A Comparison of the Online Sexual Behavior Scores of Persons with a Sexual Addiction, in Comparison to Persons Wondering If They Have a Sexual Addiction as Measured by the Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire (OSA-Q)

Adam Buzzinotti Purcell

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A COMPARISON OF THE ONLINE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR SCORES OF PERSONS WITH A SEXUAL ADDICTION, IN COMPARISON TO PERSONS WONDERING IF THEY HAVE A SEXUAL ADDICTION AS MEASURED BY THE ONLINE SEXUAL ADDICTION QUESTIONNAIRE (OSA-Q)

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By Adam Buzzinotti Purcell

August 2011
A COMPARISON OF THE ONLINE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR SCORES OF PERSONS WITH A SEXUAL ADDICTION, IN COMPARISON TO PERSONS WONDERING IF THEY HAVE A SEXUAL ADDICTION AS MEASURED BY THE ONLINE SEXUAL ADDICTION QUESTIONNAIRE (OSA-Q)
ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF THE ONLINE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR SCORES OF PERSONS WITH A SEXUAL ADDICTION, IN COMPARISON TO PERSONS WONDERING IF THEY HAVE A SEXUAL ADDICTION AS MEASURED BY THE ONLINE SEXUAL ADDICTION QUESTIONNAIRE (OSA-Q)

By: Adam Buzzinotti Purcell,

April 2011

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Joseph Maola, Ph.D.

This study will examine the online sexual behaviors of visitors to The Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH) website (www.SASH.net). The survey was available for one year via the SASH website. The data consisting of tabulated survey results was collected via the survey link on the SASH homepage, and were electronically hosted and collected by a third party data collection website (www.surveymonkey.com). Tabulated responses totaled N= 3,603, with responses from 37 countries on five continents. The study examines whether a difference exists between the self-reported online sexual behaviors (OSB) of those who self-identified as sexual addicts, and those who self-identified as believing they may have a sexual addiction.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Overview

The issue of sexual addiction has been studied for eons, and remained at the center of curiosity of multiple researchers and psychologists of the 18th and 19th centuries. This is a phenomenon in which an individual becomes obsessed with sexual activities, and seeks to find his/her pleasure within those activities. Some scholars suggest the disinterests are a symptom of depression and psychological illness while others refer to the obsession as a personality disorder motivated by surrounding elements and shaping of the mind through them. In this regard, a particular trend within the age of electronic communications and World Wide Web is of having cybersex – an activity of viewing pornographic content and interacting with porn figures for certain psychological and bodily pleasures of life.

Attention to this global phenomenon dates back to early 1990’s, when the growing widespread applications of internet resulted in creation of porn websites and clipping databases for the purpose of visual pleasure of its audiences. From its beginning, pornography remained a highly criticized and private domain of the internet, which now has become a global industry worth billions of dollars. Since, this porn-based web culture is associated deeply with sexual desires and natural bodily pleasures of human beings, many individuals who were addicted to the usage of internet became attracted by this phenomenon and became cybersex addicts – a new term referring to individuals who consider online pornography and other electronically explicit activities as their primary source of pleasure and satisfaction. However, some closely associated matters need to be
investigated within this domain i.e. what are the patterns of different cyber sexual addicts?, what is their perception of this activity?, and which gender is the most involved one in this activity (including gender sub-categories)? This study is set to explore this issue along with encompassing issue of the domain, which is highly associated with the subject of online sexual behavior (OSB).

**Study Background**

Once called “The New Frontier of Addiction” (Timm, 2001), sex on the internet has long been recognized as problematic. Griffin-Shelley (2003) described the volume of research regarding internet sexuality as a flood of information. Universal connectivity (the notion that all homes and businesses will be internet connected) was predicted by 2010 (Sutherland, 2004). Internet addiction has been labeled as an epidemic sweeping America (2004). Of the 62 million Americans with home internet access (US Census Bureau, 2003), 20 percent (“Cybersexual Relations,” 2000) have used the internet to visit sexually explicit websites. With predictions of universal connectivity on the horizon, internet sexuality is bound to be on the rise. Further, a behavioral addiction to online sexuality has been established by some (Rimington & Gast, 2007; Griffiths, 2004). A review of the literature, however, suggests a disparity in the nomenclature of the sexual addiction/compulsion (Goodman, 2001). In the literature, OSB is sometimes called; ‘Online Sexual Addiction’ (Bingham, J.E., & Piotrowski, C. 1996), ‘Compu-Sex’ (Branwyn, 1993), ‘Wanking in Cyberspace’ (Butterworth, 1993), ‘Cybersex’ or ‘Compulsive Online Sexual Behavior’ (Cooper *et al.*, 2000; Carnes *et al.*, 2001). With the advisement of Robin Cato and Dr. David Delmonico (Duquesne University), the
A quote from Griffiths (2004) supports the need for more research:

There have been few studies of excessive internet use that found a small proportion of users who admitted using the internet for sexual purposes. None of the surveys to date conclusively show that Internet addiction exists or that Internet sex addiction is problematic to anyone but a small minority. At best, they indicate that Internet addiction may be prevalent in a significant minority of individuals, but that more research using validated survey instruments and other techniques (e.g. in-depth qualitative interviews) is required.

**Purpose of Study**

This study is intended to determine if a significant difference exists between the scores on the self-reported online sexual behaviors (OSB) of respondents who self-identified as persons with a sexual addiction seeking treatment, or persons who think they may be sexual addicts and are not interested in treatment? The OSB will be measured by comparing respondents’ scores regarding questions about characteristics of OSB. The questions designed to assess OSB characteristics will measure: tolerance/withdrawal; emotional distress; life interference; obsessive-compulsive behaviors; social withdrawal; and destructive impairment (Griffiths, 2000). By comparing the responses of the survey, the study will help determine if a significant difference of scores exists between those who self-define as sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts.

**Research Questions**

The controversy about the nomenclature and the suggestion that more research is needed has led to the following research questions:
1. Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of the OSA-Q total score?

2. Is there a significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q?

3. Is there a significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q?

4. Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of obsessive/compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q?

5. Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of tolerance/withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q?

6. Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q?

7. Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q?

8. Is there a significant effect of gender on the total score of the OSA-Q?

9. Is there a significant effect of gender on the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q?
10. Is there a significant effect of gender on the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q?

11. Is there a significant effect of gender on the obsessive compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q?

12. Is there a significant effect of gender on the tolerance withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q?

13. Is there a significant effect of gender on the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q?

14. Is there a significant effect of gender on the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q?

**Rationale**

The data collected through the Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health website is derived from a global community of online users and respondents residing in 37 countries on five continents. The survey is written in and is available in American English. Although the instrument used to collect the data has not been validated, and the method of data collection through the internet has known limitations, the data collected is nonetheless valuable, containing useful information about online sexual behaviors.

**Significance**

The survey was designed to learn more about the OSB of the visitors to the SASH website. This study is designed to look at the difference between the responses of those
who self-identified as sexual addicts seeking treatment, and the responses of those
wondering if they are sexual addicts. Because the literature has struggled to establish not
only the existence of online sexual addiction (Griffiths, 2004) and the terminology of said
addiction (Goodman, 2001), then it stands to reason that those affected struggle with the
same issues of nomenclature and stigmatization. Considering the absence of sexual
addiction as a diagnostic category in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV-TR of the
American Psychiatric Association, it is important for clinicians and scholars to reach a
consensus of a non-stigmatizing nomenclature.

For the purpose of this study, the terminology: Online Sexual Behavior (OSB) is
used to describe the behaviors, and Cybersex is used to demonstrate the activity itself.
As far as the responses are concerned; If there is no difference between the responses of
those who self-identified as sexual addicts seeking treatment and those questioning if
they are sexual addicts, it would then appear that those questioning if they are sexual
addicts are at an early stage of awareness of sexual addiction. Understanding the effects
of accepting one’s behavioral addiction could be of utility to educators and counselors in
curricular design and psycho-educational interventions.

Further, if a difference exists between the responses of those who self-identified
as a sexual addicts and those questioning if they are sexual addicts, the implications
would depend on the nature of the differences. The expected results may indicate a
higher rate of problematic OSB for those who question if they are sexual addicts, as their
awareness of the problematic nature of the behavior has just begun to develop as
demonstrated by their attempt to learn more about sexual addiction by visiting the SASH
website.
Finally, the results of this study may provide educators, academicians, and mental health practitioners with knowledge of the nature and extent of the OSB that are causing problems of respondents to the survey. Although not part of the analysis of this article, the qualitative information acquired may demonstrate the level of distress OSB are causing those who responded. It is hoped that this research can support future research in the area of online sexual behavior and addiction. This study will present information about the types of OSB that may contribute to understanding by the counselors who will be treating those who are struggling with the effects of their OSB.

Research Design

The study is a quasi-experimental design using nonequivalent groups. The design will measure differences in responses regarding online sexual behaviors among two groups: Group A- respondents who self-identified them as sexual addicts, and Group B-respondents who want to know if they are or are not sexual addicts. The research project will utilize data drawn from a subset of how respondents answered question 15 (Appendix C) regarding sexual addiction (self-definition as a sexual addict or wondering if one is a sexual addict) as the independent variable. For the purpose of this study, answers to questions drawn from the Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire (OSA-Q) (Putnam, 2000) will serve as the dependent variables (life interference, social withdrawal, obsessive/compulsive behavior, tolerance/withdrawal, emotional distress, and destructive impairment).

Hypothetical Assumptions
The hypotheses examined in this study are in null format. T-tests will be used to determine if a significant difference exists between the scores of the groups of respondents.

**Research Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1**
There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the OSA-Q total score.

**Hypothesis 2**
There is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q.

**Hypothesis 3**
There is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

**Hypothesis 4**
There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of obsessive/compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q.

**Hypothesis 5**
There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of tolerance/withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

**Hypothesis 6**
There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q.

**Hypothesis 7**
There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q.

**Hypothesis 8**
There is no significant interaction of gender among self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the OSA-Q total score on the total score of the OSA-Q.

**Hypothesis 9**
There is no significant interaction of gender among self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q.

**Hypothesis 10**
There is no significant interaction of gender among self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.
Hypothesis 11
There is no significant interaction of gender among self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the obsessive compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q.

Hypothesis 12
There is no significant interaction of gender among self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the tolerance withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

Hypothesis 13
There is no significant interaction of gender among self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q.

Hypothesis 14
There is no significant interaction of gender among self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q.

Important Definitions
In this study, the following specific definitions require clarification:

Cumulative score - is the sum of the answers to all of the questions in the survey - the total OSA-Q scores.

Self-Identified – respondents to the survey whose responses indicate they are sexual addicts, or question if they are sexual addicts.
Sexual addict – a person whose sexual behavior causes subjective distress or functional impairment (Goodman, 2001)

Online – utilizing the internet

Online Sexual Addiction – compulsive usage of adult websites for cybersex and cyber porn

Tolerance – increasing amounts of internet sex are required to achieve the same effects

Withdrawal – unpleasant feeling states which occur when internet sex is suddenly discontinued, interrupted, or reduced

Emotional Distress – personal suffering resulting from the use of internet sex

Life Interference – marked adverse consequences on personal relationships

Obsessive Compulsive Behaviors – preoccupation with online sexuality and thoughts of returning to pursue more sexual behaviors

Social withdrawal – reduction or cessation of social activities in order to appropriate more time for online sexual behavior

Destructive Impairment – severe consequences due to sexual behavior and the inability to stop despite these adverse consequences
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide sufficient literary background for the topic of this study, which is associated with online sexual behavior and trends within different genders associated with this activity. This chapter, unlike other formal chapters of different studies, has adapted a new approach of directly presenting facts and figures extracted from secondary resources to fulfill the subject of study. This chapter begins with the introduction of OSB (online sexual behaviors) and its relationship to the genders. Moving further, it analyzes and categorizes the assertions of different scholars and researchers who worked and contributed within this domain. A section of formal research results is also included in a subjective format, and ends on the gender based variations in online sexual behaviors according to the suggestions of different scholars.

Online Sexual Behaviors (OSB)

Since recognition of OSB (Online Sexual Behaviors) more than twenty years ago, many publications have addressed the issue. Gelder (1985) is credited with having first recognized sexuality’s appearance on the internet in 1985 with warnings regarding internet child pornography. Online sexual content received more attention when Branwyn (1993) wrote about misrepresentation of one’s online sexuality (pretending to be hetero or homosexual, pretending to be of the opposite sex) and the vulnerability of children on the internet. In the same year Butterworth discussed masturbation and the
internet (Butterworth 1993). In 1994, at the annual conference of the National Council on Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity, Rip and Deborah Corley referred to online pornography as the “crack cocaine of sex addiction” (Griffin-Shelley, 2003). In 1995 studies appeared that examined the internet’s use in relation to ‘deviant sexual behavior’ (Durkin & Bryant, 1995). These studies recognized the phenomenon of internet sexual behaviors. Online sexual behaviors (OSB) began affecting relationships in the home (Schneider, 2000), at work (Cooper, Delmonico, & Burg, 2000), and at school (Cooper et al., 2000).

Beginning as early as 1996, Young presented a paper at the American Psychological Association that introduced the concept of a new clinical disorder: “Internet Addiction.” Although Young’s research focused on total usage of the internet, not just for sexual purposes, online sexual addiction would later be classified by her, as a sub-type of internet addiction (1996, 1999). Putnam’s article titled “Initiation and Maintenance of Online Sexual Compulsivity: Implications for Assessment and Treatment” (2000) was the most influential piece of research that contributed to the construction of the instrument. The article utilized the Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire (OSA-Q) (2000) which provided the basis for both the portion of the instrument which will be analyzed by this study, and the method for the proposed statistical analysis. The OSA-Q is a heuristic tool for assessing the effects of online sexual behavior and was developed by Putnam (2000).

The OSA-Q uses categories related to online sexual behavior that were developed to reflect areas theoretically associated with the concept of addiction (Putnam, 2000).
The categories are “analogous to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders” (DSM-IV TR, 1994) “criteria for Substance Dependence, Impulse Control Disorders, and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder“ (2000). According to Putnam, assessment via these domains can identify areas for focus during treatment (2000). Putnam (2000) also suggests that through retracing the affected areas, mental health clinicians might gain insight into the stressors which compel individuals to cope with life stressors through internet sexual outlets. The OSA-Q has yet to have its reliability and validity established, much like the other instruments available for assessment of sexually compulsive online behavior (Putnam, 2000, Young, 2000, Sexual Recovery Institute, 2000). These instruments would best serve clinicians if accompanied by psychometrically sound psychological tests that assess related areas of impairment (i.e. depression and anxiety) (Putnam, 2000). Putnam also suggests that these instruments be accepted with face validity only, until they have been tested for validity and reliability. This is a limitation of the current research. The absence of established reliability and validity, the results of the proposed analysis will have only face validity.

**Classification & Appearances:**

The major classifications of online sexual behavior can be done in three dimensions:

Accessing Pornography on the Internet

Engaging in real-time, online sexual conversations with others

Accessing multimedia software
These three categorical dimensions (regardless on one’s behavior) can lead to the spending of inordinate amounts of time engaging in sexual fantasy and behavior, and significant life consequences (Griffin & Delmonico, 2003). This, however, this remains a major issue to be explored, and the symptoms and conditions which identify that an internet user has become addict to online sexual behaviors. In this regard, a scale has been developed earlier by Cooper et al. (2000) which suggested that an individuals who spend 11 or more hours per week in online sexual activities, is on the threshold of becoming an online sexual addict if the same activity continues for longer periods. Although the duration of use is important in deciding if the person is an online sexual addict or not, some other biological and psychological elements also take part in decision. For instance, according to Griffin and Delmonico (2003), there are ten major symptoms and signs which suggest that a person has become an online sexual addict. These symptoms are:

- Preoccupation with online sexual activities over internet
- Large amounts of time spent on internet with sexual activities as prime business
- Repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut-back, or stop online sexual behavior
- Using sex on the internet to escape from feelings or life problems
- Returning to sex on the internet to find a more intense or higher risk experience
- Committing illegal sexual acts online (or related to online behavior)
- Jeopardizing or losing a relationship, job, or educational opportunity due to behavior
- Incurring significant financial consequences as a result of online sexual behavior
In the above stated symptoms observed and stated by Griffin and Delmonico (2003), however, each symptom is of its own importance, and all of them can mutually exist or remain absent from an online sexual addict. Therefore, the matter still remains completely ambiguous about defining the exact psychological or physical activities which serve as accurate symptom for this activity.

**Internet-Addiction & Online Sex**

At this stage, it is important to make a distinction between internet addiction and internet-based sexual activities addiction (since not all the internet addicts are sexual addicts but a faction of this population is involved in online sexual activities to great extent). This topic stretches the discussion to the issue of sexually-related uses of Internet, which can now be regarded as the altering pattern of social communication and interpersonal relationships (Cooper *et al.*, 2000). This definition of internet is much more practical, when the field of study is sexuality and patterns of sexual activities. According to Young (2000) and Freeman-Longo & Blanchard (1998), sex still remains the most widely searched topic via internet search engines. Since being involved in sexual activities in real-world scenario requires some time of physical activities along with (often perceived) normal or strong financial status. On the internet, however, considerable explicit content and visually aesthetic material (for a sex addict) is always available, with most of it offered openly and freely (Young, 2000).

Furthermore, the pornography (exhibition of sexual content through communication media) industry by the year 2001 was 366 million dollars – a fact that suggests that within the initial years of widespread internet applications and usage,
pornography became one of the most rapidly growing industries. All these evidences and facts suggest that internet addicts represent a huge faction among their online community, which constitutes online sexual addicts who prefer pornography and online sexual activities over their social or online life.

Specifically, a relationship can (however) be maintained between internet addiction and online sex addiction. For this, Griffiths (2000) has suggested that the first step in this course is to be taken by examining the different ways that the internet can be used for sexually-related purposes. The reason behind this approach is very simple: to identify which activities may be done to excess and which might be potentially addictive in their nature. Furthermore, Griffiths (2000) suggested some specific activities which might create a great distinction between internet addict and an online sex addict:

1. Looking for sexually-related material to be used in educational purposes
2. Doing business with sexually-related goods
3. Purchasing items or logical accesses from online sex stores/websites
4. Looking for call girls and sexual therapists online
5. Looking for sexual partners for having a long-time relationship
6. Looking for sexual partners for having a transitory relationship
7. Searching for individuals who had been the victim of a sexual assault (like rape)
8. Talking online in chat rooms under an explicit name, in order to attract other sex-addicts
9. Designing or writing sexual content with the help of sophisticated multimedia or word editing software.

From the above specific activity patterns, it can be observed that some of these activities are really obsessive, excessive and addictive. These, however, are the mere applications of online sex, which can be used in pleasing the mindset, masturbating purposes, real-time sex with partner, or any sort of social crime (Griffiths, 2000).

**Behavioral Stages in OSB**

Since there are multiple categories of online sexual behavior, which employs different specific activities and courses; there are some identified behavioral stages, which reflect in real life that a person is or was becoming a sexual addict over Internet. These stages are termed as ‘salience’, ‘mood modification’, ‘tolerance’, ‘withdrawal’, ‘conflict’, and ‘relapse.’ According to Griffiths (2000) and Cooper *et al.* (2000) these behavioral stages are usually reflected in a hierarchical pattern in real life, encompassing phases within the personality of the addicted to-be-addicted. Furthermore, some stages of them are most likely to be reactive in their nature, i.e. these might affect the associated person or business with the addicted individual.

a. **Salience** – This stage of behavioral response of OSB occurs when online sex and its associated applications become the prime priority of a person’s life, dominating all other businesses, activities of life, thinking processes, feelings, social relationships, etc. This can be regarded as the most severe stage, and a clear symptom that person has become an addict to online sexual activities. According to Griffiths (2000) it usually happens in the stage of salience that
an addict, while not on computer, keeps thinking about the fascinations of next time when he/she will be on internet, involved and lost in sexual contents.

b. **Mood Modification** – This stage can be referred as another dominant stage of internet sex addiction, in which an individual is not always mentally or visually involved in cybersex, but at certain times, spends a deep moment thinking about it. Furthermore, mood modification stage is often found in those people who are psychologically depressed or numbed (due to any incident) and want to cope their pain or depression through online sex.

c. **Tolerance** – This stage of online sexual behavior is somewhat associated with the previous stage of mood modification, in which increasing amount of internet sex is required for a person to become normal in daily life. Without this activity, the person remains dissatisfied, harsh, and depressed – a significant sign of addiction. This stage often leads to the next stage of salience, in which a person spends more and more time on internet doing cybersex to please his/her being.

d. **Withdrawal** – As the name suggests, this stage refers to the starting process of abandonment of internet based sexual activities, due to any external or internal motivation. According to Griffiths (2000) this usually happens when a person starts feeling either that he/she is going on a wrong moral path, or he/she starts believing that significant businesses/activities/relationships/behaviors are getting affected by cybersex.
Also, this stage possesses an addict due to some type of psychological irritation, which might have its associated with any of the above defines feelings.

e. **Conflict** – This is a behavioral stage of a cybersex addict, in which he or she develops a self-conflict either with the being, or with the surrounding elements, including human beings. It is in this stage, that an individual starts conflicting with surrounding human elements, jobs, hobbies, interests, etc. and remains closely associated with cybersex (Griffiths, 2000). This is another extreme stage, which either comes just before the salience stage, or leads to the stage of withdrawal. For this reason, this stage is excluded from the domain of salience.

f. **Relapse** – This is a lasting stage, in which the salience features of addiction are somehow reduced, but keeps coming (overcoming the person) time by time, due to certain psychological or social conditions. For instance, if a person (previously addicted) is depressed or humiliated through any social condition, his seeks to satisfy the mental psych through cybersex activities.

In all the above mentioned stages of OSB, it is a general observation that sexual addiction was somehow present or lowered down within the individual showing behavioral responses under any condition. Furthermore, according to Young (2000) there are multiple types of explicit content which is available on internet – a thing that makes a cybersex addict a choosy person, who is only motivated to view or have specific sexual activities – not all of them. This is the whole nature of sex i.e. it contains multiple
activities which actually arouse the feeling of physical obsession within a person. Therefore, it is very difficult to generalize that in what stage of their behavioral responses, sexual addicts prefer or deny to have (or view) a specific type of sexual content (Young, 2000; Griffiths, 2000).

**Disparity in Designation**

Online Sexual Behavior (OSB) is referred to in many ways among the various researchers. Bingham and Piotrowski (1996) published one of the first studies that recognized internet sexual activity as addictive. In the earliest literature, OSB is referred to as ‘cybersex addiction’, a sub-set of internet addiction (Young 1996). *The Journal of Sex Education and Therapy* dedicated a special edition to internet sex and relationships. Putnam (1997) established an online support group and education center that hosted the Online Sexual Addiction-Questionnaire (O.S.A.-Q) for online self-assessment of “online sexual addiction” (Griffin-Shelley, 2003). Goodman (2001) suggested that of all of the different names being used to describe general addiction; Sexual Compulsivity; sexual impulsivity, and sexual addiction, that sexual addiction was the most appropriate. Goodman was not examining the online component of sexual addiction (2001). At the request of this research project director and the Executive Director of SASH, the name “online sexual behavior” was chosen for its non-stigmatizing nature, and will be used in this paper. The gamut of nomenclatures and specificities used to describe OSB are demonstrated by examining just a few of the names used to describe OSB.

The discrepancies in nomenclature of OSB are the central rationale for the proposed research. The logical structure of the research is based upon the respondents’
choice of self-identification as persons with a sexual addiction or persons who believe they may be sexual addicts. If the academic research is unable to uniformly label the concept of addiction to online sexual endeavors, how are those affected expected to know how to identify their affliction? This concept gave way to the research question: Is there a difference between the OSB of those who self-identify as sexual addicts as compared to those who believe they might actually be sexually addicted? The following section will summarize the research which influenced the direction of the project.

Putnam’s (2000) article titled “Initiation and Maintenance of Online Sexual Compulsivity: Implications for Assessment and Treatment” provided the greatest influence to the direction of the research project. Putnam examines factors that contribute to the initiation of compulsive online sexual behavior, especially the “Triple ‘A’ Engine” (Cooper, et al., 1999) of affordability, accessibility, and anonymity. Putnam (2000) further describes assessment of OSB through the use of the Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire (OSA-Q), a heuristic (best guess) tool with categories analogous to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV-TR) criteria for substance dependence, Impulse Control Disorders, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. These categories are: life interference; social withdrawal, obsessive-compulsive behavior, tolerance/withdrawal, emotional distress, and destructive impairment. These categories of behavior will provide the basis of the proposed analysis, and comprise a smaller subset of the data collected. Several other instruments associated with sexuality, although not necessarily online sexual behavior, were utilized to construct the instrument. The demographic section of the instrument was supplied by Dr. David Delmonico of
Duquesne University. The demographic segment was a replication taken from the National Council on Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity (NCSAC) membership survey (Delmonico, 2003). The Internet Sex Screening is the other important instrument also provided by Delmonico (2004). Although none of the aforementioned instruments had been tested for validity and reliability, they were useful in constructing an instrument meets the needs of the Executive Director of SASH (the non-profit organization that funded the research conducted).

Griffiths described several studies that examined internet sex addiction (2001). The Cybersexual Addiction Test, The Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire, Men’s Sexual Addiction Screening Test, Women’s Sexual Addiction Screening Test, Sexaholics Anonymous Test, and Sex Addicts Anonymous were reviewed, but none offered a psychometrically sound method to assess online sexual behavior. Like Griffiths, this author was also unable to find instruments or tools which have been psychometrically researched (2001). Cooper (et al) conducted a study of male online sexual activity (2001). Through their study they identified a small subgroup of men who self-identified as having online sexual problems as a result of their online sexual behavior (2001). Cooper (et al) examined a range of variables based on self-reported demographic characteristics (i.e. association of relationship status to online sexual problems, time spent online for sexual activities, internet addiction, online sexual activities, and negative consequences of online sexual activities) (2001). Although the findings have not been empirically tested, the results do suggest that more research needs to be done in the areas of use, abuse, and addiction to online sexual materials (2001).
Further, Griffiths (2004) published a follow-up to the previous article about sex addiction on the internet. In his expository article, Griffiths examined the concepts of sexual addiction (non-computer related) and whether or not it is an actual addiction. Griffiths also examined the concepts of internet addiction, use of the internet for sexual purposes, arguing that the internet is not the source of the addiction, but merely a tool for fueling other addictions (2001). Along with the other authors mentioned thus far, Griffiths indicates that questionnaires about online sexual behavior are self-assessment tools that have yet to be researched for their psychometric qualities (2001). Griffiths (2001) also suggests that most of the tools for said assessments are rooted with questions that relate to psychometric properties (e.g., life interference, emotional distress, obsessive-compulsive behavior, tolerance and withdrawal, destructive impairment). Also, Griffiths noted that these psychometric categories are not mutually exclusive (2001).

Griffiths eloquently described the current state of internet sex addiction research:

If Internet sex addiction is to become a viable term, there must be scientific evidence to support it, clarification of the criteria accepted by all, and quantification of its occurrence. This has yet to occur although there are encouraging steps in the right direction. The field is still in conceptual crisis because some researchers amalgamate similar categories of sex addiction, whereas others divide and sub-categorize them. At present the question of whether Internet sex addiction is fundamentally different from other more traditional forms of sex addiction cannot be answered until the existence of more empirical research evidence. However, it does appear to be the case that Internet sex is a new medium of expression which may increase participation because of the perceived anonymity and disinhibition factors. (p. 209)

**Gender based Variations among Sex Addicts**
Sexual addiction is often associated with the gender of the addict. If so, female sexual addicts may behave differently in terms of sexual addiction and activities, when compared to male sexual addicts. Similarly, this addiction also varies when a sexual addict is a homosexual. This is not the issue to be considered within the given scope of this section, which only deals to verify and identify the variation of sexual addiction on the basis of gender differences.

1. Males:

According to Young (2008) gender influences the degree of sexual addiction. Further, if the case is associated with internet based sexual addiction (which is closely related to this study) then there are a whole lot of different sexual fantasies, associations, and fascinations of each gender group. For instance, according to Young (2008) men are more inclined towards spending sexual time on internet based websites. As this study has discussed, this activity uses the label ‘Cybersex’ or ‘online pornography’. In this activity, men find more pleasure in social interactions based on sexual and taboo communication. For instance, there are multiple chat rooms and social interaction websites, where men seek women (also referred as cyber sluts) to talk with them on their physical features, and other sexual stuff. More than this, it is the high frequency of men who are regular visitors to pornographic websites, which offer sexual video clippings, photo galleries, animated porn clips, and pornographic games (Young, 2008).

A larger number of men (than women) regularly seek to have cam-based Cybersex (which is usually offered against little payments) with women belonging to different parts of the world. These activities and evidences suggest that the area of
Cybersex is usually operated and commanded with the deep influence of male sex addiction. In general opinion and observation, it is a usual finding that almost 99% of porn websites and chat room contain nude figures, posters, and video clippings of women, which show that their target audience is of the opposite gender – men. However, according to Young (2008) this addiction is only associated with online activities of men, since in their normal life and family life, they do not demonstrate otherwise similar behavior. Further, it is also an observation that most of the sexual addict males demonstrate their open and ‘wild’ sexual addiction behavior online only (if they are married), and do not treat their wives or girlfriends with such addiction and wilderness (Young, 2008).

2. **Females:**

Addiction behavior in females is quite different than their counterparts and these women somehow associate it with their anonymous presence on internet. According to current statistics, some 28% of online sexual addicts are females, of different races, categories and professions. Furthermore, these females are married and non-married, and they spend time on internet pleasing their sexually addictive nature.

According to Carnes (2006), female addiction to online and offline sexual activities opened a new dimension to research, since it was widely believed by psychologists that sexual addiction is only associated with men. This addiction, according to Young (2008) is the result of greater freedom most of the women enjoy while being online, since in the real world, their activities are being watched carefully, and they are subjected of many social limitations which are not associated with males.
Furthermore, another reason behind demonstration of online sexual behavior from women is their anonymity. For instance, when a woman encounters with a man on internet with an intention of engaging in cybersex, they feel a sense of security in knowing that their counterpart is not able to see how they look and how they sound (unless, of course, there is live interaction). This is an aspect of female conversations in real-world scenarios, where women place higher value on physical appearance. Women are mostly involved in chat-room and pornographic video/cam based sexual activities at higher frequencies (of course lower than that of men). Further, their activities are much of private nature, which range from seeking sexual advises to learning the art of attracting men by the utilization of their looks and figures (Carnes, 2006; Young, 2008).

Another facet of the research on sexual addictions, associated with female sexual addiction behaviors, is observed by Carnes (2006) most of the cybersexually addicted women are motivated to be involve in such activities due to their instinctive search for the perfect mate. This is totally in opposition to the behavior of their counterparts, who perform such activities for short-term sexual gratification. Furthermore, sex-addict females also develop certain psychological and biological deficiencies, but can be studied under a mutually inclusive domain of this subject. The way and ratio in which women involve in online sexual activities to satisfy their addiction is completely different in terms of scientific and statistical evidences, when compared to that of men.

**Summary**

Many authors attempted to research the use of the internet to gratify sexual impulses. A unified designation or nomenclature have not yet reached an agreement on a
psychometrically grounded set of variables has not yet been tested, and the rate of occurrence has not yet been accurately measured. Problematic online sexual behavior is troublesome for some, but the extent, effects, and ramifications of the issue are still being researched. There are some observations, which have been made in the past by eminent researchers and scholars; which identify that this behavior is a form of activity, which gradually transforms into addiction, if not dealt by the self. This process observes multiple, mutually exclusive stages of behavioral responses, which an addict or to-be-addicted person reflect during such activity. Another aspect of this behavior is; it is not associated with any one gender, but is found in both (along with their sub-categories). However, through trend analysis, it has been observed that males are most likely to suffer from a cybersexual addiction. The upcoming chapters will attempt to explain the results of the study, and will explain their comparisons to the collected secondary data. Finally, this presentation of results and its subsequent analysis will examine the hypothetical assumptions made in the first chapter of this study.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter presents the procedure by which data has been collected. The chapter begins by outlining specific research questions adapted by this study, and elaborates the research design and instruments employed during the data collection process. The chapter also details the data collection process, its analysis, limitations, and reliability and validity. In the end, it demonstrates how this study also employed the secondary research process to gather the subjective data for the analysis of primary research data, and concludes every detail within the last section of summary. This chapter also delineates how data was collected by the researcher in order to meet specific study objectives.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1) Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the OSA-Q total score?

2) Is there a significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q?

3) Is there a significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q?
4) Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of obsessive/compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q?

5) Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of tolerance/withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q?

6) Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q?

7) Is there a significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the measure of destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q?

8) Is there a significant effect of gender on the total score of the OSA-Q?

9) Is there a significant effect of gender on the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q?

10) Is there a significant effect of gender on the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q?

11) Is there a significant effect of gender on the obsessive compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q?

12) Is there a significant effect of gender on the tolerance withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q?

13) Is there a significant effect of gender on the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q?
14) Is there a significant effect of gender on the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q?

**Research Design**

The study is a quasi-experimental design using nonequivalent groups. The design will measure differences in responses regarding online sexual behaviors among two groups: Group A- respondents (who self-identified themselves as sexual addicts) and Group B- respondents question if they are sexual addicts. The research project will utilize data drawn from a subset of how respondents answered question 15 (Appendix C) regarding sexual addiction (self-definition as a sexual addict or wondering if one is a sexual addict) as the independent variable. For the purpose of this study, answers to questions drawn from the Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire (OSA-Q) (Putnam, 2000) will serve as the dependent variables (life interference, social withdrawal, obsessive/compulsive behavior, tolerance/withdrawal, emotional distress, and destructive impairment).

**Instrument**

The instrument was constructed with feedback from Robin Cato, Executive Director of SASH (Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health) and the research supervisor, Dr. David Delmonico of Duquesne University. The instrument has 21 questions regarding demographic information, and 25 questions about the online sexual behaviors of the respondents. The demographic section posed questions regarding: gender, date of birth, relationship status, race/ethnicity, religion, education, sexual
orientation, income, state/country of residence, definition of sexual addiction, sexual addict self-diagnosis, reason for visiting website, past treatment of depression, location to log onto internet for sexual interest, medium for pursuing online sexual interests, time spent pursuing sexual interest, life problems related to sexual pursuits and ramifications of sexual pursuits. The 25 questions regarding online sexual behavior were separated into six categories. Twenty three of the questions were yes/no, one question of multiple choice, and one question divided into three parts with each part having a range of scores from one to five (1- Not at all; 2- not very; 3- no opinion; 4- somewhat; and 5- extremely). The instrument’s design was influenced by Putnam’s Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire (OSA-Q) (2000), the Internet Sex Screening Test (ISST) (Carnes, Delmonico, & Griffin, 2001) and the Cybersexual Addiction Quiz (Young, 1998). While these instruments provided the primary structure for the majority of the survey, the final instrument’s design was driven by feedback from the Executive Director of SASH.

Research Population

The sample size was based upon the respondents who visited the SASH webpage and clicked on a hyperlink that redirected their web browser to the first informed consent of the survey. The investigator received 3,606 responses. All respondents were separated into two nonequivalent groups based on their answer to the question about the status of their sexual addiction. Once the data set was filtered for attrition and their responses to the question about sexual addiction, the sample used in analysis was N=1121. The participants were selected due to their visitation on the SASH website which is an internet site on sexual health. The participants in the study
volunteered and were provided with an informed consent explaining their involvement, confidentiality and options to withdraw from the study. The informed consent form required affirmation of the respondents’ age (at least 18 years old). The informed consent had the investigators contact information for questions and results of the inventory. Respondents included users from six continents, despite that the survey was only available in English.

**Data Collection**

All responses were anonymous and confidential, since the survey was made available to any visitor of the SASH website, provided respondents verified that they are at or beyond the age of consent. The SASH webpage (www.sash.net) was “advertised” on the internet through the use of search engine optimization techniques. It employed metatagging technique for inserting the keywords used to find webpages through search engines. Consequently, this is the method by which people seeking information about sexual addiction are able find the SASH homepage. From February 7, 2006, until February 6, 2007, a link was placed on the SASH homepage that asked visitors of the website to respond to a survey about their online sexual behavior. A grand total of 3,606 people responded to the survey. The data collected were hosted and stored on a third party host www.surveymonkey.com. The host website prevents duplicate or multiple responses by allowing only one response per IP address (an individual computer’s internet address). Although this would not prevent those with dynamic IP addresses, or those with the ability to reset their IP address from returning and answering more than one survey, it does provide an initial filter against those confounding factors. This
vulnerability will be discussed in the Limitations Section. After a one year period, the link to the survey was removed from the website and data collection terminated.

Analysis

The procedure for data analysis will first require data format conversion. The data set is currently in .xls format (Microsoft Excel spreadsheet), which can be imported into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for data analysis. The next step will be to separate the data into two groups; those who are sexual addict, and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts. The study asks the research question: Is there a difference between the scores of those who self-identify as sexual addicts seeking treatment, and those who self-identify as sexual addicts wondering if they have a sexual addiction? The difference will be determined by comparing the scores from these two groups based on their responses to questions about six psychometric dimensions (e.g. life interference, emotional distress, obsessive compulsive behaviors, tolerance/withdrawal, destructive impairment, and social distress). The analytical comparison will entail seven T-tests for independent samples. This method was chosen because the comparison of the cumulative scores and the six variables is between groups who have only been tested once. Further, this analytical analysis will be accompanied by a detailed and thorough literary analysis, which will definitely transform and connect the statistical findings with assertions and suggestions of multiple scholars and researchers, who worked extensively in this and other closely associated domains of subject.

Limitations
There are several limitations associated with this study. External validity is the concept of generalization of the results to the populous. In regard to this survey, some of the limitations noted concerns with underestimation in self-monitoring, fear of stigmatization, and the co-morbidity of other addictions and compulsions. The responses cannot be said to represent any particular group other than computer users who have found the www.sash.net homepage. The responses do, however, represent a group of people who either believe they have a sexual addiction, or wonder if they are sexual addicts. The Halo Effect threatens external validity, as some respondents may answer questions in a manner they believe would satisfy the researcher. Attrition is another threat to internal validity, but easily controlled by omitting any uncompleted survey. Other surveys to be omitted are those in which individuals who purported the survey was about someone else, or that the questionnaire did not apply to them. The use of www.surveymonkey.com in data collection was yet another limitation. In the survey construction phase, the nature of the user-interface limits the methods by which one enters a question. The user-interface may result in the awkward wording of some items causing confusion.

Reliability

The collected primary data for this study (through close-optioned online surveys) meets the reliability criteria, in a sense that third party surveyor (i.e. Survey Monkey) along with the host website remained totally neutral in the collection process of data, and manipulation of figures is not done at the back-end. Furthermore, Survey Monkey has integrated a specific algorithm in its powered surveys that a single person from a single
internet address cannot participate in the survey more than once – a feature that adds another cornerstone to the reliability of collected data. Finally, the online instrument (which was employed) has certain scripts running at its back-end, which tend to deactivate the survey process (i.e. automatically expire the session) when it remains idle for a specific period of time. Along with these measures and techniques, it was made sure that collected data was reliable.

Validity

Since the interface of survey was electronic (i.e. online) therefore, there is always a chance that the survey is being answered by automatic responses, scripts, and survey filling bots, operated by other third parties for specific reasons. However, the survey monkey is a globally known surveying service, which is preferred by many due to its strong interface, which detects and stores the pattern of automatic surveying bots; and thus, protects its hosted surveys from getting non-valid. Furthermore, the survey was not open to everyone, since it had a link in it which required the voluntary participation from participants. Until that link was not clicked, survey process could not begin, therefore, it is highly unlikely that it could be filled automatically through some script or a third-party bot.

This study also employed extensive literary research (also known as secondary research) to collect the results and assertions from similar researches conducted by previous scholars and researchers. This secondary research was conducted with the help of online libraries and research journals, which contained multiple articles and research
papers. Furthermore, different results of other statistical surveys are included, and are used in the analysis and discussion.

Summary

This chapter presented methods used to investigate the research question: Is there a difference between the online sexual behavior (OSB) scores of those who self-identify as sexual addicts, and those wondering if they are sexually addicted? This chapter also included the criteria necessary for survey response (i.e. Locate the www.sash.net homepage, follow the link to the survey, agree to voluntary informed consents). The research design included the proposed methods for statistical analysis (T-tests), and also, presents a discussion of the threats to internal and external validity of the research procedures. Further, it employed a quasi-experimental approach of collecting data through an online survey. Its validity and reliability are assured, if certain online limitations are excluded from the scope of this method. Finally, this study also adapted to some extent the collection of secondary and subjective data from multiple verifiable resources.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not a difference exists between those who self-identified as sexual addicts compared to those who were wondering if they were sexual addicts on the measures of life interference, social withdrawal, obsessive compulsive, tolerance/withdrawal, emotional distress, and destructive impairment. This chapter reports the results of the statistical analysis of the data collected. Within this chapter the 14 hypotheses concerning online sexual addiction are restated and statistical results are presented. The results of the analysis are stated in both narrative form and in tables. The conclusions from the aforementioned hypotheses are provided and a summary is presented.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were developed to explore whether or not a significant difference exists between those who self-identified as sexual addicts and those who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Gender was also examined to determine is there was a difference between males and females when measured on the OSA-Q. The self-identified sexual addict group had uniformly higher scores than those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on each of the first seven hypotheses. The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

Hypothesis 1
There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts, on the measure of the OSB total score.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant interaction between self-identified sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on the OSA-Q total score. The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant interaction between those who self-identify as sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on the total online sexual behavior score, $t(1120) = 16.1, p < .001$, with self-identified sexual addicts ($M = 25.24$) reporting higher scores than those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts ($M = 19.76$). Results indicated a significant interaction, with those who self-identified as sexual addicts scoring higher than those who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant interaction between the life interference scores of sexual addicts seeking treatment and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant interaction between those who self-identify as sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual
addicts on the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q, $t(1120) = 13.54, p < .001$ with self-identified sexual addicts ($M = 9.17$) reporting higher scores than those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts ($M = 6.85$). Results indicated a significant interaction, with those who self-identified as sexual addicts scoring significantly higher than those who were wondering if they are sexual addicts, therefore Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant difference between those who self-identify as sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q, $t(1120) = 14.3, p < .001$ with self-identified sexual addicts ($M = 5.25$) reporting higher scores than those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts ($M = 3.98$). Results indicated a significant interaction, with those who self-identified as sexual addicts scoring higher than those who were wondering if they are sexual addicts, and therefore Hypothesis 3 is rejected.
**Hypothesis 4**

There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the obsessive/compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the obsessive/compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q. The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant interaction between those who self-identify as sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on the obsessive/compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q, $t(1120) = 14.19, p < .001$ with self-identified sexual addicts ($M = 5.68$) reporting higher scores than those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts ($M = 4.3$). Results indicated a significant interaction with those who self-identified as sexual addicts scoring higher than those who were wondering if they are sexual addicts, therefore Hypothesis 4 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 5**

There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the tolerance/withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the tolerance/withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.
The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant interaction between those who self-identify as sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on the tolerance/withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q, $t(1120) = 14.79$, $p < .001$ with self-identified sexual addicts ($M = 6.24$) reporting higher scores than those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts ($M = 4.78$). Results indicated a significant interaction, with those who self-identified as sexual addicts scoring uniformly higher than those who were wondering if they are sexual addicts, therefore Hypothesis 5 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 6**

There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant interaction between those who self-identify as sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q, $t(1120) = 13.19$, $p < .001$ with self-identified sexual addicts ($M = 5.57$) reporting higher scores than those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts ($M = 4.12$). Results indicated a significant interaction, with those who self-identified as sexual addicts scoring uniformly higher than those who were wondering if they are sexual addicts, therefore Hypothesis 6 is rejected.
**Hypothesis 7**

There is no significant difference between self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the self-identified sexual addicts and those wondering if they are sexual addicts on the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant interaction between those who self-identify as sexual addicts and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts on the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q, $t(1120) = 17.11, p < .001$ with self-identified sexual addicts ($M = 9.26$) reporting higher scores than those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts ($M = 7.36$). Results indicated a significant interaction, with those who self-identified as sexual addicts scoring uniformly higher than those who were wondering if they are sexual addicts, therefore Hypothesis 7 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 8**

There is no significant effect of gender on the total score of the OSA-Q.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender on the total score of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant effect for gender on the total score of the OSA-Q, $t(1115) = 11.54, p < .001$ with males ($M = 48.6$) reporting
higher scores than females \((M = 27.8)\). Results indicated there is a significant interaction, therefore Hypothesis 8 is rejected.

Due to finding significant effects for hypotheses 8, post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni Correction in order to attempt to determine between which groups the differences exist. (see table 4.1) The results indicated three significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts \((t=8.57, p=.002)\); the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts \((t=3.92, p=.003)\); and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison the to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts \((t=5.20, p=.006)\).

Table 4.1 OSB Total Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>T Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>SA - Females</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA - Males</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering – F</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering – M</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the 0.05 alpha level

Hypothesis 9
There is no significant effect of gender on the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender on the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicated that there is a significant effect for gender on the life interference subscale of the OSA-Q, $t(1115) = 11.55, p < .001$ with males ($M = 19.76$) reporting higher life interference scores than females ($M = 11.19$). Results indicated there is a significant interaction with males scoring higher than females, therefore Hypothesis 9 is rejected.

Due to finding significant effects for hypotheses 9, post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni Correction in order to attempt to determine between which groups the differences exist. (see table 4.2) The results indicated four significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts ($t=2.35, p=.000$); the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts ($t=1.81, p=.002$); the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts ($t=3.47, p=.005$); and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts in comparison to the females who were wondering if they were sexual addicts ($t=2.77, p=.011$).

Table 4.2 OSB Life Interference Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>T Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

45
Hypothesis 10

There is no significant effect of gender on the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender on the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant effect for genders on the social withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q, $t(1115) = 9.45, p < .001$ with males ($M = 9.88$) reporting higher social withdrawal scores than females ($M = 5.96$). Results indicated there is a significant interaction, therefore Hypothesis 10 is rejected.

Due to finding significant effects for hypotheses 10, post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni Correction in order to attempt to determine between which groups the differences exist. (see table 4.3) The results indicated three significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA – Males</th>
<th>SA - Females</th>
<th>2.35</th>
<th>.000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<td>SA - Males</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>.698</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering – F</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering – M</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the 0.05 alpha level
sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts (t=2.49, p=.002); the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts (t=1.79, p=.004); and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison the to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts (t=3.25, p=.005).

Table 4.3 OSB Social Withdrawal Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>T Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>SA - Females</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA - Males</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>.298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering – F</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering – M</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the 0.05 alpha level

**Hypothesis 11**

There is no significant effect of gender on the obsessive compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q.
A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender on the obsessive compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant effect for gender on the obsessive compulsive subscale of the OSA-Q, \( t(1115) = 9.57, p < .001 \) with males \((M = 10.25)\) reporting higher obsessive compulsive scores than females \((M = 5.8)\). Results indicated there is a significant interaction, therefore Hypothesis 11 is rejected.

Due to finding significant effects for hypotheses 11, post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni Correction in order to attempt to determine between which groups the differences exist. (see table 4.4) The results indicated two significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts \((t=1.99, p=.007)\); and the males who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison to the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts \((t=.085, p=.008)\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>T Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>SA - Females</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA - Males</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.265</td>
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<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.019</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering – F</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering – M</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 12

There is no significant effect of gender on the tolerance withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender on the tolerance withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant effect for gender on the tolerance withdrawal subscale of the OSA-Q, \( t(1115) = 10.92, p < .001 \) with males (\( M = 11.96 \)) reporting higher tolerance withdrawal scores than females (\( M = 6.75 \)). Results indicated there is a significant interaction, therefore Hypothesis 12 is rejected.

Due to finding significant effects for hypotheses 12, post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni Correction in order to attempt to determine between which groups the differences exist. (see table 4.5) The results indicated four significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts (\( t=3.98, p=.008 \)); the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts (\( t=3.62, p=.009 \)); the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison the to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts (\( t=3.01, p=.002 \)); and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts in comparison to the females who were wondering if they were sexual addicts (\( t=1.77, p=.010 \)).
Table 4.5 OSB Tolerance Withdrawal Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>T Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>SA - Females</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
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<td>.009</td>
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<td>SA - Males</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.488</td>
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<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering – F</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering – M</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the 0.05 alpha level

**Hypothesis 13**

There is no significant effect of gender on the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender on the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant effect for gender on the emotional distress subscale of the OSA-Q, \( t(1115) = 13.39, p < .001 \) with males (\( M = 11.91 \)) reporting higher emotional distress scores than females (\( M = 5.87 \)). Results indicated there is a significant interaction, therefore Hypothesis 13 is rejected.
Due to finding significant effects for hypotheses 13, post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni Correction in order to attempt to determine between which groups the differences exist. (see table 4.5) The results indicated two significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts ($t=2.22, p=.002$); and the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts ($t=1.99, p=.007$).

**Table 4.6 OSB Emotional Distress Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>T Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>SA - Females</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA - Males</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.375</td>
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<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
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<td>.019</td>
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<td>Wondering – F</td>
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<td>.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering – M</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the 0.05 alpha level

**Hypothesis 14**

There is no significant effect of gender on the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q
A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender on the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q.

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant effect for gender on the destructive impairment subscale of the OSA-Q, \( t(1115) = 10.85, p < .001 \) with males \( (M = 16.63) \) reporting higher destructive impairment scores than females \( (M = 9.70) \). Results indicated there is a significant interaction, therefore Hypothesis 14 is rejected.

Due to finding significant effects for hypotheses 14, post hoc tests were conducted using the Bonferroni Correction in order to attempt to determine between which groups the differences exist. (see table 4.7) The results indicated four significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts \( (t=2.79, p=.008) \); the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts \( (t=3.62, p=.004) \); the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison the to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts \( (t=1.79, p=.011) \); and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts in comparison to the females who were wondering if they were sexual addicts \( (t=2.55, p=.010) \).

Table 4.7 OSB Life Interference Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>T Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>SA - Females</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.008</td>
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<td>SA – Males</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.004</td>
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<td>SA - Males</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>.498</td>
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<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering - M</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA – Females</td>
<td>Wondering – F</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering – M</td>
<td>Wondering - F</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the 0.05 alpha level

**Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to report the findings from the online administration of the OSA-Q. The hypotheses concern the interactions between self-identified sexual addicts, those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts. Additionally, the variables were also analyzed based upon gender. The hypotheses were restated and examined using the existing data set. The results indicated all null hypotheses were rejected; finding significant interactions between those who self-identify as sexual addicts, and those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts. Significant differences were also found between males and females. The importance of these findings will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Discussion of the Results

This study reviewed and analyzed data collected from a 65-item questionnaire about problematic online sexual behaviors. The online administration of the questionnaire was available for one calendar year on the Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH.org) website. For the purpose of this study, data analysis utilized the responses to the OSA-Q (Online Sexual Addiction – Questionnaire). The OSA-Q is separated into six non-mutually exclusive categories; life interference, social withdrawal, obsessive/compulsive, tolerance/withdrawal, emotional distress, and destructive impairment, and a total cumulative score. Scores for the seven categories were compared based on two variables; self-identified sexual addicts compared to those who wonder if they have a sexual addiction and gender (male and female). The results of the analysis are reported in the following section.

With all survey research that has a sample size larger than (n=500), one must mention effect size. The larger the sample, the higher the likelihood the results might not be a result of the survey responses, but rather due to the effect size. Since this survey utilized a sample of (n=1117), it warrants mentioning that the results could simply be exaggerated due to the large sample. In this example, there would not need to be much of a difference in order for it to appear that there is a large difference, exaggerated by the large sample size.

There is also a higher likelihood of Type II (beta) errors. It is possible that the null hypotheses were accurate, but still got rejected. The study used a .05 significance
level for all calculations, and therefore there is a 5% chance that the null hypotheses were erroneously rejected.

The OSB Total Score of online sexual behavior questionnaire is defined as it is the sum of the answers to all of the questions in the survey, the summed total of the subscale scores. The data analyzed for OSB total scores found a significant difference between the scores of those who self-identified as sexual addicts and those who were merely wondering if they had a sexual addiction, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the comparison indicated that those who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher total OSB scores. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the comparison indicated that those who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher total OSB scores. The higher total cumulative scores of the group who self identified as sexual addicts could have been due to the increased awareness of those who accepted the label, and thereby, achieved a greater awareness of their behaviors and the impact of those behaviors upon their lives.

The first subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire is life interference. Life interference is defined as marked adverse consequences on personal relationships. The data analyzed for life interference found a significant difference between the scores of those who self-identified as sexual addicts and those who were merely wondering if they had a sexual addiction, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the comparison indicated that those who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher scores in the category of life interference.

The second subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire is social withdrawal. Social withdrawal is defined as reduction or cessation of social activities in order to
appropriate more time for online sexual behavior. The data analyzed for social withdrawal found a significant difference between the scores of those who self-identified as sexual addicts and those who were merely wondering if they had a sexual addiction, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the comparison indicated that those who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher scores in the category of life interference.

The third subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire is obsessive/compulsive behavior. The obsessive/compulsive scale is defined as a preoccupation with online sexuality and thoughts of returning to pursue more sexual behaviors. The data analyzed for obsessive/compulsive found a significant difference between the scores of those who self-identified as sexual addicts and those who were merely wondering if they had a sexual addiction, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the comparison indicated that those who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher scores in the category of obsessive/compulsive.

The fourth subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire is tolerance/withdrawal. The tolerance scale is defined as increasing amounts of internet sex are required to achieve the same effects. Tolerance/Withdrawal is defined as unpleasant feeling states which occur when internet sex is suddenly discontinued, interrupted, or reduced. The data analyzed for tolerance/withdrawal found a significant difference between the scores of those who self-identified as sexual addicts and those who were merely wondering if they had a sexual addiction, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the statistical comparison indicated that those who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher scores in the category of
tolerance/withdrawal than those who were merely wondering if they have a sexual addiction.

The fifth subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire is emotional distress. The emotional distress scale is defined as personal suffering resulting from the use of internet sex. The data analyzed for emotional distress found a significant difference between the scores of those who self-identified as sexual addicts and those who were merely wondering if they had a sexual addiction, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the comparison indicated that those who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher scores in the category of emotional distress.

The sixth subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire is destructive impairment. The destructive impairment scale is defined as severe consequences due to sexual behavior and the inability to stop despite these adverse consequences. The data analyzed for destructive impairment found a significant difference between the scores of those who self-identified as sexual addicts and those who were merely wondering if they had a sexual addiction, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The results of the comparison indicated that those who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher scores in the category of destructive impairment.

Upon analysis of the survey, it was apparent that the sample was comprised primarily of males (79% of males completed the survey, while only 20% of females completed the survey) (N=1117, 882 males, 235 females). This result is quite revealing, since, according to Young (2008), men show more cyber-sexual inclination in comparison to women. Furthermore, men are more addicted to internet and communication activities online, as compared to women. One possible reason for this
phenomenon is the early centralization of the online pornography industry, which specifically targeted men. Although, the case is different in today’s scenario, therefore, it can be assumed that most of the cyber-sexual activities still remain largely associated with males. Although the responses of transgender (N=7) individuals was not statistically significant, it is noteworthy to mention that their OSA-Q total scores were nearly double the mean male scores. Not only does this suggest an avenue for future research endeavors, but it indicates that perhaps transgender individuals are struggling with online sexual addiction.

The dependent variables were also analyzed based upon gender. In the first analysis based upon gender, the OSB cumulative score of online sexual behavior questionnaire was examined. The OSB cumulative score of the online sexual behavior questionnaire is defined as it is the sum of the answers to all of the questions in the survey, the summed total of the subscale scores. The data analyzed for OSB total scores found a significant interaction between the scores of males and females.

Secondarily, a Bonferroni correction was conducted to determine if a difference between the groups exists, or is a product of sampling error. The Bonferroni analysis found three significant interaction effects within the comparisons of the OSB cumulative total scores; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts; the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts; and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison the to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Within these groups, there is s
significant difference between males and females. Based upon these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The first subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire to be compared based upon gender is life interference. Life interference is defined as marked adverse consequences on personal relationships. The data analyzed for life interference found a significant difference between the scores males and females. The results of the comparison indicated that males had higher scores on the category of life interference. Further T-tests and a Bonferroni correction analysis was conducted to determine if a difference between the groups exists, or is a product of sampling error. The Bonferroni analysis found a significant difference between the life interference scores of three significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts was found; the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addict was found; and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison the to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Within these groups, there is a significant difference between males and females. Based upon these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The second subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire to be compared based upon gender is social withdrawal. Social withdrawal is defined as reduction or cessation of social activities in order to appropriate more time for online sexual behavior. A Bonferroni correction was then conducted to determine if a difference between the genders exists, or is a product of sampling error. The data analyzed for social withdrawal found three significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who
self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts; the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts; and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Within these groups, there is a significant difference between males and females. Based upon these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The third subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire to be compared based upon gender is obsessive/compulsive behavior. The obsessive/compulsive scale is defined as preoccupation with online sexuality and thoughts of returning to pursue more sexual behaviors. The data analyzed for obsessive/compulsive behavior found a significant interaction between the scores males and females. The results of the comparison indicated that males had higher scores in the category of obsessive/compulsive behavior. A Bonferroni correction was then conducted to determine if a difference between the genders exists, or is a product of sampling error. The Bonferroni analysis found a significant difference between two significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts; and the males who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison to the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Within these groups, there is a significant difference between males and females. Based upon these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The fourth subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire to be compared based upon gender is tolerance/withdrawal. Tolerance/Withdrawal is defined as unpleasant feeling states which occur when internet sex is suddenly discontinued, interrupted, or
reduced. The data analyzed for tolerance/withdrawal behavior found a significant interaction between the scores males and females. The results of the comparison indicated that males had higher scores in the category of obsessive/compulsive behavior. A Bonferroni correction was then conducted to determine if a difference between the genders exists, or is a product of sampling error. The Bonferroni analysis found a significant difference between the tolerance/withdrawal behavior scores of males and the tolerance/withdrawal of the females, with four significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts; the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts; the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts; and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts in comparison to the females who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Within these groups, there is a significant difference between males and females. Based upon these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The fifth subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire to be compared based upon gender is emotional distress. The emotional distress scale is defined as personal suffering resulting from the use of internet sex. The data analyzed for emotional distress behavior found a significant interaction between the scores males and females. The results of the comparison indicated that males had higher scores in the category of emotional distress. A Bonferroni Post Hoc Analysis was then conducted to determine if a difference between the genders exists, or is a product of sampling error. The Bonferroni analysis found a significant difference between the emotional distress scores of males and
the emotional distress scores of the females, with two significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts; and a significant difference between the scores of the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Within these groups, there is a significant difference between males and females. Based upon these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The sixth subscale of online sexual behavior questionnaire to be compared based upon gender was destructive impairment. The destructive impairment scale is defined as severe consequences due to sexual behavior and the inability to stop despite these adverse consequences. The data analyzed for destructive impairment found a significant interaction between the scores males and females. The results of the comparison indicated that males had higher scores in the category of destructive impairment.

A Bonferroni correction was then conducted to determine if a difference between the genders exists, or is a product of sampling error. The Bonferroni analysis found a significant difference between the destructive impairment scores of males and the destructive impairment scores of the females, with four significant interaction effects; a significant difference between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the females who self-identified as sexual addicts; the males who self-identified as sexual addicts and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts; the females who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison the to males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts; and the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts in comparison to the females who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Within these
groups, there is a significant difference between males and females. Based upon these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Summary of the Results**

This chapter will address the summary and findings of this study. It will contain a discussion of the results of the study and a conclusion section will address the relationship to previous research and significance of the study. The chapter will then explain implications and limitations and will conclude with recommendations for future research.

The study examined two independent variables, sexual addicts and gender on the basis of the total cumulative scores and each of the six subscale scores of the Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire. The respondents who self-identified as sexual addicts had uniformly higher scores on both the cumulative scores and the subscale scores. Males also had uniformly higher scores on both the cumulative measure and the each of the subscales. From these results, it appears that males who self-identify as sexual addicts are experiencing the greatest effects of problematic online sexual behaviors.

The research found that 43% of participants were married, while 24% of participants were in some other kind of relationship. Furthermore, 23% of participants identified themselves as single, while 10% of them were self-identified as divorced or separated. Most of the online sexual addicts were married. In a study conducted by Fong (2006) compulsive sexual behavior is somehow associated with the married life of an individual. However, Fong (2006) did not classify any differences of behavioral responses reflected by married men and women suffering from addiction, but the
different stages (Young, 2008) and attitude variations (Griffiths, 2000) vary according to their respective environment, which is shaped by a life partner.

**Conclusion**

Based upon the discussion of the results, several conclusions may be drawn from this study. First, respondents who indicated they were sexual addicts had consistently higher scores across all subscales and their total OSB scores. Their higher scores could be due to a greater awareness of their online sexual behaviors as compared to those who wonder if they have a sexual addiction and have not yet developed full awareness of the ways in which a sexual addiction might be affecting their lives. Secondly, when the results were compared based on gender, males received uniformly higher scores than females across all subscales and their total OSB scores were also higher than females. This conclusion is supported by the assertions of Young (2008) who indicated men show more cyber-sexual inclination than women.

This researcher believes that counselors and therapists can benefit from understanding how individuals are suffering from online sexual addiction, and how to develop interventions to help clients reduce their suffering. A counselor’s job is to help clients deal with stressors and difficulties in their lives; if a client self-identifies as an online sexual addict, then a counselor can be reasonably assured that their suffering is significant, especially if they are males or trans-gendered individuals.

One possible cause for the higher scores of those who self-identified as sexual addicts is their developed awareness of how their behaviors are affecting their lives. Once the individual accepts the label and is able to apply it to themselves, the ability to
recognize how their behaviors are affecting not only their lives, but the lives of those around them, is increased. Those were merely wondering if they are sexual addicts could be labeled as a pre-contemplative stage of awareness of their behaviors. The developed awareness of the self-identified sexual addicts who were willing to accept the label, even just for the purpose of the survey, could be an indication that those who are wondering if they are sexual addicts had lower scores because they were not yet fully aware of their behaviors, let alone willing to accept the effects on themselves and those in their sphere of existence.

There are many possible interpretations of the results of the aforementioned research. This section will attempt to provide the author’s conjecture and interpretation of the results. For the first seven hypotheses, the groups were separated by self-selection as a sexual addict or a person who was wondering if they have a sexual addiction. In each of the first seven hypotheses (the OSA-Q total scores, life interference, social withdrawal, tolerance/withdrawal, emotional distress, and destructive impairment), the hypotheses were rejected because the scores of the self-identified sexual addicts were uniformly higher than the scores of those who self-identified as wondering if they might be sexual addicts. Originally the author believed that the sexual addicts would inevitably score lower than those who were wondering if they are sexual addicts. The results proved differently. It appears that as the awareness level increases, (or at least its inception), the greater the appearance of the signs and symptoms of online sexual addiction. This is perhaps a secondary effect of learning that online sexual addiction exists and causes problems for people. The author believes this is a strong endorsement for psycho-educationally
structured interventions by therapists; if a client is not aware of their addiction, they cannot be proactive in its treatment. Additionally, treatment of online sexual addiction might best be structured according to the methods utilized in cognitive-behavioral therapy. That is, by using psycho-educational techniques combined with cognitive-behavioral theoretically based therapy, a therapist could increase the client’s awareness of both the signs and symptoms of online sexual addiction, and help the client to become proactive in the treatment of the online sexual addiction.

The other seven hypotheses were based upon gender of the respondents broken down into four groups for comparison; males who self-identified as sexual addicts; females who self-identified as sexual addicts; males who are wondering if they are sexual addicts and females who were wondering if they were sexual addicts. Significant differences were found after comparing the means of the four groups. Secondarily, a Bonferroni correction was employed to attempt to reduce the sampling error and to decrease the possibility of Type II errors. Even after utilizing the corrected alpha (p=.0125), there were significant differences found between the males and females; especially in between the males who self-identified as sexual addicts in comparison to the males who were wondering if they are sexual addicts. On the OSA-Q total score and each of the six subdivisions, males who self-identified as sexual addicts had higher scores than the males who were wondering if they were sexual addicts.

The simplest rationale behind the source of the results related to gender is that men are more visually stimulated than women. The internet provides an open portal to the kind of sex one is searching for, and within fractions of a second, visual and audio stimulation can be gratified with the type of porn or sexual stimulus at the pleasure of the
user. As mentioned earlier in the paper, there is a possibility that effect size had an influence on the results of the gender hypotheses, as the survey was primarily composed of males (males n=865, females n=235). This concern should have been alleviated by utilization of the means of the two groups.

In terms of usefulness to the fields of counseling and psychology, this information is useful for therapists to know that men are more likely to be the victims of online sexual addiction than women. Additionally, it may provide useful knowledge in terms of treatment of online sexual addiction; if the majority of victims are males, then perhaps males would be an ethical choice in assigning therapists. As per the results of the analyses, the male clients who claim to be suffering from an online sexual addiction would like have high scores on the Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire (OSA-Q). They would also be likely to have the greatest need for help in the treatment of their symptoms and expressions of behavior.

While some earlier research (Griffiths, 2001) has suggested that online sexual addiction may not even exist, this author postulates that the lack of public awareness and the lack of available psycho-educational materials may be the cause. It is possible that researchers are merely at the beginning phases of understanding online sexual addiction, and as a side effect, the average person is not aware that online sexual addiction is affecting their lives. The respondents of this survey reported very high levels of interference in each of the six categories on the OSA-Q. This might be addressed in future research about online sexual addiction by surveying the therapists instead of the clients. The therapists have a third-person perspective on the source of the clients’
behaviors, and a greater awareness of online sexual addiction’s effect on individuals seeking treatment for the addiction.

In conclusion, this research has demonstrated that there is a difference between the genders when compared based on the OSA-Q, with the males scoring higher. It was further demonstrated that those who accept the identity of a sexual addict appeared to have higher scores than those who were wondering if they have a sexual addiction. This appears to be a result of the level of awareness the individual has about their online sexual behaviors and how those behaviors might be negatively affecting their lives.

**Implications and Limitations**

This study was intended to contribute to the growing body of knowledge about online sexual addiction, and to give therapists and counselors a greater understanding of the depth and magnitude of online sexual addiction and the corresponding suffering of those affected by it. Counselors and therapists will benefit from an increased understanding of online sexual addiction. The results from this study indicate that addicts are likely to suffer dysfunction in a variety of areas including emotional distress, social withdrawal, destructive impairment, tolerance/withdrawal, obsessive and compulsive thinking, and life interference. Thus, the research presented herein suggests that the clinician should adopt a broad approach to assist clients in confronting their online sexual behavior. Moreover, this research indicates that males are likely to report greater difficulty in a multitude of areas, including but not limited to, life interference, social withdrawal, and obsessive compulsive tendencies. Therefore, the counselor must be
aware of the unique needs of this particular group and to conduct therapy in a manner in which males’ needs are supported.

As with all survey research, this study has limitations despite the lengths taken to ensure a worthy segment of research. First, the OSA-Q was a heuristic (best guess) instrument developed to further understand online sexual addiction. Future research should consider utilizing a instrument with established validity and reliability. At the time of the survey construction, no such instruments were found, despite extensive literature reviews. Second, the categories of the OSA-Q were not mutually exclusive, which, in turn, mottles the results of the survey. Despite the design weaknesses and its administration, it is apparent many people suffer from online sexual addition worldwide. Although the survey was only available in English, the responses spanned five continents and thirty-seven countries. To this researcher, this is an indication that online sexual addiction is a concern as large as the internet; that is, global.

The next issue with the survey administration was attrition. A significant portion of surveys were eliminated from the analysis due to attrition (the respondents did not finish the survey). This could have been due to the length of the survey; perhaps future researchers can find or develop more concise instruments that do not lend themselves to such high levels of attrition. One possible point of conjecture is that the survey raised awareness that, in turn, caused respondents to become upset and quit. Another possibility is that some respondents were “caught” taking the survey, were embarrassed, and quickly closed the survey.

Limitations of self-report questionnaires are always concerns because the medium is self-administered. Although questionnaires are efficient means of tabulation and
analysis, the weakness of self-administration could lend itself to rapid responses and omitted items. Additionally, there is no way for respondents to ask questions if they do not understand an item. To the contrary, self-administered surveys might produce more valid results when respondents can answer in private. This is especially true when highly sensitive topics such as sexuality and addictions are addressed.

Cross-sectional sampling is another limitation of this study. Longitudinal analysis by future researchers may demonstrate variable levels of online sexual addiction. It is possible that the results of the survey were skewed due to temporal sampling related issues; perhaps respondents were searching for a simple diagnosis in a moment of suffering when they responded to the survey. Although the sheer number of respondents and their respective distribution suggests the problem is rather widespread.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research may consider focusing exclusively on transgender individuals. While their responses were omitted from the statistical analysis due to limited sample size (male to female N=5, female to male N=2), their responses were significantly higher (50% higher for female to male, 100% higher for male to female) than the male and female responses. Although a traditionally difficult group to access, and despite the weaknesses of online survey administration, online access to transgender individuals might prove an effective method of surmounting the traditional stigmas which prevent access to transgender individuals.

Two options that could be utilized to further the current research project would be analysis based upon relationship status (single, married, divorced, etc) and sexual
orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, etc.). Although data were collected on these variables, it was not utilized in the scope of this paper.

Based on the current findings, this research could be replicated with a larger sample. With a larger and more diverse population, the generalization of the findings will improve. A larger sample size may also result in obtaining greater levels of differentiation between variables.

Future research could utilize a linear approach which would follow the same respondents longitudinally. Respondents could be observed from the point where they begin to wonder if they have an online sexual addiction, to the point where they accept the label of a person struggling with an online sexual addiction and possible through treatment and resolution of the behaviors. If significant differences were found, then faculty and supervisors could develop strategies to help with successful completion of the program.

Future studies might consider exploring the area of sexuality differences and cross-cultural differences with regards to online sexual addiction. More research in this area would be beneficial to determine if homosexuals and heterosexuals or ethnically diverse cultures experience online sexual addiction differently. Due to the inability to separate the locations of the respondents, this study was not able to sort the respondents based on their reported location. If geographic location were a variable, it might be possible to conduct calculations that would reflect individual countries and multicultural respondents in order to explore differences between ethnic groups. Distinguishing how personality types correlate with online sexual addiction may help to determine which strategy is more effective for a specific type of personality.
The final research recommendation is to conduct the study in the form of online video interviews, as opposed to a survey. Given the developing state of simple, free, live, video conferencing software, it would be feasible to conduct interviews that might address the problems of attrition and misunderstood questions. This is a trend that is slowly becoming a computer standard and therefore there is a need to discover if this method of interaction is a viable method of ethno-methodological research and investigation. It is this investigators hope that this study creates more of an interest in online sexual addiction, and in turn, encourages further research.
References


Appendix A

The Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH) offers hope and valuable resources to those seeking information about sexual addiction.
Appendix B

PHASE I (instrument)

INFORMED CONSENT INFORMATION

Only individuals age 18 or over may complete the following survey, please click here to navigate away from this survey if you are under the age of 18. By continuing, you are affirming you are at least 18 years old at the time you are taking the survey.

TITLE: Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH) Survey of Demographics of Website Visitors

INVESTIGATING BODY:
SASH
P.O. Box 725544
Atlanta, GA 31139
(770) 541-9912
(770) 541-1566 fax

Duquesne University
Adam Purcell
Department of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education
School of Education
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
(412) 396-1791

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being conducted by The Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH) in conjunction with Duquesne University. All expenses are covered by SASH.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the demographic characteristics of visitors to the SASH website. This survey is conducted entirely online and data is stored in a locked and secured manner. For more information on the security of your data, you may visit the Survey monkey website (www.surveymonkey.com). This one-time survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and is the only information that will be requested from you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The risks of participating in this survey are no more than would be considered in every day life. There are no direct benefits to you; however, your participation may help shape the type of information provided on the SASH website and assist others who seek sexual health information.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name will never appear on any survey or research instrument, and you will not be asked for information that could identify you (email addresses, physical address, phone number, etc.). All responses and materials related to
this project will be stored in a secured manner in an electronic environment. Your response will only appear in statistical data summaries. No tracking software, cookies, or other spyware will be used to connect your responses to your identity in any way. The data you provide is anonymous and will be reported with everyone else’s data so there will be no way to identify your individual responses.

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW**: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time. Should you decide to withdraw your consent; any data collected up to that point will be discarded.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request. You may email sash@sash.net to request a summary of the results; however, by doing so you will be forfeiting your guarantee to anonymity since you will need to provide contact information in order to send you the summary.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT**: I have read the aforementioned statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

The return of this survey will indicate my consent to voluntarily participate in this study. I also certify that I am over the age of 18 at the time of this survey. If I have any questions regarding this research, I may contact Adam Purcell (412-396-1791) or the Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH) (770)-541-9912, or the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board Chairperson, Dr. Paul Richer at (412)396-6326.

Please affirm that you have read the above consent form and wish to continue on to the demographic survey. If you decide to stop participating during the survey, simply close your web browser and your data will not be used.

.I agree to voluntarily participate in this survey

I do not wish to participate in this survey at this time.
2005 SASH Website Visitor Survey

1. Gender:

   Male  Female  Transgender MTF  Transgender FTM

2. Date of Birth

   MM  DD  YYYYY

   Date  /  /

3. Relationship Status

   In a committed relationship
   Single
   Married
   Divorced/Separated
   Widowed/Widower

4. Race/Ethnicity

   White/Caucasian
   African American
   Asian/Pacific Islander
   Native American/Indian
   Hispanic/Latino
   Other

5. Religion

   Protestant
   Catholic
   Jewish
   Agnostic
   Atheist
   Belief in a Higher Power
   Baptist
   Methodist
   Other

6. Highest Degree Obtained

   High School diploma, GED, or less
   Associate/Technical Degree
   Bachelor’s Degree
   Master’s Degree
   Doctoral Degree (non medical)
   Medical Degree

7. Please specify the degree:
8. What year did you receive the degree?

9. The sexual orientation I most identify with is:
(Please draw a line through the scale where you would place yourself)

|_________________________________________________________|
|_________________________________________________________|

0                 1               2                 3                 4                 5                 6

10. Please indicate your occupation:
    Accounting/Finance
    Advertising/Public Relations
    Arts/Entertainment/Publishing
    Banking/Mortgage
    Clerical/Administrative
    Construction/Facilities
    Customer Service
    Education/Training
    Engineering/Architecture
    Government
    Healthcare
    Hospitality/Travel
    Human Resources
    Insurance
    Internet/New Media
    Law Enforcement/Security
    Legal
    Management Consulting
    Manufacturing/Operations
    Marketing
    Non-Profit/Volunteer
    Pharmaceutical/Biotechnologies
    Real Estate
    Restaurant/Food Service
    Retail
    Sales
    Technology
    Telecommunication
    Transportation/Logistics
    Other, please specify:

11. Annual Gross Income:
    less than $15,000
    $15,001-$35,000
    $35,001-$55,000
    $55,001-$85,000
$85,001-$100,000
$100,001+

12. State/Country in which you primarily reside:

13. I believe Sexual Addiction/Sexual Compulsivity is primarily (please choose one):
   A disease
   A compulsion
   An Impulse control disorder
   A Sexual Desire Disorder
   A lack of morals and willpower
   An Addiction
   A form of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
   Other

14. Are you a sexual addict/sexual compulsive (answer yes if you are seeking treatment for sexual addiction, currently receiving treatment of sexual addiction, or you are in recovery from sexual addiction):
   Yes  No

15. My primary reason for visiting the SASH website today is:
   I am seeking treatment for sexual addiction
   I am a medical healthcare professional
   I am a mental healthcare professional
   I am wondering if I have a sexual addiction
   I think my partner may be sexually addicted and I’m seeking treatment for him/her
   I have a family member who is/may be a sexual addict
   Seeking other information besides sexual addiction (Specify: ____)
   Other (specify)……
Appendix C

PHASE II (instrument)

INFORMED CONSENT INFORMATION

Only individuals age 18 or over may complete the following survey, please click here to navigate away from this survey if you are under the age of 18. By continuing, you are affirming you are at least 18 years old at the time you are taking the survey.

TITLE: Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH) Survey of Internet Sexual Behavior

INVESTIGATING BODY:
SASH
P.O. Box 725544
Atlanta, GA 31139
(770) 541-9912
(770) 541-1566 fax

Duquesne University
Adam Purcell
School of Education
Pittsburgh, PA  15282
(412) 396-1791

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being conducted by The Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH) in cooperation with Duquesne University. All expenses will be covered by SASH.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate reported online sexual interests and online sexual behaviors of visitors to the SASH website. This one-time survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and is the only information that will be requested from you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: One anticipated risk is that questions on the survey may bring up information about your current or past sexual behaviors that will be troublesome to you. Resources to organizations and healthcare professionals with expertise in sexual behavior are offered at the end of the survey should you feel it necessary to contact someone for more information. The completion of this survey will contribute to the understanding of sexual interests and behaviors on the Internet.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name will never appear on any survey or research instrument, and you will not be asked for information that could identify you (email addresses, physical address, phone number, etc.). All responses and materials related to
this project will be stored in a secured manner in an electronic environment. Your response will only appear in statistical data summaries. No tracking software, cookies, or other spyware will be used to connect your responses to your identity in any way. The data you provide is anonymous and will be reported with everyone else’s data so there will be no way to identify your individual responses.

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:** You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time. Should you decide to withdraw your consent; any data collected up to that point will be discarded.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS:** A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request. You may email sash@sash.net to request a summary of the results; however, by doing so you will be forfeiting your guarantee to anonymity since you will need to provide contact information in order to send you the summary.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT:** I have read the aforementioned statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

The return of this survey will indicate my consent to voluntarily participate in this study. I also certify that I am over the age of 18 at the time of this survey. If I have any questions regarding this research, I may contact Adam Purcell (412-396-1791) or the Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH) (770)-541-9912, or the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board Chairperson, Dr. Paul Richer at (412)396-5567.

Please affirm that you have read the above consent form and wish to continue on to the demographic survey. If you decide to stop participating during the survey, simply close your web browser and your data will not be used.

.I agree to voluntarily participate in this survey

I do not wish to participate in this survey at this time.
2005 SASH Internet Sexual Behavior Survey

1. What percentage of time do you spend pursuing sexual interests on the internet at the following locations?
   - Home
   - Work
   - Other

2. Please indicate the percentage of time you use each medium for pursuing on-line sexual interests (choose all that apply):
   - World Wide Web (WWW)
   - Instant Messenger Services (e.g., AIM, Yahoo Messenger, MSN, ICQ, etc.)
   - Chat rooms / Internet Relay Chat
   - Newsgroups / Usenet
   - Video/Audio Chatting (e.g., CuSeeMe, PalTalk, ICUII, etc.)
   - Email
   - Personals advertisements
   - DVD/VCD Pornographic videos
   - Other (specify) ____________________________________

3. Average total time spent on-line for all reasons:

   # of Hours per week

4. Average number of hours spend online specifically for sexual purposes?

For the following questions please indicate your response by selecting the number which most closely corresponds to your answer

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Often</th>
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5. How frequently do you neglect other responsibilities to spend time pursuing online sex?

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6. Does your online sexual behavior cause problems in your life?

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<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
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7. If so, please specify
   legal status
   social relationships
   romantic relationships
   career
   health (either psychological, emotional or physical)
   Spiritual
   other (please specify)

8. How frequently do you spend more time than planned pursuing sexual material on the internet?

   Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
   1       2         3           4          5         6       7

9. Have you ever been caught looking at sexual material on your computer?

   Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
   1       2         3           4          5         6       7

10. If you have, where were you caught?
    Home
    Work
    Both
    Other

11. Have you ever resolved to stop your internet sexual behavior/compulsion and later broken the resolution?

   Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
   1       2         3           4          5         6       7

12. How often do you get upset with yourself for wasting too much time searching for sex or sexual material on the internet?

   Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
   1       2         3           4          5         6       7
13. Do you masturbate at the computer while looking at pornography or engaging in sexual behavior with others online?

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<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
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14. Do you need sexual images or interpersonal sexual contacts that are increasingly more graphic than those viewed or experienced in the past, in order to attain the same level of sexual excitement?

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15. Do you lose interest in previously viewed pornography or in previous online sexual partners and need to find new sexual material or contacts to attain the same level of sexual excitement as in the past?

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</table>

16. Do you spend money for sexual material or sexual interaction at pay websites?

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</table>

17. How frequently have you viewed online sexual material or engaged in online sexual interactions while you were supposed to be working?

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</table>

18. Have you been told that you spend too much time on the computer or on the internet?

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<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
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19. How frequently do you spend time viewing online sexual material or engage in sexual interactions during time that could be spent with your family, friends, or a romantic partner?

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20. Has your internet sexual behavior/compulsion caused you problems with friends, family, or a romantic partner?

Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
1       2       3       4       5       6       7

21. When you are not online, how often do you think about getting back online to visit sexual websites or make sexual contacts?

Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
1       2       3       4       5       6       7

22. Do you know sexual internet sites so well that you check to see if they have been updated?

Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
1       2       3       4       5       6       7

23. Have you ever tried to stop your online sexual behavior by doing things like deleting your sex site bookmarks?

Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
1       2       3       4       5       6       7

24. Have you ever tried to stop looking at online sexual material, or tried to stop engaging others in online sexual behavior and then felt a strong desire to return to it?

Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
1       2       3       4       5       6       7

25. Have you ever fantasized about people you have seen online or in pornography while having sex with a partner?

Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
1       2       3       4       5       6       7

26. Have you accumulated debt from fees paid to gain access to internet sexual material?

Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
1       2       3       4       5       6       7

27. Have you ever feared that you would be caught in the act of masturbating to internet sexual material?

Never  Rarely  Occasionally  Sometimes  Frequently  Often  Always
1       2       3       4       5       6       7
28. Have you ever come up with ways to avoid being caught engaging in an online sexual encounter or ways to avoid being caught looking at internet sex sites?

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29. Is it easier for you to reach climax masturbating to sexual content or contacts online as compared to when having physical sex with a partner?

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30. Do you masturbate to sexual material on the internet because it is easier than finding or maintaining traditional sexual relationships?

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31. Do you ever worry that your online sexual behavior/compulsion is out of control?

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32. How often do you prefer cybersex to sexual intimacy with a partner?

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33. How frequently do people who know you complain about the amount of time you spend online?

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34. How frequently does your job performance suffer because of online sexual behavior/compulsion?

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35. How often do you lose sleep because of pursuing online sexual encounters?

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91
36. How often do you use cybersex as a reward for an accomplishment (for example, a productive day at work or home, a stressful day, completion of a task)?

Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Often | Always
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

37. How often do you use an alias, or communicate anonymously in order to engage in sexual fantasies that you don’t usually experience in real life?

Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Often | Always
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

38. How frequently do you move from online sexual pursuit to phone sex or real life meetings for sex?

Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Often | Always
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

39. How often do you feel guilty after online sexual encounters?

Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Often | Always
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

40. How frequently do you feel embarrassed or ashamed of your online sexual behavior?

Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Often | Always
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

41. How frequently do you engage in deception during online sexual pursuits?

Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Often | Always
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

42. How frequently do you engaging in deviant online sexual behavior?

Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Often | Always
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7

43. How frequently do you find sexual thoughts about others that makes it difficult to fully relate or interact with them?

Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Often | Always
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7
44. How frequently do you have concerns about controlling your online sexual behavior/compulsion?

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<thead>
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45. How often do you discuss your online sexual behavior/compulsion with others?

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46. How frequently do you use online sexual material as a way of dealing with feelings of inadequacy, stress, sadness, fear, anger, or loneliness?

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47. How frequently do you pursue online sexual material at work (or school) despite the risk involved?

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48. Have you ever felt hopeless or suicidal as a result of your online sexual behavior/compulsion?

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49. Have you ever thought that discovering online sexual material was the worst thing that happened to you?

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50. How frequently do you visit the internet with the exclusive purpose of pursuing online sexual material?

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51. How frequently does the fear that others might discover your online sexual behavior/compulsion concern you?

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52. Have you ever had problems with your sexuality in the past (on or offline)?

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53. Do you ever find your online sexual behavior/compulsion as abusive:

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54. Any additional comments:

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. If you believe your online sexual behavior requires treatment, you should seriously consider contacting a state licensed psychotherapist who specializes in the treatment of sexual problems. You may visit our referral page at [http://www.sash.net/members/resources_main.aspx](http://www.sash.net/members/resources_main.aspx) to obtain a list of mental health professionals in your state. You may also find groups such as Sexual Compulsives Anonymous [http://www.sca-recovery.org](http://www.sca-recovery.org) or Sex Addicts Anonymous [http://www.sexaa.org](http://www.sexaa.org) to be of assistance.

Additional help can be found at:
www.sexhelp.com
www.healthymind.com
www.cybersexualaddiction.com
www.victoriapoint.com/internetaddiction/
www.addictionresearch.com
http://www.sash.net/general/addict_groups.aspx
Appendix D

**Survey Monkey Privacy Statement and Electronic Security Measures**

Our privacy policy states that will not use your data for our own purposes. The data you collect is kept private and confidential.

In regards to the security of our infrastructure, here is an overview of our setup.

We do offer SSL encryption for the survey link and survey pages during transmission. The cost is an additional $9.95 per month.

The servers are kept at Inflow www.inflow.com).

**Physical**

- Servers kept in locked cage
- Entry requires a pass card and biometric recognition
- Digital surveillance equipment
- Controls for temperature, humidity and smoke/fire detection
- Staffed 24/7

**Network**

- Multiple independent connections to Tier 1 Internet access providers
- Fully redundant OC-48 SONET Rings
- Uptime monitored every 5 minutes, with escalation to Survey Monkey staff
- Firewall restricts access to all ports except 80 (http) and 443 (https)

**Hardware**

- Servers have redundant internal power supplies
- Data is on RAID 10, operating system on RAID 1
- Servers are mirrored and can failover in less than one hour

**Software**

- Code in ASP, running on SQL Server 2000 and Windows 2000 Server
- Latest patches applied to all operating system and application files
- SSL encryption of all billing data
- Data backed up every hour internally
- Data backed up every night to centralized backup system, with offsite backups in event of catastrophes