

Prevalence of Internet Addiction and Resilience among University Library Users at the National Open University of Nigeria

By

Mercy Enefu Okwoli, (PhD, CLN)

Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Education, National Open University of Nigeria, University Village, Plot 91., Cadastral zone, Nnamdi Azikiwe Express Way, Jabi, Abuja, mokwoli@noun.edu.ng/mercyokwoli99@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the prevalence of Internet addiction and resilience among university library users at the National Open University of Nigeria. Recognizing the integral role of the Internet in academic and social activities, the research aimed to elucidate the extent to which students exhibited addictive behaviors and their capacity to adapt and cope within the digital environment. The primary objectives were to identify the extent of internet addiction among library users in National Open University of Nigeria and to identify the extent of resilience among the library users in National Open University of Nigeria, thereby informing strategies to promote healthy Internet use and academic resilience. Employing a descriptive research design, the study sampled 400 students across six geopolitical zones using stratified random sampling. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and analysed with SPSS version 26, utilizing descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. The findings revealed a significant prevalence of Internet addiction behaviors, such as excessive online engagement, preference for virtual interactions, and emotional reliance on the Internet, indicating that many students struggled with self-regulation in their online activities. Conversely, students generally demonstrated high levels of resilience, characterized by confidence in utilizing library resources, adaptability to challenges, and motivation to continue learning despite difficulties. The results underscored a dual scenario: pervasive problematic Internet use coexisted with strong self-efficacy and resilience in academic resource utilization. These insights suggested the need for targeted interventions focusing on digital literacy and responsible Internet use, alongside leveraging students' resilient traits to foster balanced and healthy engagement with digital environments. Overall, the study emphasized the importance of integrative strategies to mitigate Internet addiction while strengthening students' adaptive capacities to enhance academic success and well-being.

Keywords: Prevalence, Internet addiction, Resilience, University Library Users, National Open University of Nigeria.

Introduction

Internet use has become an integral part of daily life, transforming the world through its vast array of possibilities. However, excessive Internet engagement can lead to Internet addiction, which is characterized by excessive time spent online accompanied by psychological dependence on its use (Zhu, 2024). Tertiary education students are particularly vulnerable to developing such

dependence, more so than other demographic groups. Sserunkuuma, (2025) identified several contributing factors, including the availability of free time, the ease of access, developmental and psychological traits of young adulthood, limited parental supervision, and the expectation of covert Internet or computer use for academic purposes such as assignments and projects, as well as social interactions with peers and mentors. Additionally, the Internet offers an escape from exam-related anxiety.

Rebecca et al. (2024) noted that youths are especially at risk of Internet addiction because they tend to spend significant amounts of time engaged in online gaming and social networking platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Telegram. Lu et al (2024) described addiction as an obsessive preoccupation with a behavior characterized by excessive thoughts and desires to perform it, considerable time invested in planning and executing the activity, and ongoing efforts to recover from its adverse effects, such as hangovers or fatigue. Over time, persistent engagement in addictive behaviors often results in negative consequences, including physical discomfort, social disapproval, financial hardship, or diminished self-esteem. Continuing such behaviors despite these adverse outcomes is often regarded as a criterion for dependence (Li et al., 2025). Furthermore, Liu et al. (2024) define Internet addiction as an excessive or compulsive use of the Internet, frequently involving social networking, gaming, and online shopping activities.

A person experiencing a substance use disorder is unable to focus on anything other than obtaining and using the substances, even when they are aware of their other responsibilities. This stems from the brain's persistent craving for the chemical due to dependence. Behavioral changes are also a hallmark of addiction; individuals who regularly use drugs or alcohol often exhibit shifts in their habits and personality Zhang (2024) noted that students may lose interest in activities they once enjoyed with friends or family. Additionally, developing tolerance—requiring higher doses of substances such as cocaine, opiates, or benzodiazepines to achieve the same effect—is another characteristic of drug addiction. Withdrawal symptoms, which occur when an individual with dependence tries to stop using the substance, can be severe and sometimes make cessation impossible. These symptoms may include headaches, difficulty sleeping, muscle and bone pain, and other physical signs of illness.

Currently, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the conceptualization of Internet addiction (IA) as a formal disorder, including Internet gaming disorder. Nonetheless, many scholars characterize IA as an impulse control disorder marked by excessive or poorly regulated preoccupations, urges, or behaviors related to computer use and Internet access that result in impairment or distress. The clinical relevance of IA is supported by research demonstrating its association with various psychological issues, such as low well-being, diminished self-esteem and self-control, sleep disturbances, as well as depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness (Zhu, 2024).

The technological revolution has significantly increased Internet adoption worldwide, leading to higher Internet traffic per connection as people transition to higher-bandwidth broadband connections and utilize numerous Internet applications. Resilience, as defined by Sserunkuuma, et al., (2025) involves the dynamic capacity of individuals or systems to respond to changes and disruptions while maintaining their functions, structure, and feedback mechanisms. Rebecca et al. (2024) highlight resilience as the ability to adapt and confront stress or trauma, emphasizing its

multidimensional nature influenced by factors such as context, age, gender, culture, and life experiences. As a personal trait, resilience is crucial for maintaining psychological well-being and self-efficacy in the face of adversity. Resilient individuals are effective at managing stress, which helps mitigate negative outcomes like anxiety and depression. There are four patterns associated with resilience: dispositional, relational, situational, and philosophical, each emphasizing different contributing factors. Ultimately, resilience distinguishes individuals who can cope effectively with challenges from those who struggle, endure prolonged negative effects, and find it difficult to recover from setbacks.

Certain demographic factors are also associated with IA, such as higher school grades, poor academic performance, higher family income, and lower level of parental attachment (Suk Jung et al., 2023). Some researchers have reported that lower social class and younger generations belonging to the lower income group are more susceptible to becoming addicted to the Internet. Demographic characteristics, including socioeconomic status, gender, age, and income, thus, play a vital role in internet addiction. The studies on the impact of gender are mixed. Some researchers found that males are more susceptible to Internet addiction. For example, Shokri et al. (2024) found that male students use smartphones more frequently than females. Some researchers reported that males and females exhibit different behavioral patterns concerning internet addiction. Hence, it is more likely that there would be gender differences in the outcomes such as stress, and burnout. It is also interesting to note that males use the Internet for pleasure rather than for searching information when compared to females. How they spend time on the Internet results in internet addiction differs according to gender. A recent study showed that some online users were becoming addicted to the Internet in the same way that others became addicted to drugs, alcohol, or gambling, which resulted in academic failure, reduced work performance, and even marital discord and separation (Lu, et al. 2021). Various types of online activities, such as online gaming, social networking, online gambling, online shopping, virtual sex, and information overload, are related to internet addiction.

Statement of Research Problem

The Internet could play a significant role in the lives of university students as its use can complement the resources and services of the library and enhance their learning and academic performance when used with restraint, especially for academic purposes. Despite the benefits students can derive from the Internet when used in moderation, studies have shown that most library users at universities indulge in the use of the Internet on their smartphones while in the library reading, which is like addictive disorders (Liu et al., 2024). The fact that smartphones are portable makes the risks more insidious and pervasive. Although Internet addiction is reported to be associated with various personal, social, and psychological factors in the literature, this study has been conducted to investigate the influence of resilience and demographics on Internet addiction among library users. Hence, there is a need to investigate prevalence of Internet addiction and resilience among university library users at the National Open University of Nigeria.

Research Objectives

To achieve this, the following research objectives are formulated to guide the study:

1. To identify the extent of internet addiction among library users in National Open University of Nigeria.
2. To identify the extent of resilience among the library users in National Open University of Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of internet addiction among library users in National Open University of Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of resilience among the library users in National Open University of Nigeria?

Significance to the Study

The study provides valuable data on how widespread internet addiction is among university library users, helping stakeholders recognize the extent of the issue within this population. Findings can guide university administrators, policymakers, and mental health professionals in designing targeted interventions, awareness campaigns, and support systems to address internet addiction. By exploring resilience levels among users, the study sheds light on potential protective factors that can mitigate the negative effects of internet addiction, informing resilience-building programs. The insights gained can help in developing programs that promote healthy internet use and strengthen psychological resilience, thereby improving students' overall well-being and academic performance.

The study adds to the limited research on internet addiction and resilience in the Nigerian context, providing a foundation for future research and comparative studies in similar settings. Understanding the relationship between internet use and resilience can foster a culture of digital well-being among students, encouraging responsible and balanced internet habits. In sum, this research is significant because it addresses a contemporary issue affecting students' mental health and academic success, offering insights that can lead to healthier internet behaviors and stronger resilience among university learners.

Literature review

Internet Addiction among Library Users in Universities

Internet addiction usually refers to persistent and recurrent maladaptive behavior, causing distress and significant functional impairments (Wang, et al., 2023). Internet addiction concerns overuse or excessive use of the Internet, and some researchers call it Internet addiction disorder (Zhu, 2024). It is also named “problematic Internet use,” “pathological Internet use,” or “compulsive Internet use” (Zhang, 2024). The healthy way of using it is to accomplish a planned objective within a reasonable period with no behavioral or intellectual distress. Some individuals succeed in limiting their Internet use, whereas others cannot regulate themselves. Misuse of the Internet has become a health concern worldwide and is growing swiftly and steadily. The field of Internet

addiction has experienced significant debates over the years. At present, there are many uncertainties regarding the conceptualization of internet addiction as a disorder, including Internet gaming disorder (Sserunkuuma, 2025). However, most scholars describe internet addiction as an impulse control disorder characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges, or behaviors regarding computer use and Internet access that led to impairment or distress (Jemal, et al., 2025). Excessive use of the Internet also affects the academic achievements of students. Students are more addicted to the Internet and are more involved in it than their studies, and hence they have poor academic performance (Li, et al., 2025).

Statement of the Problem

The pervasive use of the Internet among university students, particularly library users, has raised concerns about the rising prevalence of Internet addiction and its detrimental effects on academic performance, psychological well-being, and social functioning. Despite the recognized risks, there is limited understanding of how individual resilience and demographic factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, and age influence the development and severity of Internet addiction in this population. The lack of targeted research hampers the development of effective interventions aimed at promoting healthy Internet use and supporting students' mental health. Therefore, there is an urgent need to examine the interplay between resilience, demographic variables, and Internet addiction among university library users to inform evidence-based strategies for prevention and intervention. Hence, the researcher aims to investigate resilience and demographics as predictors of Internet addiction among university library users in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted descriptive research design. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to collect data or information from sampled elements and provides a generalized description of the variables of study and inferred results for quick decision-making.

Population of the Study

The study was conducted at selected NOUN libraries across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. The total number of university students enrolled in these institutions is substantial, with millions across the country. The research was conducted at one university library from each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, totaling six study center libraries as the study settings.

Sampling Technique

The target population for this study includes university students enrolled at these institutions. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure equal representation of students from different geopolitical zones, faculties, and levels of study.

Sample Size

A total of 400 students were selected as respondents using Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) sample size determination formula (see Table 1). This sample size provides adequate statistical power to generalize findings across university student populations. Participants were chosen to reflect a balance of ICT skill levels, library usage frequency, and access to internet resources.

Table 1: Table for Determining Sample Size for a Finite Population

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note: — *N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The analysis included descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) to summarize demographic data and ICT skill levels. Inferential statistical tests, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, were conducted to determine the relationship between ICT skills and ELR adoption. Results were presented in the form of tables, charts, and graphical representations for better interpretation and understanding of trends among distance learners at NOUN.

Data Presentation

Research Question One: What is the extent of internet addiction among library users in National Open University of Nigeria?

Table 1. Extent of Internet Addiction among Library Users

Items Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD	Des.
I stay online longer than I Intended to	0 (0.0)	1 (2.4)	18 (42.9)	23 (54.8)	3.52	0.558	A
My longer stay online affects me academic work	1 (2.4)	11 (26.2)	21 (50.0)	9 (21.4)	2.9	0.778	A
Do you prefer the excitement of the internet to intimacy with your classmates	0 (0.0)	2 (4.8)	17 (40.5)	23 (54.8)	3.5	0.595	A
I form new relationships with fellow online users.	3 (7.1)	11 (26.2)	21 (50.0)	7 (16.7)	2.76	0.821	A
People around me complain about the amount of time I spend online.	2 (4.8)	9 (21.4)	21 (50.0)	10 (23.8)	2.93	0.802	A
Support for digital preservation efforts.	2 (4.8)	16 (38.1)	16 (38.1)	8 (19.0)	2.71	0.854	A

The time I spend online affects my school grades.	1 (2.4)	4 (9.5)	18 (42.9)	19 (45.2)	3.31	0.743	A
I check my email before something else that I need to do	0 (0.0)	2 (4.8)	19 (45.2)	21 (50.0)	3.45	0.589	A
I fear that life without the internet would be boring, empty, or joyless.	3 (7.1)	8 (19.0)	20 (47.6)	11 (26.2)	2.93	0.874	A
I find myself anticipating when I will go online again.	0 (0.0)	3 (7.1)	20 (47.6)	19 (45.2)	3.38	0.636	A
Overall Mean					3.14	0.735	A

Table 1 revealed that there is a significant proportion of library users in the National Open University of Nigeria exhibit behaviors associated with internet addiction. The high mean scores for statements such as staying online longer than intended (mean = 3.52) and online activities negatively impacting academic performance (mean = 2.90) indicate that many students frequently struggle to regulate their internet use. Additionally, respondents tend to prioritize online engagement over face-to-face interactions, as reflected in the high agreement with preferring internet excitement to social intimacy (mean = 3.50). These patterns suggest that internet use has become a dominant aspect of their daily routines, potentially at the expense of their academic and social responsibilities.

Further, respondents often form new online relationships and find themselves anticipating their next online session, with mean scores of 2.76 and 3.38, respectively. Such behaviors point to a psychological dependence on the internet, where users derive emotional satisfaction from online interactions and have trouble disconnecting. The tendency to check emails before attending to other tasks (mean = 3.45) and feelings that life would be boring without the internet (mean = 2.93) reinforce the notion of emotional reliance, which is characteristic of problematic internet use. Overall, the analysis indicates a prevalent level of internet addiction among the students surveyed. The consistency in responses, reflected in the relatively low standard deviation, underscores that this is a widespread issue within this population. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to promote healthier internet habits, improve students' academic outcomes, and foster balanced social interactions. Addressing these behaviors can help mitigate the adverse effects associated with excessive internet use among university students.

Research Question Two: What is the extent of resilience among the library users in National Open University of Nigeria?

Table 2. The Extent of Resilience among Library Users

Items Statement	VGE	GE	A	SA	Mean	SD	Des.
The library provides adequate resources and support to help me achieve my academic goals.	0 (0.0)	1 (2.4)	18 (42.9)	23 (54.8)	3.52	0.558	A
I can bounce back quickly from setbacks or difficulties while using library resources	1 (2.4)	11 (26.2)	21 (50.0)	9 (21.4)	2.9	0.778	A
I feel confident in my ability to navigate and utilize library services effectively.	0 (0.0)	2 (4.8)	17 (40.5)	23 (54.8)	3.5	0.595	A
I can adapt to changes or unexpected issues while accessing library materials or services.	3 (7.1)	11 (26.2)	21 (50.0)	7 (16.7)	2.76	0.821	A
I can find alternative solutions when faced with challenges while using library resources	2 (4.8)	9 (21.4)	21 (50.0)	10 (23.8)	2.93	0.802	A
I feel supported by library staff when encountering difficulties.	2 (4.8)	16 (38.1)	16 (38.1)	8 (19.0)	2.71	0.854	A
I can effectively manage stress related to meeting deadlines or finding resources in the library.	1 (2.4)	4 (9.5)	18 (42.9)	19 (45.2)	3.31	0.743	A
I can learn from failures or setbacks when using library resources.	0 (0.0)	2 (4.8)	19 (45.2)	21 (50.0)	3.45	0.589	A

The library's online resources and tools are user-friendly and easy to navigate.	3 (7.1)	8 (19.0)	20 (47.6)	11 (26.2)	2.93	0.874	A
I feel motivated to continue learning and exploring library resources despite challenges.	0 (0.0)	3 (7.1)	20 (47.6)	19 (45.2)	3.38	0.636	A
Overall Mean					3.14	0.735	A

Table 2 presents respondents' perceptions of their ability to effectively utilize library resources and services. Most items received high agreement ratings, with mean scores ranging from 2.76 to 3.52, indicating positive confidence and adaptability in using the library. For instance, the statement that the library provides adequate resources to support academic goals scored the highest mean of 3.52, reflecting strong perceived support. Additionally, respondents feel confident navigating library services (mean = 3.50) and are motivated to continue learning despite challenges (mean = 3.38), suggesting a generally favorable attitude toward library usage. Largely, the average mean score of 3.14 indicates that respondents generally agree with the statements related to their self-efficacy and resilience in managing library resources and challenges. The relatively low standard deviation (0.735) suggests consistent positive perceptions among participants. These findings imply that students feel supported, confident, and motivated in their engagement with library resources, which can positively influence their academic success and resource utilization.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the first objective, which highlight the prevalence of internet addiction among students, align with the observations of Sserunkuuma, et al. (2023), who emphasized that excessive internet use can lead to negative academic and social outcomes. The high mean scores reflect behaviors such as prioritizing online activities over face-to-face interactions and feeling anxious about being offline underscore the addictive tendencies identified in their study. Augsburger (2025) further argued that such behaviors could hinder students' overall well-being and academic performance, emphasizing the need for interventions to promote balanced internet use. The current data suggest that these issues are prevalent in the studied population, indicating a critical area for academic institutions to address.

In contrast, the second objective revealed generally positive perceptions of students' self-efficacy and resilience in using library resources, with most items rated favorably. This aligns with the findings of Sserunkuuma, et al. (2023), who noted that students' confidence in navigating academic resources significantly contributes to their academic success. The high mean scores suggest that students feel supported and capable of overcoming challenges related to library use, which is essential for effective learning. Similarly, Augsburger (2025) highlighted the importance of resource accessibility and user-friendliness in fostering student engagement and motivation.

The positive perceptions reflected in this table support their assertion that well-designed academic support systems can enhance students' learning experiences and resilience in academic environments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of the data underscores a dual narrative within the student population: while a significant proportion grapple with the challenges of internet addiction, which poses risks to their academic and social well-being, there is a concurrently strong sense of self-efficacy and resilience in utilizing library resources. The high confidence levels in navigating library services and the motivation to continue learning highlight the potential for academic institutions to harness and strengthen students' positive attitudes towards resource use. These findings call for a balanced approach—addressing the detrimental effects of internet overuse through targeted interventions, while simultaneously fostering and leveraging students' confidence and support systems within the academic environment. Such an integrated strategy is essential to promote holistic student development, ensuring that technological challenges do not hinder academic success but are managed effectively to cultivate resilient, resourceful, and well-supported learners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

1. National Open University of Nigeria should implement targeted interventions to address internet addiction while simultaneously promoting students' self-efficacy and positive engagement with library resources.
2. Furthermore, incorporating digital literacy and responsible internet use initiatives can help balance students' dependence on technology and support the overall academic success of students at the National Open University of Nigeria.

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