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JOINT PREDICTIVE POWER OF PAEDOPHILIC TENDENCY AND PORNOGRAPHIC ADDICTION ON SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT OF UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the joint predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates in South-East Nigeria. Eight research questions guided the study, while eight null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. It was conducted in the five states of South-East Nigeria: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The population comprised 148,712 undergraduate students enrolled in federal universities in the region during the 2024/2025 academic session. A sample of 1,148 undergraduates was selected using a multistage sampling procedure. Three instruments were used for data collection, namely the Paedophilic Tendency Scale (PTS), Pornographic Addiction Scale (PAS), and School Adjustment Scale (SAS). The instruments were face-validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their reliability coefficients, determined using the Cronbach Alpha method, were 0.76, 0.79, and 0.74, respectively. Data were collected using Google Forms and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Simple linear regression was used to answer the research questions, while multiple linear regression was used to test the null hypothesis. The findings revealed that paedophilic tendency significantly predicted university undergraduates' school adjustment. Pornographic addiction also significantly predicted school adjustment. Furthermore, paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction jointly and significantly predicted school adjustment. The regression model further showed that pornographic addiction made the strongest contribution to predicting school adjustment, followed by paedophilic tendency. The study concluded that paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction are significant behavioural predictors of university undergraduates' school adjustment. It was therefore recommended, among others, that university authorities should strengthen counselling and mental health services through regular psychological screening, confidential counselling, sexuality education, and digital wellness programmes to enhance students' adjustment to university life.

Keywords: Paedophilic tendency, pornographic addiction, school adjustment, university undergraduates, South-East Nigeria.

Introduction

School adjustment is an important indicator of students' ability to function effectively within the academic, social and emotional environment of the university. It reflects the extent to which students successfully cope with academic demands, establish healthy interpersonal relationships,

regulate their emotions and adapt to institutional expectations. Wang and Degol (2020) defined school adjustment as the mastery of the competencies required to cope effectively with the academic, social and emotional demands of school. Similarly, Hirschfield et al. (2020) described school adjustment as the extent to which students meet the expectations of teachers, peers and the institution while maintaining psychological well-being. Ladd et al. (2022) further explained that school adjustment involves students' ability to manage academic responsibilities, develop positive social relationships and adapt successfully to the learning environment.

School adjustment is multidimensional, comprising academic, social, emotional and institutional adjustment. Academic adjustment concerns students' ability to meet academic expectations, maintain effective study habits and achieve educational goals (Arah, 2020; Wang & Degol, 2020). Social adjustment refers to successful interaction with peers and lecturers as well as conformity to acceptable social norms (Green et al., 2020). Emotional adjustment involves the ability to regulate emotions, cope with stress and maintain psychological stability (Martin-Ruiz et al., 2023), while institutional adjustment reflects students' acceptance of university rules, values and learning culture. Collectively, these dimensions determine how effectively undergraduates adapt to university life.

Several studies have shown that school adjustment contributes significantly to students' academic success and psychological well-being. For instance, Kaljahi (2016) reported that academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment significantly predicted university students' academic performance in Northern Cyprus, suggesting that students who adjust effectively to university life achieve better educational outcomes. Likewise, Arah (2025) and Morales-Castillo (2023) found that coping strategies significantly predicted school adjustment, which subsequently improved academic achievement among adolescents in Colombia. These findings demonstrate that school adjustment serves as an important pathway through which students' personal characteristics influence educational success.

Conversely, poor school adjustment has been associated with several negative educational and psychosocial outcomes. Students who experience adjustment difficulties often demonstrate poor academic performance, reduced classroom participation, absenteeism, anxiety, depression, emotional distress and an increased tendency to withdraw from school (Green et al., 2020; Mella et al., 2021; Symonds et al., 2022). Poor adjustment also affects students' interpersonal relationships and psychological well-being, thereby reducing their ability to benefit from university education. Consequently, researchers have increasingly examined behavioural and psychological factors capable of predicting school adjustment.

One behavioural factor that may influence school adjustment is paedophilic tendency. Paedophilic tendency refers to persistent sexual fantasies, urges or interests directed toward prepubertal children. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), such tendencies become clinically significant when they persist for at least six months among individuals aged 16 years or older who are at least five years older than the child involved. Perrotta (2020) explained that paedophilic tendency represents a psychological condition characterized by maladaptive sexual interests capable of interfering with emotional stability, interpersonal

functioning and overall psychosocial adjustment. Although the condition is relatively uncommon within the general population, Hall and Hall (2019) noted that research remains limited because of ethical and legal restrictions, with most available evidence originating from clinical and forensic populations. Kaylor et al. (2019) and Ferdokow et al. (2020) further observed that while males constitute the majority of documented cases, paedophilic tendencies may also occur among females but are frequently underreported because of societal stigma.

Although empirical studies directly examining paedophilic tendency and school adjustment among university undergraduates are scarce, findings from related behavioural studies suggest that maladaptive sexual or aggressive behaviours are associated with poor educational adjustment. Estévez et al. (2018) found that aggressive behaviour significantly predicted poor school adjustment and lower academic engagement among Spanish adolescents. Similarly, Hernandez and Ramos (2020) reported that adolescent perpetrators of child sexual abuse exhibited significantly poorer school adjustment, emotional instability and lower academic engagement than their non-offending counterparts. Brown and Johnson (2020) and Arah, (2017); also established a significant negative relationship between child abuse perpetration and school engagement, indicating that adolescents involved in abusive behaviours experienced poorer adjustment within the school environment. Although these studies focused on behavioural problems rather than paedophilic tendency specifically, they suggest that maladaptive behavioural dispositions may interfere with students' ability to adapt successfully to educational environments. Consequently, it becomes necessary to investigate whether paedophilic tendency predicts school adjustment among university undergraduates.

Another behavioural factor receiving increasing scholarly attention is pornographic addiction. Pornographic addiction is characterized by compulsive and uncontrolled consumption of sexually explicit materials despite experiencing adverse academic, psychological and social consequences (Duffy et al., 2016; Franklin, 2021). Ugese et al. (2024) described it as a behavioural addiction marked by psychological dependence, impaired self-control and persistent use of pornography for emotional regulation. The widespread availability of smartphones, high-speed internet and unrestricted digital platforms has increased pornography consumption among university students, making problematic use an emerging public health concern.

Studies have shown that excessive pornography consumption is associated with impaired concentration, emotional distress, poor interpersonal relationships and declining academic functioning (Grubbs et al., 2022; Kuhn et al., 2022; Rost et al., 2022). Empirical evidence further supports the negative educational consequences of pornography addiction. Ohuakanwa et al. (2012) found a significant negative relationship between pornography addiction and psychosocial adjustment among university students in Lagos State. Similarly, Ikechukwu (2020) reported that addiction to online pornography distracted students from academic activities and contributed to poor school adjustment among adolescents in Imo State. Rostam (2023) likewise observed that university students addicted to pornography exhibited higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, resulting in poorer adjustment to school. Although Benjamin et al. (2019) found no significant relationship between sexual media exposure and students' academic engagement among

Philippine undergraduates, differences in cultural context, sample characteristics and measurement approaches may explain the disparity in findings.

Research has also identified several psychological factors associated with pornographic addiction. Ugese et al. (2024) established that poor self-control and ineffective stress coping significantly predicted pornography addiction among emerging adults, suggesting that students with weaker coping mechanisms may be more vulnerable to compulsive pornography use. Since poor self-control, emotional instability and maladaptive coping are themselves associated with poor educational adjustment, pornography addiction may indirectly undermine students' successful adaptation to university life.

Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that behavioural and psychological problems are capable of influencing students' adjustment within educational institutions. However, despite growing interest in behavioural addictions and maladaptive sexual interests, very few studies have simultaneously examined the predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on university undergraduates' school adjustment, particularly within the Nigerian context. Most previous studies concentrated on academic performance, psychosocial adjustment, aggressive behaviour or mental health, while little empirical attention has been devoted to paedophilic tendency as a predictor of school adjustment among university undergraduates. This gap provided the justification for the present study, which investigated the predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on sexual behaviour and school adjustment of university undergraduates in South-East Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the joint predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on school adjustment of university undergraduates?

Hypothesis

There is no significant joint predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on school adjustment of university undergraduates

Research Method

The research adopted a correlational survey research design because it provided an appropriate framework for determining the predictive relationships among the study variables. Specifically, the design enabled the researcher to examine how paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction predict university undergraduates' sexual behaviour and school adjustment without manipulating any of the variables under investigation. It also facilitated the determination of both the direction and magnitude of the relationships among the variables. The study was conducted in South-East Nigeria, comprising the five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. These states contain several federal universities with diverse undergraduate populations, thereby providing an appropriate setting for investigating behavioural and psychological factors affecting students.

The target population consisted of 148,712 undergraduate students enrolled in federal universities in South-East Nigeria during the 2024/2025 academic session**.** These students constituted the study population because they represented the group to which the findings were intended to generalize. A total of 1,148 undergraduate students participated in the study. The sample was selected through a multistage sampling technique involving successive stages of selection to ensure adequate representation of respondents from the participating institutions. Although the minimum sample size calculated using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula was 399, the researcher increased the sample to 1,148 in order to improve the reliability of the findings and reduce sampling error.

Four structured instruments were utilized for data collection. These included the Paedophilic Tendency Scale (PTS), Pornographic Addiction Scale (PAS), Sexual Behaviour Scale (SBS), and School Adjustment Scale (SAS). The PTS was developed by the researcher, whereas the PAS, SBS, and SAS were adapted from previously standardized instruments. The instruments consisted of Likert-type items designed to measure the respective variables objectively and comprehensively.

To ensure validity, the instruments underwent face validation by three experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The validators assessed the instruments for clarity, relevance, appropriateness of the items, grammatical accuracy, and adequacy of content coverage. Their recommendations guided the revision of the instruments before the final administration. The reliability of the instruments was determined through a pilot study involving 50 undergraduate students drawn from universities outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha coefficients of 0.76, 0.79, 0.85, and 0.74 were obtained for the PTS, PAS, SBS, and SAS respectively, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

The questionnaires were administered online using Google Forms. Students' representatives assisted in disseminating the questionnaire links through WhatsApp groups and other social networking platforms frequently used by undergraduate students. The online administration enhanced confidentiality, protected respondents' identities, and promoted honest responses to the sensitive issues examined in the study. Data were analyzed using SPSS. Multiple Regression analysis was used for data analysis. Statistical decisions were based on the 0.05 level of significance, while the interpretation of relationship strength followed the correlation coefficient benchmarks proposed by Schober et al. (2018).

Presentation and Interpretation of Data

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

Table 1: *Regression analysis of the joint predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on school adjustment of university undergraduates*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	N
1	.420[a]	.176	.175	8.51715	1148

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

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

Table 2: *Regression ANOVA and coefficient tests of significance of the joint predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on school adjustment of university undergraduates.*

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17748.525	2	8874.262	122.333	.000[b]
	Residual	83060.388	1145	72.542		
	Total	100808.913	1147			

a. Criterion Variable: school adjustment
b. Predictors: (Constant), paedophilic tendency, pornographic addiction

Table 1 presents the regression analysis of the joint predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates. The result yielded a multiple correlation coefficient (R = 0.420), indicating a moderate positive relationship between the combined predictor variables (paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction) and school adjustment among university undergraduates. The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2 = 0.175) indicates that 17.5% of the variation in school adjustment is jointly explained by paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction, while the remaining 82.5% is attributable to other variables not included in the model. This finding suggests that paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction jointly have a meaningful predictive influence on the school adjustment of university undergraduates.

Table 2 presents the ANOVA result for the joint predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates. The result yielded an F-value of 122.333 with an associated probability value (p = 0.000). Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant joint predictive power of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction on the school adjustment of university undergraduates, is rejected.

The implication of this finding is that paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction jointly and significantly predict the school adjustment of university undergraduates. This suggests that the combined influence of these maladaptive sexual tendencies contributes significantly to students' ability to adjust to the academic, social, emotional, and institutional demands of university life. Undergraduates with higher levels of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction are

therefore more likely to experience poorer school adjustment than those with lower levels of these tendencies. The finding further indicates that considering both variables together provide a better explanation of students' school adjustment than considering either variable independently.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that:

1. Paedophilic tendency significantly predicted both the sexual behaviour and school adjustment of university undergraduates**.** Specifically, higher levels of paedophilic tendency were associated with increased risky sexual behaviour and poorer school adjustment.
2. Pornographic addiction significantly predicted both the sexual behaviour and school adjustment of university undergraduates. Undergraduates with higher levels of pornographic addiction were more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours and experience poor school adjustment.
3. Paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction jointly and significantly predicted both the sexual behaviour and school adjustment of university undergraduates. The combined influence of the two variables accounted for a significant proportion of the variation in students' sexual behaviour and school adjustment, indicating that both are important predictors of these outcomes.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction jointly predicted the school adjustment of university undergraduates**.** Specifically, the two predictor variables jointly accounted for 17.5% of the variation in students' school adjustment, while the hypothesis test further showed that their joint predictive influence was statistically significant. This implies that university undergraduates with higher levels of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction are more likely to experience poor school adjustment than those with lower levels of these tendencies.

This finding is understandable because both paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction are maladaptive behavioural patterns that may interfere with students' psychological well-being, emotional stability, and social functioning. Students who are preoccupied with inappropriate sexual thoughts or who engage compulsively in pornography consumption may devote considerable time and cognitive resources to these behaviours at the expense of their academic responsibilities. Such students may experience difficulty concentrating during lectures, reduced commitment to academic activities, poor time management, and diminished motivation to participate in school-related tasks. Consequently, their ability to adjust successfully to the academic, social, emotional, and institutional demands of university life may be adversely affected.

Furthermore, pornographic addiction may encourage social withdrawal, distorted perceptions of interpersonal relationships, and poor emotional regulation, while paedophilic tendencies may create feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety, fear of disclosure, and internal psychological conflict. These emotional and behavioural challenges may reduce students' confidence in interacting with

peers and lecturers, weaken their sense of belonging within the university community, and limit their ability to establish healthy social relationships. The combined influence of these factors may therefore hinder effective school adjustment, resulting in poorer academic engagement and overall university experience.

The finding of this study is consistent with previous empirical studies. For instance, Ohuakanwa et al. (2012) reported a significant negative relationship between pornography addiction and students' psychosocial and academic adjustment among university students in Lagos State. Similarly, Ikechukwu (2020) found that addiction to online pornography distracted students from academic activities and contributed to poor school adjustment among in-school adolescents in Imo State. Likewise, Rostam (2023) reported that university students addicted to pornography experienced higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, which negatively affected their adjustment to school. Regarding paedophilic tendency and maladaptive behavioural characteristics, the findings also agree with Hernandez and Ramos (2020) and Brown and Johnson (2020), who found that adolescents involved in child sexual abuse or related maladaptive sexual behaviours demonstrated significantly poorer school engagement and adjustment than their counterparts.

Overall, the present finding underscores the importance of addressing maladaptive sexual tendencies and problematic pornography use among university undergraduates. Strengthening university counselling services, promoting responsible digital media use, and providing early psychological interventions may help students develop healthier coping strategies, improve emotional well-being, and enhance their adjustment to university life.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction are significant predictors of university undergraduates' sexual behaviour and school adjustment**.** Individually, both variables significantly predicted students' sexual behaviour and school adjustment, while their combined influence also significantly predicted these outcome variables. Specifically, higher levels of paedophilic tendency and pornographic addiction were associated with riskier sexual behaviour and poorer school adjustment among university undergraduates. The study therefore concludes that addressing maladaptive sexual tendencies and problematic pornography use through appropriate counselling, preventive education, and psychological interventions is essential for promoting healthy sexual behaviour and improving students' adjustment to university life.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University management should strengthen counselling and mental health services by organizing regular awareness programmes, psychological screening, and confidential counselling to help students address maladaptive sexual tendencies and pornographic addiction before they negatively affect their sexual behaviour and school adjustment.
2. Parents, lecturers, and university authorities should collaborate to promote responsible digital media use through sexuality education, digital literacy programmes, and value-

based orientation that discourage excessive pornography consumption and encourage healthy sexual behaviours.

3. University counselling centres should develop evidence-based intervention programmes aimed at helping students with paedophilic tendencies and pornographic addiction improve self-control, emotional regulation, and healthy interpersonal relationships, thereby enhancing their adjustment to university life.
4. Government, university administrators, and relevant stakeholders should formulate and implement policies that strengthen campus-based mental health services, regulate access to inappropriate online content within university environments where feasible, and support continuous research and preventive programmes on problematic sexual behaviours among undergraduates.

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