening adolescent health programs at district level. *Journal of Public Health*.
- Baek, H., Roberts, A. M., Seepersad, R., & Swartz, K. (2019). Examining negative emotions as mediators between exposures to family violence and bullying: A gendered perspective. *Journal of school violence*, 18(3), 440-454.
- Baturay, M. H., & Toker, S. (2019). Internet addiction among college students: Some causes and effects. *Education and Information Technologies*, 24(5), 2863-2885.
- Berte, D. Z., Mahamid, F. A., & Affouneh, S. (2021). Internet addiction and perceived self-efficacy among university students. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 19(1), 162-176.
- Bhardwaj, V. K. (2018). Internet addiction, loneliness and academic performance among the secondary school student. *International Journal of Education and Management Studies*, 8(1), 76-80.
- Chand, P., & Sheth, S. (2021). 9 Assessment for Pathological Internet Use (“Internet Addiction”). *Cyberpsychiatry*, 121.
- Cheng, Y. S., Ko, H. C., Sun, C. K., & Yeh, P. Y. (2021). The relationship between delay discounting and Internet addiction: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Addictive Behaviors*, 114, 106751.
- Darpinian, S., Sterling, W., & Aggarwal, S. (2022). *Raising Body Positive Teens: A Parent’s Guide to Diet-Free Living, Exercise, and Body Image*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Dodig Hundric, D., Lotar Rihtaric, M., Mandić, S., & Ricijaš, N. (2023). The Mediating Effect of Danger Invulnerability in the Relationship Between Sensation Seeking and Gambling Among University Students. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 1-17.
- Duong, X. L., Liaw, S. Y., & Augustin, J. L. P. M. (2020). How has Internet Addiction been tracked over the last decade? A literature review and 3C paradigm for future research. *International Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 11.
- Earle, M. J., & Freddolino, P. P. (2022). Meeting the practice challenges of COVID-19: MSW students’ perceptions of e-therapy and the therapeutic alliance. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 50(1), 76-85.
- Eid, M., Nusairat, N., Alkailani, M., & Al-Ghadeer, H. (2020). Internet users’ attitudes towards social media advertisements: The role of advertisement design and users’ motives. *Management Science Letters*, 10(10), 2361-2370.
- Enright, G., Allman-Farinelli, M., & Redfern, J. (2020). Effectiveness of family-based behavior change interventions on obesity-related behavior change in children: a realist synthesis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(11), 4099.

- Enright, G., Allman-Farinelli, M., & Redfern, J. (2020). Effectiveness of family-based behavior change interventions on obesity-related behavior change in children: a realist synthesis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(11), 4099.
- Fardghassemi, S., & Joffe, H. (2022). The causes of loneliness: The perspective of young adults in London's most deprived areas. *Plos one*, 17(4), e0264638.
- Fatema, K., Nasreen, S., Parvez, M. S., & Rahaman, M. A. (2020). Impact of using the Internet on students: A sociological analysis at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman science and technology university, Gopalganj, Bangladesh. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(12), 71-83.
- Fernandez, E., Woldgabreal, Y., Day, A., Pham, T., Gleich, B., & Aboujaoude, E. (2021). Live psychotherapy by video versus in-person: A meta-analysis of efficacy and its relationship to types and targets of treatment. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 28(6), 1535-1549.
- Jeong, B., Lee, J. Y., Kim, B. M., Park, E., Kwon, J. G., Kim, D. J., ... & Lee, D. (2020). Associations of personality and clinical characteristics with excessive Internet and smartphone use in adolescents: A structural equation modeling approach. *Addictive behaviors*, 110, 106485.
- Kircaburun, K., Yurdagül, C., Kuss, D., Emirtekin, E., & Griffiths, M. D. (2020). Problematic mukbang watching and its relationship to disordered eating and internet addiction: a pilot study among emerging adult mukbang watchers. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 1-10.
- Kurniasanti, K. S., Assandi, P., Ismail, R. I., Nasrun, M. W. S., & Wiguna, T. (2019). Internet addiction: a new addiction?. *Medical Journal of Indonesia*, 28(1), 82-91.
- Lamont, G. J., Weaver, K. D., Figueiredo, R., Mercer, K., Jonahs, A., Love, H. A., ... & Al-Hammoud, R. (2020). Information-seeking behavior among first-year engineering students and the impacts of pedagogical intervention. In *2020 ASEE Virtual Annual Conference Content Access*.
- Lebni, J. Y., Toghroli, R., Abbas, J., NeJhaddadgar, N., Salahshoor, M. R., Mansourian, M., ... & Ziapour, A. (2020). A study of internet addiction and its effects on mental health: A study based on Iranian University Students. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 9.
- Li, D. (2022). The Shift to Online Classes during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Benefits, Challenges, and Required Improvements from the Students' Perspective. *Electronic Journal of E-Learning*, 20(1), 1-18.
- Lin, M. P. (2020). Prevalence of internet addiction during the COVID-19 outbreak and its risk factors among junior high school students in Taiwan. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(22), 8547.
- López-Meneses, E., Sirignano, F. M., Vázquez-Cano, E., & Ramírez-Hurtado, J. M. (2020). University students' digital competence in three areas of the DigCom 2.1 model: A comparative study at three European universities. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 36(3), 69-88.
- Machimbarrena, J. M., Calvete, E., Fernández-González, L., Álvarez-Bardón, A., Álvarez-Fernández, L., & González-Cabrera, J. (2018). Internet risks: An overview of victimization in cyberbullying, cyber dating abuse, sexting, online grooming and problematic internet use. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 15(11), 2471.
- Mathew, P. (2020). Impact of problematic internet use on the self-esteem of adolescents in the selected school, Kerala, India. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 34(3), 122-128.
- Matsumoto, K., Hamatani, S., & Shimizu, E. (2021). Effectiveness of Videoconference-Delivered cognitive behavioral therapy for adults with psychiatric disorders: systematic and meta-analytic review. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 23(12), e31293.

- Popoola, B. O. & Bolaji, H. O. (2023). Internet Addiction among University Undergraduates in Oyo State: Implications for Cyber Counseling. *Journal of library, science education and learning technology*, (4)1, 1-17.**
- Mead, D., & Sharpe, M. (2021). Aligning the “Manifesto for a European Research Network into Problematic Usage of the Internet” with the Diverse Needs of the Professional and Consumer Communities Affected by Problematic Usage of Pornography. *Internet and Smartphone Use-Related Addiction Health Problems: Treatment, Education and Research*, 17, 379.
- Muraina, K. O., & Popoola, B. O. (2022). Locus of Control and Self-Concept as Determinants of Internet Addiction among Public University Undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Digital Learning and Education*, 2(1), 51-58.
- Nageeb, S. M., & Al Enzi, N. M. M. (2020). The Effect of Internet Addiction on the Executive Functions and Communication Skills among University Nursing Students. *International journal of Nursing Didactics*, 10(02), 11-26.
- Novella, J. K., Ng, K. M., & Samuolis, J. (2022). A comparison of online and in-person counseling outcomes using solution-focused brief therapy for college students with anxiety. *Journal of American College Health*, 70(4), 1161-1168.
- Ogunwuyi, B. O., & Omoike, A. (2020). Emotional intelligence and internet addiction among students in The University. *Journal of Educational Review*, 2(6) 18-29
- Pawlikowska, A., Szuster, E., Kostrzewska, P., Mandera, A., Biernikiewicz, M., Sobieszcańska, M., ... & Kałka, D. (2022). Internet Addiction and Polish Women’s Sexual Functioning: The Role of Social Media, Online Pornography, and Game Use during the COVID-19 Pandemic—Online Surveys Based on FSFI and BSMAS Questionnaires. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(13), 8193.
- Rahmatullah, A. S., Mulyasa, E., Syahrani, S., Pongpalilu, F., & Putri, R. E. (2022). Digital era 4.0: The contribution to education and student psychology. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 6, 89-107.
- Stoll, J., Müller, J. A., & Trachsel, M. (2020). Ethical issues in online psychotherapy: A narrative review. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 10, 993.
- Su, W., Han, X., Yu, H., Wu, Y., & Potenza, M. N. (2020). Do men become addicted to internet gaming and women to social media? A meta-analysis examining gender-related differences in specific internet addiction. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 113, 106480.
- Thomas, N., McDonald, C., de Boer, K., Brand, R. M., Nedeljkovic, M., & Seabrook, L. (2021). Review of the current empirical literature on using videoconferencing to deliver individual psychotherapies to adults with mental health problems. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 94(3), 854-883.
- Thomas, N., McDonald, C., de Boer, K., Brand, R. M., Nedeljkovic, M., & Seabrook, L. (2021). Review of the current empirical literature on using videoconferencing to deliver individual psychotherapies to adults with mental health problems. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 94(3), 854-883.
- Tóth, G., Kapus, K., Hesszenberger, D., Pohl, M., Kósa, G., Kiss, J., ... & Feher, G. (2021). Prevalence and risk factors of internet addiction among Hungarian high school teachers. *Life*, 11(3), 194.
- Tus, J. (2020). Self–Concept, Self–Esteem, Self–Efficacy and Academic Performance of the Senior High School Students. *International Journal of Research Culture Society*, 4(10), 45-59.
- Uye, E. E., Abiahu, K. C., Ikechukwu, D. S., & Olapegba, P. O. (2022). Role of personality traits and internet addiction on interpersonal relationship quality among undergraduates of university of Ibadan, Nigeria. *Journal of Psychology and Behavioural Disciplines*, COOU, 2(2).

- Wang, W. C. (2019). Exploring the relationship among free-time management, leisure boredom, and internet addiction in undergraduates in Taiwan. *Psychological reports, 122*(5), 1651-1665.
- Xu, S., Luo, L., Xiao, Z., Zhao, K., Wang, H., Wang, C., & Rao, H. (2019). High sensation seeking is associated with behavioral and neural insensitivity to increased negative outcomes during decision-making under uncertainty. *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience, 19*(6), 1352-1363.