

WEB SURFING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR SCHOOL WORK ENGAGEMENT

Chigbo Chukwuebuka Ikechukwu*

**Department of Computer Anambra State Polytechnic, Mgbakwu, Anambra State, Nigeria*

***Corresponding Author:**

Abstract

Numerous reports indicate that the student population is likely vulnerable to the challenges associated with increased internet activity. The paper presents the findings on the role of web surfing on schoolwork engagement based on observation of university students in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two hundred thirty-two undergraduates enrolled in different courses in five tertiary institutions in Anambra State were conveniently recruited for the study. They completed a self-report measure of the Schoolwork Engagement Inventory and Smartphone Addiction Scale-Short Version (SAS-SV). The simple regression analysis conducted on the data revealed that internet dependency statistically significantly predicted the respondent's schoolwork participation $F(1,230), 42.53, P<.000$. Thus, the result affirmed the hypothesis that web surfing predicts schoolwork engagement in undergraduates. The practical implications and recommendations are discussed.

Keywords: *web surfing, schoolwork, engagement, undergraduate*

INTRODUCTION

Researchers have recently used schoolwork engagement to describe how much students participate in academic and extracurricular school activities and identify with and value educational outcomes. Its definition typically includes a psychological element related to students' feelings of inclusion at school and acceptance of school values, as well as a behavioral element related to involvement in extracurricular activities. Growing concerns have been raised about the amount of time that most secondary school students spend engaging in internet-related activities like online communication and social media (Adekunmisi et al., 2013; Anasi, 2008; Ani, 2010; Edem & Ofre, 2010; Madumere et al., 2020; Nwazor & Godwin-Maduikwe, 2015; Olateju, 2019; Opesade & Afolayan, 2022; Osang, 2012). Several reports indicate that most students regularly use their phones for non-academic purposes and may have lower grades and less interest in school due to this phenomenon. The concept of a school connotes a setting in which students meet regularly to participate in academic activities such as lectures, discussions, and group projects (Salmela-Aro & Upadaya, 2012). Similarly, schools designate a structured environment where students commit to learning, obtaining a certificate, progressing in their careers, and improving their overall performance (Siu et al., 2014).

Schoolwork engagement describes the time and energy students devote to educational activities. However, growing insinuation suggests students' engagement in school-related activities has decreased in the past few years (Appleton et al., 2006). Moreover, it has been found that as students progress through their education, the likelihood that they will disengage from the academic work they are required to complete increases (Marion et al., 2014; Siu et al., 2014). Students who are self-motivated and accept full responsibility for their academic responsibilities have a better chance of achieving their educational goals. Students who do not keep up with their schoolwork and do not take their academic responsibilities seriously are more likely to fall behind in their studies. This assertion is supported by a large body of research that links increased engagement in schoolwork to beneficial educational outcomes such as improved performance (Bakker et al., 2015; Salanova et al., 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2002). However, other research has shown that not being invested in one's schoolwork can lead to adverse outcomes like burnout and depression (Marrion et al., 2014; Salmela-Aro et al., 2009; Salmela-Aro & Upadaya, 2012). Research like this highlights the significance of student engagement in the classroom.

Salmela-Aro and Upadaya (2012) argued that the motivation, dedication, and focus necessary for academic success are all components of active engagement in schoolwork. Here, enthusiasm is a desirable quality in a student. Dedication is best exemplified by a consistently optimistic and analytical outlook on scholastic pursuits. Total concentration is also referred to as absorption in scientific literature. Given that student engagement in schoolwork is associated with better academic outcomes, examining the factors that may affect student engagement in schoolwork seems essential. The current paper argues that web surfing might potentiate students' disengagement from schoolwork. The current article suggests that Nigerian students' observed decline in schoolwork engagement might be related to time committed to surfing the internet. Reports indicate that overuse of web technology can lead to behavior issues and impulse control. As people surf the web for pleasure, this addiction can be hard to diagnose. The prevalence of web surfing has given rise to internet dependency. Because of its increasing prevalence, internet dependency is becoming a primary global concern. However, many reports in the media exist regarding unhealthy Internet use among students. Internet dependence in this context reflects excessive internet use to the detriment of a student's physical, psychological, social, or vocational well-being. Although internet use is crucial in education, students are more likely to utilize the internet as a source of information and entertainment daily. Most use it regularly without becoming dependent upon it. However, for some, involvement on the internet begins to have serious negative consequences. Internet dependence occurs when such consequences are minimized or ignored while Internet use increases. In the contemporary education ecosystem, the number of internet-dependent students is increasing. Excessive Internet use may revolve around social media, pornography, blogging, gambling, gaming, shopping, or other online activities.

Web surfing and schoolwork engagement

Web surfing refers to viewing information on various topics on several websites at random. It entails a behavior related to internet wandering that might potentiate learning distraction in students. Researchers have examined the effects of time spent navigating the internet under various umbrella terms, such as smartphone addiction, excessive mobile phone use, etc. (Adeniyi, 2021; Adeyemi, 2021; Akpunne & Uzonwanne, 2020; Akpunne & Akinnawo, 2019; Ayandele et al., 2020; Balogun & Olatunde, 2020; Iorver Igyuve et al., 2018; Obi et al., 2020; Onuoha & Bada, 2018; Onuoha, 2019). The literature also abounds with studies on schoolwork engagement (Bakker et al., 2015; García-Ros et al., 2018; Marion et al., 2014; Salmela-Aro et al., 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Shih, 2012). However, research into the correlation between undergraduates' web surfing behavior and their engagement in schoolwork is scant. The lack of research synthesis hampers knowledge of how internet surfing dependence can affect academic commitment. Still, it appears likely that young students who are enthusiastic about the internet and its associated activities will become reliant on their internet devices to sustain their enthusiasm for online trending, which may lead to a decline in their engagement with school.

Indeed, most students dedicate a considerable amount of their time surfing the internet using their smartphones. Importantly, their sustained internet use is primarily for social exchanges and other actions unrelated to their academic pursuit (Enwereuzor et al., 2016). Owing to smartphones' high accessibility and mobility, the extensive and pervasive use of smart mobile phones has become the social norm, exposing users to several risk factors and health challenges (Yu & Susman, 2020). The more an individual uses a smartphone, the more likely they are exposed to numerous favorable and unfavorable outcomes. For example, the persistent pings, buzz, and beeps accompanying the use of internet devices can

instigate a distinct distraction for a student leading to deviation in essential tasks, including deterioration in schoolwork. Furthermore, increased interruption to moments crucial to reading books interferes with students' reading culture.

Hypothesis: *Web surfing predicts schoolwork engagement in undergraduates*

Method

Participants

Students from tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria, constituted the research population. A total of two hundred and thirty-two ($n= 232$) students aged 17-28 years, comprising males and females enrolled in different courses, were conveniently selected from five public tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria, between December 2022 and March 2023. About 253 students were approached and asked to participate in a survey to understand their internet use following school authorities' authorization. In all, 246 consented to participate in the study and were given questionnaires to complete on the spot. However, only the correctly filled copies (i.e., 232) were subjected to data analysis. The other copies were discarded for wrongful filling.

Measures

Schoolwork participation was assessed with the Salmela-Aro and Upadaya's (2012) Schoolwork Engagement Inventory (EDA), which encompasses nine items designed to evaluate respondent's energy (e.g., "I feel strong and vigorous when I am studying"), dedication (e.g., "My schoolwork inspires me"), and absorption (e.g., "I feel happy when I am working intensively at school") concerning schoolwork. Respondents rated the degree to which each item applied to them based on estimation from the previous month, using a 0 (never) to 6 (daily) response scale. Items were averaged to form an overall scale score. Higher scores indicate greater engagement with schoolwork. The inventory has a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha (α) Coefficient of .78 in the present study.

Web surfing was assessed using the Smartphone Addiction Scale-Short Version (SAS-SV) developed by Kwon et al. (2013). The (SAS-SV) encompasses ten items, with responses to each item scored on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Sample items contain: "Having my mobile phone in my mind even when I am not with it" and "The people in my surroundings always comment on my smartphone use." The score on the instrument ranged from 10 to 60. Higher scores indicate problematic internet use. The instrument is internally consistent with Cronbach's α Coefficient of .73 obtained in the contemporary sample

Result

A cross-sectional research design was adopted in the study. Data from the respondents were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, Version 23).

Table 1: showing the simple regression result.

	B	SEB	β	t	Sig.
Constant	1.87	.037		61.57	.000
WS	.83	.051	.168	13.87	.000
R^2	.342				

Note. WS= Web surfing; B = Unstandardized regression coefficient; SEB = Standardized error of the Coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient; R^2 = Coefficient of determination. * $P<.000$.

A simple regression analysis was conducted to test the assumption that web surfing would significantly predict schoolwork engagement among undergraduates in Anambra State, Nigeria. The result demonstrated a statistically significant effect of web surfing on the respondent's schoolwork engagement $F(1,230), 42.53, P<.000$. Thus, the result affirmed the hypothesis that web surfing predicts schoolwork engagement in undergraduates.

Discussion

The study examined web surfing as a predictor of schoolwork engagement among undergraduates in Anambra State, Nigeria. Data from a convenience sample of two hundred and thirty-two respondents were analyzed using simple regression analysis. The result demonstrated that web surfing statistically predicted schoolwork engagement among the respondents ($\beta=.168$). The result indicates that web surfing accounted for about 34.2% of the sample's variation in schoolwork engagement. This entails that the urge to navigate the internet constantly contributes significantly to students' overall disengagement in the modern-day educational system. The most likely explanation for this result could be that internet users can participate in multiple online activities, most related to gaming, instant messaging, social exchanges, business exploration, and other enjoyable activities due to the multi-features that are embedded in internet devices. These features allow users to engage in multiple online activities simultaneously, thereby potentiating academic disengagement risk. Additionally, in recent years, many students who consider their studies necessary during examinations have neglected their reading to participate in internet activities unrelated to education. Additionally, most undergraduates patronizing the internet may believe that the web contains the solution to everything, thus, neglecting their educational demands.

The result aligns with findings from earlier studies (Anyira & Udem, 2020; Oji & Erubami, 2020). For instance, Bukhori et al. (2019) found a correlation between the amount of time students spent reading their textbooks and the amount of time they spent using their smartphones. Recent research has found a significant link between excessive use of smartphones and reading distractions (Gezgin et al., 2021), including reading attitudes (Izmeci, 2017; Levratto et al., 2021). This link has been noted in recent studies. The discovery can be conceptualized as supporting the hypothesis that compulsive use of the internet has a deleterious effect on the motivation to engage in activities such as reading and other school-related pursuits. The study's findings indicated that the respondents' engagement in schoolwork varied, which validates educators' concern regarding the diminishing engagement culture of many students despite the significance of schoolwork. Students' excessive use of the internet, which has been shown to have a negative impact on academic performance, is widely discouraged in today's modern societies, despite the growing popularity of the internet in today's modern societies (Lin et al., 2021). Therefore, the current finding suggests that an addiction to the internet is significantly correlated with lower academic engagement rates in Nigeria's educational environment.

Practical implication

The finding has provided support regarding the predictive effect of web surfing in the increasing decline in schoolwork engagement in higher education in Anambra State. Also, the study helps provide relevant data to education administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders interested in promoting schoolwork in academia, including researchers.

Conclusion

The current study examined schoolwork engagement in the era of growing compulsive use of internet-enabled mobile devices among students. Two hundred and thirty-two undergraduates were recruited for the study. Indeed, the simple linear regression conducted on the data confirmed the study's expectations. Thus, the study concluded that web surfing is crucial to student-schoolwork engagement in the Anambra State educational system. It is essential to report the observed limitation relative to the present study. Firstly, the sample size limited the current study's generalization, comprising only students from tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Thus, more comprehensive samples are needed in future research. More so, the data used for the analysis was exclusively based on self-report, which could raise the issue of common method variance. Multiple data collection methods are required to have trusted data for generalization. However, the present paper contributes to the literature by revealing web surfing as an antecedent of schoolwork engagement, thus, expanding our knowledge of the influencing variables in the declining schoolwork engagement in tertiary institutions.

References

- [1]. Adekunmisi, S. R., Ajala, E. B., & Iyoro, A. O. (2013). Internet access and usage by undergraduate students: A case study of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 2013.
- [2]. Adeniyi, W. (2021). Psycho-demographic Characteristics as Predictors of Smartphone Addiction among Undergraduates of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. *Journal of Research in Psychology*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.31580/jrp.v3i1.1976>
- [3]. Adeyemi, O. (2021). The Association of Mobile Phone Addiction Proneness and Self-reported Road Accident in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-021-00193-8>
- [4]. Akpunne, B C, & Uzonwanne, F. C. (2020). Problematic smartphone use as a predictor of depression, anxiety, and psychological distress among undergraduate students in four selected Nigerian universities. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 12(2).
- [5]. Akpunne, Bede C., & Akinnawo, O. E. (2019). Internet Addiction, Problematic Smartphone Use and Psychological Health of Nigerian University Undergraduates. *International Neuropsychiatric Disease Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.9734/indj/2018/v12i330093>
- [6]. Anasi, S. (2008). Internet use pattern of Undergraduate students at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. *University of Dar Es Salaam Library Journal*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.4314/udslj.v8i1.26643>
- [7]. Ani, O. E. (2010). Internet access and use: A study of undergraduate students in three Nigerian universities. *Electronic Library*, 28(4). <https://doi.org/10.1108/02640471011065373>
- [8]. Anyira, I. E., & UDEM, O. K. (2020). Effect of Social Media Addiction on Reading Culture: A Study of Nigerian Students. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 2020.
- [9]. Appleton, J. J., Christenson, S. L., Kim, D., & Reschly, A. L. (2006). Measuring cognitive and psychological engagement: Validation of the Student Engagement Instrument. *Journal of School Psychology*, 44(5). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2006.04.002>
- [10]. Ayandele, O., Popoola, O. A., & Oladiji, T. O. (2020). Addictive use of smartphone, depression, and anxiety among female undergraduates in Nigeria: a cross-sectional study. *Journal of Health Research*, 34(5). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHR-10-2019-0225>
- [11]. Bakker, A. B., Sanz Vergel, A. I., & Kuntze, J. (2015). Student engagement and performance: A weekly diary study on the role of openness. *Motivation and Emotion*, 39(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-014-9422-5>
- [12]. Balogun, F. M., & Olatunde, O. E. (2020). Prevalence and predictors of problematic smartphone use among pre-iversity young people in Ibadan, Nigeria. *Pan African Medical Journal*, 36. <https://doi.org/10.11604/pamj.2020.36.285.18858>
- [13]. Bukhori, B., Said, H., Wijaya, T., & Nor, F. M. (2019). The effect of smartphone addiction, achievement motivation, and textbook reading intensity on students' academic achievement. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile*

- Technologies*, 13(9). <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v13i09.9566>
- [14]. Çizmeçi, E. (2017). No Time For Reading, Addicted To Scrolling: The Relationship Between Smartphone Addiction And Reading Attitudes of Turkish Youth. *Intermedia International E-Journal*, 4(7). <https://doi.org/10.21645/intermedia.2017.37>
- [15]. Edem, M. B., & Ofre, E. T. (2010). Reading and Internet use activities of undergraduate students of the University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria. *African Journal of Library Archives and Information Science*, 20(1).
- [16]. Enwereuzor, I. K., Ugwu, L. I., & Ugwu, D. I. (2016). Role of smartphone addiction in gambling passion and schoolwork engagement: a Dualistic Model of Passion approach. *Asian Journal of Gambling Issues and Public Health*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40405-016-0018-8>
- [17]. García-Ros, R., Pérez-González, F., Tomás, J. M., & Fernández, I. (2018). The Schoolwork Engagement Inventory: Factorial Structure, Measurement Invariance by Gender and Educational Level, and Convergent Validity in Secondary Education (12-18 Years). *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 36(6). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282916689235>
- [18]. Gezgin, D. M., Gurbuz, F., & Barburuglu, Y. (2021). Undistracted Reading, Not More or Less: The Relationship Between High School Students' Risk of Smartphone Addiction and Their Reading Habits. *Technology, Knowledge, and Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-021-09570-x>
- [19]. Iorver Igyuve, A., Akilla, O. M., Oluwakemi, O. M., Damilare Agbele, J., & Igyuve, A. I. (2018). Smartphone Adoption in Nigeria: Issues and Discourse. *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*.
- [20]. Kwon, M., Kim, D. J., Cho, H., & Yang, S. (2013). The smartphone addiction scale: Develop and validate a short version for adolescents. *PLoS ONE*, 8(12). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0083558>
- [21]. Levratto, V., Suminas, A., Schilhab, T., & Esbensen, G. (2021). Smartphones: Reading habits and overuse. A qualitative study in Denmark, Lithuania, and Spain. *Educacion XXI*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.5944/educxx1.28321>
- [22]. Lin, Y., Liu, Y., Fan, W., Tuunainen, V. K., & Deng, S. (2021). Revisiting the relationship between smartphone use and academic performance: A large-scale study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106835>
- [23]. Madumere Dr (Mrs), C. P., Ekwelem Mr, V. O., & Anike Mrs, C. J. (2020). Social media and smartphone usage among students in Nigeria: the implications to their academic activities. *Library Philosophy and Practice*.
- [24]. Marion, D., Laursen, B., Kiuru, N., Nurmi, J. E., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2014). Maternal affection moderates friend influence on schoolwork engagement. *Developmental Psychology*, 50(3). <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034295>
- [25]. Nwazor, J. C., & Godwin-Maduiké, C. C. (2015). Social Media and Academic Performance of Business Education Students in South-East Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(25).
- [26]. Obi, A., Omoregie, M., & Onoriose, B. (2020). Prevalence and determinants of smartphone addiction among undergraduate students in a tertiary educational institution, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Medical and Dental ...*, 2(2).
- [27]. Oji, M., & Erubami, J. A. (2020). Discourse on social media uses and reading culture of Nigerian youths. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 9(6). <https://doi.org/10.36941/AJIS-2020-0115>
- [28]. Olateju, J. A. (2019). Utilization of the Internet by undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. *International Journal of Science and Technology Education Research*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.5897/ijster2018.0441>
- [29]. Onuoha, C. U. (2019). Problematic smartphone use and associated personality traits: A study of undergraduate students in a Nigerian University. *IFE Psychologia*, 27(1).
- [30]. Onuoha, U. C., & Bada, B. V. (2018). Linking Psychological Attributes and Gender to Smartphone Addiction among University Undergraduates: A Nigerian Study. *Journal of Education, Society, and Behavioural Science*. <https://doi.org/10.9734/jesbs/2018/v27i315905>
- [31]. Opesade, A. O., & Afolayan, M. O. (2022). Internet Use and Cybercrime Exposure of Public Secondary School Students in a Nigerian State Capital. *International Journal of ICT Research in Africa and the Middle East*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.4018/ijictrame.290836>
- [32]. Osang, F. (2012). Internet Access in Nigeria: Perception of National Open University of Nigeria (Noun) Students. *International Journal of Emerging Technology and Advanced Engineering*, 2(10).
- [33]. Salanova, M., Schaufeli, W., Martínez, I., & Bresó, E. (2009). How obstacles and facilitators predict academic performance: The mediating role of study burnout and engagement. *Anxiety, Stress and Coping*, 23(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615800802609965>
- [34]. Salmela-Aro, K., Savolainen, H., & Holopainen, L. (2009). Depressive symptoms and school burnout during adolescence: Evidence from two cross-lagged longitudinal studies. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38(10). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-008-9334-3>
- [35]. Salmela-Aro, K., & Upadaya, K. (2012). The schoolwork engagement inventory: Energy, Dedication, and Absorption (EDA). In *European Journal of Psychological Assessment* (Vol. 28, Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000091>
- [36]. Schaufeli, W. B., Martínez, I. M., Pinto, A. M., Salanova, M., & Barker, A. B. (2002). Burnout and engagement in university students a cross-national study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33(5). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022102033005003>
- [37]. Shih, S. S. (2012). An examination of academic burnout versus work engagement among Taiwanese adolescents. *Journal of Educational Research*, 105(4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2011.629695>
- [38]. Siu, O. L., Bakker, A. B., & Jiang, X. (2014). Psychological Capital Among University Students: Relationships with

Study Engagement and Intrinsic Motivation. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 15(4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-013-9459-2>

- [39]. Wang, W. (2001). Internet dependency and psychosocial maturity among college students. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 55(6). <https://doi.org/10.1006/ijhc.2001.0510>
- [40]. Yu, S., & Sussman, S. (2020). Does smartphone addiction fall on a continuum of addictive behaviors? In *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (Vol. 17, Issue 2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17020422>