

## **Role of Emotional Inexpressiveness, Self-Objectification and Gender on Internet Addiction among Undergraduates**

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**Abstract:** The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design to examine the role of emotional inexpressiveness, self-objectification and gender on internet addiction among undergraduates in a South-Southern part of Nigerian University. A total of 226 (44 [19.5%] male and 182 [80.5%] female with mean age of 21.25 and SD of 2.93) participated in the study. Three instruments: Young (1998) Internet Addiction Test revalidated by Frangos, Frangos and Sotiropoulos (2012), Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) by McKinley and Hyde (2006); and Berkeley Expressivity Scale by Gross and John (1997) were used in data collection. Independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses and hierarchical multiple regression was used to test the third hypothesis. Results of the t-test showed that students who were emotionally inexpressive were more addicted to internet than those who were not. Also, students who scored high on self-objectification were more addicted to the internet than those who scored low on self-objectification. However, results of the hierarchical multiple regression revealed that emotional inexpressiveness, self-objectification, level of study, age, and gender jointly predicted internet addiction among undergraduates. Results further showed that Level of Study (with Year 4 students reporting more on Internet addiction) and Self-objectification were the respective best predictors of Internet Addiction ( $\beta=.62$ ,  $t =11.63$ ,  $P<0.05$ ;  $\beta=.31$ ,  $t =3.84$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) while emotional inexpressiveness had the least contribution to the prediction of internet addition ( $\beta=-.17$ ,  $t =-1.81$ ,  $P>0.05$ ). It was therefore, concluded that self-objectification basically underscore why most undergraduate can be internet addicted.

**Keywords:** Emotional Inexpressiveness, Self-objectification, gender, undergraduate, Internet Addiction.

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### **Introduction**

One of the important features of modern society is the increased effect of online communication tools especially the Internet, on people. There is no doubt that this effect is higher on young people than any other age bracket in the society (Cuceloglu, 2007). Scholars (Uduikhue, 2013; Ezike, 2013; Wellman & Rainie, 2012) have noted that the number of Internet users is growing every day. Despite the fact that this new communication tool has positive aspects (access to the updated sources, being informed of research and results, the possibility of communication between researchers, etc.), it also has detrimental effects, and psychologists have consequently introduced a new kind of addiction called the Internet addiction or virtual addiction (Bigges, 2000) to describe the major detrimental effect of online communication tools.

Hence, excessive use of Internet has been discussed with different concepts. Ivan Goldberg introduced the problem of addiction to the Internet for the first time in 1995, and in 1996; while Young raised the problematic behavior of Internet and investigated whether using the Internet can be addictive or not (Young, 1998; Young & Rodgers, 1998), and Kaplan has raised an interesting psychological model for Internet addiction (Caplan, 2007).

Internet addiction or behavioral dependency on the Internet, regardless of whether it is considered as a social problem, mental impairment, or behavioral disorder is a recurrent, chronic, and pandemic phenomenon which is associated with serious physical, financial, familial, social and mental losses (Moayedfa, Habibpoor-Gatabi & Ganji, 2007). American Psychiatric Association has defined internet addiction as a pattern for using the internet which can cause dysfunction and unpleasant internal reactions during a period of two months, and has provided seven criteria for its diagnosis (at least three criteria during two Months): 1 – Tolerance, 2 - Withdrawal symptoms, 3 – The duration which people use the Internet is more than the time they initially planned to, 4 - Constant desire to control the behavior, 5 - To spend considerable time for matters related to the Internet, 6 - Reduction of social, occupational and recreational activities by using the Internet, 7 - Continued use despite the knowledge of negative effects (Patrick & Joyce, 2008). Internet addiction has been found important as a new and increasing global problem. The consequences of Internet addiction for addicts include changing the lifestyle in order to spend more time on the Internet, neglecting their own health, avoidance of major life activities, reducing the social relations, ignoring the family and friends, financial problems caused using the Internet, and other dimensions (Bahrainian & Khazae 2014). The focus of the study is on students who cannot study without internet which is a viable tool that facilitate assignments, research works and studies generally.

However, it has been observed that most students do not get addicted to internet due to academic rationales. Rather the mere pleasure of fondling of phones, online transactions, pornography, gaming, chatting to mention but a few (Ogba, 2015).

With particular reference to chatting through which emotions are expressed, most students find it very hard to withdraw from online chat room where either emotion is expressed without restrictions and censorship. At their closet for instance, most students spend late night hours chatting, and even wake up early hours of the next morning to continue from where they stopped from the previous night and continue all through the day (Ogba, 2015). It is no longer a surprise to notice in a lecture class that students intermittently smile; not to the lecturer nor to the topic under discussion but in response to an online chat/twit. In such milieu, emotions are expressed but the study considered emotional inexpressiveness.

Emotional inexpressiveness is the tendency of being unable to express one's emotional reactions in observable behavior or the inability of communicating feelings through verbal and non-verbal means (Gross & John, 1997). Inexpressiveness is one of the characteristics of males, which have traditionally been defined in negative terms but is drastically gaining grounds among female folks (Dossier, 1982). An expressive person is simply one who has feelings and verbally expresses them. An inexpressive individual is one who does not verbally express his/her feelings, either because he/she has no feelings or because he/she has been socialized not to or were not taught on how to express emotions. Another way to think of inexpressiveness is as the lack of affective self-disclosure.

Emotional expressiveness, the opposite of emotional inexpressiveness is the degree to which an individual actively express emotional experience through verbal or non-verbal behavior (Kring, Smith & Neals, 1994). It is also a heuristic model of the emotion process in which environmental cues trigger emotional response tendencies; these tendencies prepare the individual to mount a behavioral response, subject to a number of emotional regulation processes (Gross & John, 1997). Studies on emotional differences between men and women are numerous (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979; Brody & Hall, 2000). Conventional wisdom may lead one to believe that women are more emotional than men, or at least are more emotionally expressive (Brody & Hall, 2000). This conventional wisdom has been supported by the results of many academic research papers indicating that women are indeed the more emotionally expressive of the genders (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979; Brody & Hall, 2000). Most of the experiments carried out to observe gender differences in emotional expressiveness have been focused on face-to-face interactions (Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999; Brody & Hall, 2000) However, these days the internet and in particular, social networking sites, are a huge part of everyday communication. Therefore, an analysis of emotional expressiveness in on-line discourse is pertinent to today's society. All of these findings has been on emotional expressivity have largely been based on experiments involving face-to-face observation and reactions. However as society becomes more technologically advanced it has seen the rise in social networking sites as a common means of communication (Trevino, Webster & Stein, 2000).

Many people believe that this rise in online communication and the change in communication patterns that it has brought with it have a tendency to influence how people objectify themselves. Hendler, Nilsen, O'Barr and Roberts (2011) defined self-objectification as the tendency to project an objectifying third-person perspective on one's own body, evaluating it in terms of its value and attractiveness to others, rather than its value and function for the self. Objectification theory according to Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) presupposes that taking an observer's perspective on one's body (known as self-objectification) leads to negative mental health outcomes; this was simplified by Saleebey's (1992) assertion that the mind and body exist in a continuing interaction. However, D'Emilio & Freedman (1997) noted that the two biggest changes during this time are new technology's impact on mainstream media and the rise of a more conservative political philosophy. The former has greatly influenced how student's expressiveness, sexuality and bodies are viewed especially in Nigeria culture.

Although influences on self-objectification might include a variety of interpersonal, social, cultural, and even biological factors, an aggressive purveyor of self-objectification is undoubtedly the media (Winter, 2015; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) of which the Internet is a major player. The question of whether the media's impact on self-objectification only applies to women alone is still unanswered. Thus, both men and women were included in this study for three main reasons. First, experimental research has found that it is possible to induce self-objectification in both men and women (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998).

For example, in a study ostensibly on consumer behaviors, both men and women who tried on a swimsuit reported more self-objectification than those who tried on a sweater (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998), more so, unscrambling sentences with objectification-related words produced more self-objectification for both men and women than neutral words (Roberts & Gettman, 2004). Second, there seems to be an increased emphasis on the objectification of men in the media across time (Thompson, 2000) and

the introduction of the word “metrosexual” (i.e., a slang word for a male who spends a great deal of time and money on his appearance) into everyday vocabulary could be indicators that male appearance is increasingly visible and important. Third, most studies that have examined media’s impact on body image have focused on restrictive eating and drive for thinness as outcomes, which are undoubtedly more relevant to women than to men (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001). After all, manipulating “thinness” (Kalodner, 1997) is undoubtedly less damaging to men than manipulating muscularity (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001). Thus, objectification theory (OT) offers a framework for understanding psychological experiences (including normative body dissatisfaction and Internet addiction). Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) suggest that although self objectification varies in its form, the common thread running through all forms of objectification is the experience of being treated *as a body* (or collection of parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others. Consequences of self-objectification include shame, anxiety, not achieving peak motivational states, and a lack of awareness of internal bodily states (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Empirical finding such as Twenge and Fredrickson (2002) has revealed a significant correlation between self-objectification and depression symptoms. Similarly, in a longitudinal study of adolescents ( $N = 399$ ), Grabe, Hyde & Lindberg (2007) found that the relationship between self-objectification measured by self surveillance at Time 1 (end of fifth grade) and depression measured at Time 2 (end of seventh grade) was significantly mediated by body shame at Time 2. In a cross-sectional study of 116 undergraduate women in Australia, Steer & Tiggemann (2008) found that self-objectification was related to body shame, appearance anxiety and self-consciousness during sexual activity. Roberts & Gettman (2004) had participants unscramble sentences with objectification-related words (e.g., sexiness, weight) or body competence-related words (e.g., health, fitness). The college-aged women and men who unscrambled the sentences with objectification words reported more self-objectification than those who unscrambled sentences with body competence words.

The central thrust of this work nevertheless, was the relational-cultural theory in explaining the role of emotional inexpressiveness, self objectification, and gender on Internet addiction. The first core tenet of relational-cultural theory (RCT) asserts that all individuals develop through and toward growth-fostering relationships over the lifespan, and that this process requires mutuality (Comstock, Hammer, Strentzsch, Cannon, Parsons & Ii, 2008). When one achieves such growth-fostering connections, everyone in the relationship experiences five outcomes: 1) a greater sense of zest, 2) a greater ability to act in the world, 3) a more accurate picture of her/himself and the other person(s), 4) a greater sense of worth, and 5) a greater connection to the other person(s) and greater motivation to connect with others (Comstock, Hammer, Strentzsch, Cannon, Parsons & Ii, 2008). To achieve a strong connection, the relationship must be mutual. Mutuality requires openness to many ideas and possibilities and when it is achieved, individuals have found a growth-fostering relationship and can experience the five outcomes listed above (Comstock & Dongxiao, 2005; Parkins, 2012). This occurs when two people are open to influence from the other and are receptive and responsive while each person simultaneously maintains a sense of self. Unfortunately, whenever such growth-fostering connections are interrupted, inexpressiveness and self-objectification becomes a sort of defense mechanism to cushion the effect.

The paucity of empirical research on emotional inexpressiveness and self-objectification as it affects undergraduates within online discourse, elicited the interest to embark on this study. Specifically, the study investigated whether undergraduates who are emotionally inexpressive were more addicted to internet than those who were not. Also, the study examined whether undergraduates who scored high on self-objectification were more addicted to the internet than those who scored low on self-objectification; and whether level of study, age, and gender would significantly predict internet addiction. Corollary of these objectives, it hypothesized that undergraduates who were emotionally inexpressive would be more addicted to the internet than those who were not; those who score high on self-objectification would be more addicted to the internet than their counterparts who scored low on self-objectification. It was finally hypothesized that level of study, age, and gender would significantly predict internet addiction among undergraduates. Level of study and age served as covariates in the present study in order to expunge confounding effects

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Two hundred and twelve (226) undergraduate students were purposively selected to participated in the study. Of this, 44 (19.47%) were males, while 182 (80.53%) were females, having the minimum age of 16 and maximum age of 30. A mean age of 21.25 and standard deviation of 2.93 were obtained. Out of the 226 students, 44 (19.47%) were married (small fraction of married undergraduates), while a large percentage of them 204 (90.27%) were single. In terms of their year of study, 63(27.87%) were year one students, 44(19.47%) were sophomore students, 49 (21.68%) were third year students, 63(27.88%) were in their fourth year, with the remaining 7(3.10%) were in their fifth year. All participants were Christians as the region is predominantly a

Christian dominated region. Lastly, 116 (51.33%) were Ibibio, 44 (19.47%) Igbo, 44 (19.47%) Annang, while Efik accounted for the remaining 22 (9.73%).

#### *Instruments*

Internet Addiction Test (IAT) as originally developed by Young (1998) and revalidated by Frangos, Frangos and Sotiropoulos (2012) is a 20-item inventory that measured mild, moderate and severe level of Internet Addiction. It covers the degree to which their Internet use affects their daily routine, social life, productivity, sleeping pattern, and feelings. The inventory is answered in a five-point Likert were 1=rarely, 2=occasionally, 3=frequently, 4=often, and 5=always. The minimum score is 20, and the maximum is 100; the higher the score, the greater level of addiction is or the greater the problems Internet use causes. Young (1998) noted that a score of 20-39 points indicated an average online user who had complete control over his/her usage of internet; A score of 40-69 signified frequent problems due to Internet usage; and a score of 70-100 implied that the Internet was causing significant problems. Example of the items measuring Internet addiction include: "How often do you find that you stay on-line longer than you intended?" "How often do your grades or school work suffers because of the amount of time you spend on-line?" and "How often do you fear that life without the Internet would be boring, empty, and joyless? The reliability for this questionnaire is 0.899 in Cronbach's alpha the higher the score the greater the level of internet addiction (Pui, 2006). The present research pilot tested the inventory with another University in the same South-Southern part of Nigeria and the result showed a high internal consistency of .83.

Self-objectification was measured with the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS; McKinley & Hyde, 2006). This scale was a 24-item self-report measure of body consciousness and has three subscales: *Body Surveillance* a measure of defining the body by how it looks, as opposed to how it feels and some items of Body Surveillance subscale are "I rarely think about how I look", "I think more about how my body feels than how my body looks", and "I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good."

*Body Shame* - a measure of whether someone believes they are a bad person because they do not meet the cultural standard for what a body should look like and some items of Body Shame subscale are "I feel like I must be a bad person when I don't look as good as I could", "I never worry that something is wrong with me when I am not exercising as much as I should", and "I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best."

The third subscale, *Appearance Control Beliefs* – a measure of whether or not a person believes they can control their own appearance, or if it is controlled by other things; with items such as "A large part of being in shape is having that kind of body in the first place", "It doesn't matter how hard I try to change my weight, it's probably always going to be about the same", and "I really don't think I have much control over how my body looks."

The internal consistency for the OBCS as reported by McKinley and Hyde (2006) was Cronbach alpha of .75. With respect to its validity, there were significant correlations between the OBCS body shame scale and sedentary individuals with disordered eating, and also physically active individuals (Greenleaf & McGreer, 2006). There was also a positive correlation between the body shame scale and two sub-scales of the Socio-cultural Attitudes toward Appearance Questionnaire-3 (Internalization-General Scale ( $r = .66$ ) and the Internalization-Athletic Scale ( $r = .21$ ). The total score is calculated by finding the sum of the items, after reverse coding the necessary items. The total score ranges from 24-168, with a higher score (above the norm 95.12) indicating a higher body consciousness. However, when OBCS was pilot-tested with another University in the same South-Southern part of Nigeria, the result yielded the Cronbach of .79.

Emotional inexpressiveness was measured with Berkeley Expressivity Scale as developed by Gross & John (1997). It is a 16-item scale designed to measure an individual's emotional expressivity. The scale was separated into 3 facets: negative expressivity, positive expressivity, and impulse strength. Each item is answered on a 7-point Likert-type ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Items: 3, 8, and 9 are reverse scored. Whereas, items 3, 5, 8, 9, 13, 16 were Negative Emotionality facet; Items: 1, 4, 6, 10 were Positive Emotionality facet and Items: 2, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15 were the Impulse Strength facet. It had a continuous scoring pattern. A combination of the subscales forms the emotional expressivity scale. Items that makes up the Positive Emotionality facet are, "Whenever I feel positive emotions, people can easily see exactly what I am Feeling", "I laugh out loud when someone tells me a joke that I think is funny", "When I'm happy, my feelings show", and "I am an emotionally expressive person." Items that makes up the Impulse Strength facet include, "I sometimes cry during sad movies", "My body reacts very strongly to emotional situations," "I have strong emotions," "I am sometimes unable to hide my feelings, even though I would like to," "There have been times when I have not been able to stop crying even though I tried to stop," and "I experience my emotions very strongly." For the

Negative Emotionality facet, items include: “People often do not know what I am feeling”, “It is difficult for me to hide my fear”, “I’ve learned it is better to suppress my anger than to show it”, “No matter how nervous or upset I am, I tend to keep a calm exterior”, “Whenever I feel negative emotions, people can easily see exactly what I am feeling”, and “What I’m feeling is written all over my face.”

For the purpose of this study, higher scores represented emotional expressiveness while lower score signify emotional inexpressiveness. When the scale was pilot-tested with another University in the same South-Southern part of Nigeria, Cronbach alpha coefficient value of .74 was obtained.

**Procedure**

The researchers approached the participants in their various lecture classes and halls; having obtained permission from their lecturers. The researchers introduced themselves, explained the objectives of the study and sought for participatory consent; having assured the participants of confidentiality of their responses. Since the instruments combined contained 60 items, respondents were given enough time and instruments were collected after completion. A total of 270 questionnaires were administered, but only 226 were properly filled representing 83.70% response rate.

**Statistics**

Systematic analysis of data collected in the study was carried out using the SPSS version 20.0. In doing this, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested with student t-test for independent samples, while hypothesis 3 was tested with hierarchical multiple regression. A

One-Way multiple post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test was also employed for further qualitative findings on the level of study of participants.

**Result**

**Table 1: Summary of T-Test of Independence Showing the Influence of Emotion Expressivity on Internet Addiction**

Internet Addiction	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P
Emotional Expressiveness	116	64.12	15.09			
Emotional Inexpressiveness	110	69.20	5.41	224	-3.33	<.01

The result in Table 1 indicated that emotional expressivity was a significant predictor of Internet addiction. Participants with emotional inexpressiveness reported higher Internet addiction (Mean = 69.20) than those with emotional expressiveness (Mean = 64.12). The difference was statistically significant, t (224) = -3.33, P <.01. The hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 2: Summary of T-Test of Independence Showing the Influence of Self-Objectification on Internet Addiction**

Internet Addiction	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P
High Self-Objectification	100	69.60	8.59			
Low Self-Objectification	126	63.74	13.47	224	3.88	<.01

As shown in Table 2, participant’s self-objectification was a significant predictor of Internet Addiction. Participants with high self-objectification reported higher Internet addiction (Mean = 69.60) than those with low self-objectification (Mean = 63.74). The difference was statistically significant, t (224) = 3.88, P <.01. Hence, the hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis showing the predictions of Emotional Inexpressiveness, Self-objectification, Level of Study, Gender, Age, and on Internet Addiction**

Variables	B	SE	Beta	T	P	R	R	F	P
Age	-.05	.29	-.01	-1.16	>0.05				
Gender	-2.17	1.90	-.08	-1.14	>0.05				
Level of Study	5.64	.49	.63	11.63	<0.05	.65	.42	31.09	<0.05
Emotional Objectification	-.19	.11	-.17	-1.81	>0.05				
	.18	.05	.31	3.84	<0.05				

In order to test for the third hypothesis, 110 emotionally inexpressive participants were isolated from the total participants of 226 before running the regression analysis. Table 3 showed that age had no significant

independent prediction on Internet Addiction (Beta = .01;  $t = -0.16$ ;  $P > .05$ ). Gender also had no significant independent prediction on Internet Addiction (Beta = .08;  $t = -1.14$ ;  $P > .05$ ). Level of Study had a significant prediction on Internet Addiction (Beta = .63;  $t = 11.63$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Emotional Inexpressiveness had no significant prediction on Internet Addiction (Beta = -.17;  $t = -1.81$ ;  $P > .05$ ); and Self-Objectification had a significant prediction on Internet Addiction (Beta = .31;  $t = 3.84$ ;  $P < .05$ ).

However, It was found that the joint contributions of the independent variables (Emotional Inexpressiveness, Self-objectification, Level of Study, Gender, Age) to the prediction of Internet Addiction was significant ( $F(5, 110) = 31.089$ ;  $R = .650$ ,  $R^2 = .423$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = .409$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The result also reveals that the independent variables when taken together contribute 42% of the variance in the prediction of the respondents' internet addiction while the remaining 58% might be due to other variables not within the scope of the present study. Subjecting the data to further analysis using the stepwise regression showed that Level of study was the single best predictor of Internet addiction, quickly followed by self-objectification, and emotional inexpressiveness. In order to ascertain the study level where these undergraduates may likely be more internet addicted, a One-Way multiple post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test was employed and indicated Year 4 was the period students reported highest on Internet addiction and the mean score for Year 4 students ( $M = 76.67$ ,  $SD = 4.53$ ) was significantly different from Year 3 students ( $M = 70.43$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ), Year 5 students ( $M = 62.57$ ,  $SD = 17.97$ ), Year 2 students ( $M = 61.00$ ,  $SD = 5.06$ ), and Year 1 students ( $M = 57.89$ ,  $SD = 14.56$ ) being the level that reported least on internet addiction.

### Discussion

The study investigated the role of emotional inexpressiveness and self-objectification on Internet addiction. Firstly, it was hypothesized that undergraduates who were emotionally inexpressive would be more addicted to the internet than those who were not. The result confirmed the hypothesis; implying that students who are emotionally inexpressive scored high on Internet addiction. In other words, they were more addicted to the internet than their counterparts who were not emotionally inexpressive. The finding is in consonance with the relational-cultural theory (RCT) which holds that all individuals develop through and toward growth-fostering relationships over the lifespan, and that this process requires mutuality (Comstock et al., 2008). This mutuality requires openness and when it is achieved, individuals have found a growth-fostering relationship (Comstock & Dongxiao, 2005; (Parkins, 2012) and when it is not achieved, that 'openness' withers away, thereby paving way for inexpressiveness which ultimately leads to negative mental outcomes Saleebey (1992). A plausible explanation is that with the upsurge of emotions among young people in recent times, those who are unable to express themselves resorts to the internet which coincidentally is in vogue in a bid to close this communication gap in order to avoid depressive symptoms which is usually the case in most unfulfilled emotional need.

It was further hypothesized that undergraduates who score high on self-objectification would be more addicted to the internet than their counterparts who scored low on self-objectification. The hypothesis was also confirmed implying that undergraduates with high self-objectification reported more internet addiction as compared to their counterparts with low self-objectification. The finding is consistent with results from previous studies that found a significant correlation between self-objectification and depression symptoms (Twenge & Fredrickson, 2002; Roberts & Gettman, 2004). More so, this finding is in line with Aubrey's (2006) study that found exposure to televised objectification does not necessarily translate to a sea of change in audiences' perceptions of the self. The results have much in common with the results of other cultivation studies; the measurable effects are modest but should not be dismissed as theoretically insignificant (Gerbner et al., 1994). This finding plausibly explains itself as people who are high in self-objectification will tend to resort to excessive internet use and will attempt to see and judge themselves from others view point of how they should look like. Further, it takes only a bit of self-objectification for a person's view of his or her body to be fundamentally different from a person who does not chronically self-objectify (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Lastly, It was hypothesized that Level of Study, Age, and Gender would significantly predict internet addiction among undergraduates. The result showed that level of study together with self-objectification, and emotional inexpressiveness predicted internet addiction ( $< .05$ ).

Further analysis revealed that Year 4 and 3 students were more likely to be internet addicted. Significance of this finding rests on the reality that the society has placed too much emphasis on appearance (dress and body image) and at the same time not adequately grooming the younger generation on appropriate behavioral skills for effective communication (emotional and verbal).

Hence, some youths today finds the Internet as a safe haven or a yardstick to ascertain what is ideal, which in most case is not realistic. This finding is unprecedented as no empirical work was found to either support or refute. As a result, more research enquiries are needed to explore this area.

### Conclusion

The study examined the role of emotional inexpressiveness and self-objectification on internet addiction among undergraduates. The study concludes that undergraduates who are emotionally inexpressive are more internet-addicted than their counterparts who were not. Also, undergraduates who highly self-objectify will be more addicted to internet than their counterparts with low self-objectification. Gender was not a predictor of Internet addiction as both male and female were not exempted from the web of Internet fever; while all levels of study predicted internet addiction, more so for Year 4 and Year 3 students. To this end, awareness to the extent of this problem (Internet addiction) should be pursued vigorously and to a wide range of audiences. University authorities or faculty boards may perhaps add information services to the “student handbook” instead of just placing rules and regulations.

As there is no space for remedial guidance and preventive actions in the “student handbook” wellness programs, mentoring, stimulating extracurricular activities, and volunteer works (for which students may be paid stipends by the university authorities) stating the objectives of such programs and how it can benefit the student and their well-being may be included. Finally, future research may employ different methods of inquiry particularly on a causal perspective and pursue the study to a wider scale of population and different target groups.

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