

INFLUENCE OF INTERNET ADDICTION ON ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION

Taiwo Ayobami Akinboye

Covenant University, Canaanland, Ota, Ogun State

Taiwo.Omojowo93@Gmail.Com

Feyikemi Hilda Adegoke

Covenant University, Canaanland, Ota, Ogun State

Adegokefeyikemi18@Gmail.Com

ABSTRACT

This study's aim was to examine the role of internet addiction in academic procrastination among undergraduates. Data was collected from 460 undergraduate students at Covenant University and the University of Lagos using a cross-sectional survey design and the systematic random sampling technique. The Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire and the Academic Procrastination Scale were the tools utilised. The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSSv25) statistical software was used to encode and analyse the data using linear regression analysis. The results showed a moderate positive relationship between internet addiction and academic procrastination ($p\text{-value}=.000$, $r\text{-value}=.350$); therefore, increased levels of internet addiction are associated with increased academic procrastination. One of the recommendations for educational institutions is to implement policies and interventions that target internet addiction. This can include counselling services, workshops, and awareness campaigns designed to assist students in effectively managing their internet usage and encouraging responsible online conduct. It is also advised to work with mental health services, promote digital wellness, and incorporate time management programmes into the curriculum.

Keywords: Academic Procrastination, Internet Addiction, Undergraduates

1. Introduction

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, many individuals struggle with the widespread habit of procrastination, often postponing important tasks in favour of more enjoyable or less demanding activities. While this behaviour may seem harmless, research underscores its serious consequences, including decreased academic performance, increased stress, and long-term emotional strain (Steel, 2007; Srivastava & Kumar, 2024). The impact of procrastination is especially pronounced in academic settings. Established research has documented the detrimental effects of academic procrastination, such as reduced performance, heightened stress, and compromised well-being (McCloskey, 2011).

One emerging factor that may worsen academic procrastination is internet addiction. This condition is characterised by excessive and uncontrolled internet use that interferes with daily life (Kuss & Griffiths, 2015). Internet addiction can disrupt students' focus and time management, often manifesting among undergraduates as endless scrolling, online gaming, or excessive social media engagement. This behaviour not only indicates a lack of self-regulation but also serves as a maladaptive coping strategy for academic stress (Zhao *et al.*, 2025; Liu *et al.*, 2022). However, our understanding of this behaviour remains incomplete, particularly concerning the significant factor of internet addiction.

The internet is a vast network that connects billions of people through an intricate system of interlinked computer networks, forming a global village. It allows individuals from various walks of life to connect without needing to be physically present. While the internet is a powerful and useful tool, providing users with information on a wide array of subjects, it is primarily utilised for social media, content sharing, instant messaging, job seeking, online shopping, online gaming, online dating, learning, and research.

Despite the internet's role in facilitating interpersonal and professional communication, some psychologically vulnerable individuals may experience significant negative emotional and behavioural effects from excessive internet use (Young & Rodgers, 1998, as cited in Monetti *et al.*, 2011). For instance, excessive internet usage can lead to low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, and difficulties with socialisation.

A significant concern in the digital age is internet addiction, which can adversely affect academic pursuits, particularly when combined with the tendency to procrastinate. As the addictive nature of the internet intensifies, procrastination becomes more prevalent. Students often find it difficult to resist the allure of social networking, online gaming, and endless streams of entertainment. Despite being aware of the consequences, undergraduates frequently struggle to break free from this cycle, trapped in a paradox where temporary relief from academic stress leads to long-term academic difficulties.

Understanding the relationship between internet addiction and academic procrastination is necessary. We can determine how internet addiction affects academic procrastination with the aid of this study. The study can help identify ways to counteract these tendencies and promote more effective study habits by illuminating the relationship between excessive internet use and academic procrastination.

2. Theoretical Framework

Internet addiction

Cognitive-Behavioural Model of Problematic Internet Usage: This theory suggests that problematic internet usage is influenced by two main factors: cognitive factors and behavioural factors. Cognitive factors involve the attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts individuals have towards the internet. For example, a person may believe they need to be constantly connected online or feel they cannot live without certain online activities. These beliefs can make it challenging for

individuals to control their online behaviour, leading to increased internet use. On the other hand, behavioural factors refer to the actions and habits associated with internet use, such as the amount of time spent online and the types of activities engaged in. A person who neglects their responsibilities or relationships by spending the majority of their waking hours online may be exhibiting problematic internet usage. According to this model, cognitive and behavioural factors interact with one another.

Basic Needs Theory: This theory posits that the internet serves as a quick and convenient means of satisfying various needs, such as social interaction, information exchange, and social approval. Research shows that individuals who experience mental distress due to unmet needs are more likely to become dependent on the internet.

Academic Procrastination: The behavioural theory of academic procrastination suggests that human behaviour is learnt through interactions with the environment. According to this theory, behaviours are shaped by environmental stimuli or influences. Therefore, academic procrastination can be viewed as a learnt behaviour. For example, a student who wants to complete an assignment may observe others procrastinating instead of working, leading them to adopt the same behaviour.

Theory of functionalism: This theory states that behaviour serves a function. An object's ability is purely dependent upon its function in the cognitive system to which it belongs. Academic procrastination is a behaviour which serves a purpose. It states that individuals engage in procrastination to avoid being overwhelmed by academic tasks.

Hypothesis

Internet addiction has a significant influence on academic procrastination among undergraduates.

2.2 Methods

Design

The research design chosen for this study is the survey design. The survey method allows for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data from a large sample size. Specifically, a cross-sectional survey design was employed. Systematic random sampling was the method used for sampling. To guarantee representative participation, a systematic random sampling technique was used for the questionnaire distribution. This indicates that each candidate had an equal chance of being chosen.

Setting

The study was conducted at Covenant University in Ota, Ogun State, and the University of Lagos in Akoka, Lagos State. Covenant University is a private university, whereas the University of Lagos is a federal institution. Both universities were selected to increase the representativeness of the sample. The surveys were distributed in both universities' residence halls, recreation areas, and classrooms.

Population

The population of the study includes male and female undergraduates in the university across all levels.

Participants

The participants included male and female undergraduates from Covenant University and the University of Lagos across all levels of study. Approximately 7,500 undergraduates attend Covenant University, compared to 40,000 at the University of Lagos. After 500 surveys were sent out, 460 valid answers were received. 56.5% of the participants were between the ages of 15 and 20, while the other 43.5% of the participants were between the ages of 21 and 29. 26.7% of the participants were from the 100 level, 24.1% from the 200 level, 15.9% from the 300 level, 23.3% from the 400 level, and 10.0% from the 500 level. 48.9% were males, and 51.1% were females.

Instruments

Academic procrastination scale: The APS was developed by Justin D. McCloskey in 2011. It assesses academic procrastination. The scale has a high internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha value of .94. Convergent validity was established by correlating the APS with the Tuckman Procrastination Scale, showing a significant positive correlation ($r = .70, p < .001$).

Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire (PIUQ): The PIUQ, developed by Demetrovics Z., Szeredi B., and Rózsa S. in 2008, assesses problematic internet use. It consists of three subscales: obsession, neglect, and control disorder. It evaluates three areas of problematic Internet use, which are also subscales: control disorder (which involves an inability to control Internet use), neglect (abandonment of basic tasks and other everyday needs and activities), and obsession (obsessive thoughts and mental withdrawal symptoms caused by an inability to access the Internet). The scale's Cronbach's alpha value of .87 indicates that it has a high level of internal consistency reliability. The test-retest reliability of the PIUQ is also established with a value of .90.

Methodological Justification

A cross-sectional survey design was used in the study, which is ideal for determining correlations between variables at one particular moment in time. The researcher was able to quickly and effectively gather data from a sizable population of undergraduate students thanks to this design. The use of systematic random sampling enhanced the representativeness of the sample and reduced selection bias.

The study used two validated and standardised instruments. The Academic Procrastination Scale (APS), created by McCloskey (2011), is a suitable instrument for assessing procrastination in academic settings because of its strong convergent validity and excellent reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.94). Similar to this, Demetrovics *et al.* (2008) found that the Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire (PIUQ) had a strong measure of internet addiction due to its high internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87) and extensive subscales that addressed obsession, neglect, and control disorder.

The analytical approach, which employed linear regression through SPSS, made it possible to evaluate the predictive relationship between academic procrastination and internet addiction. To find out how much internet addiction contributes to procrastinating behaviour, this statistical method is suitable.

Overall, the tools, statistical techniques, and design selected for the study are in line with its goals and offer a solid basis for interpreting its results.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. With the statistical programme IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSSv25), the data was encoded and examined. Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. Regression analysis examined the predictive relationship between the independent variable (internet addiction) and the dependent variable (academic procrastination). It will help determine the extent to which internet addiction contributes to academic procrastination.

3. Result

Research Hypothesis: Internet addiction has a significant influence on academic procrastination among undergraduates.

Table 1: Linear Regression analysis on the influence of internet addiction on academic procrastination

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	B	F	t	Sig.
(Constant)							
Internet Addiction	.350	.122	.120	.350	63.771	7.986	.000

The model includes the predictor variable "internet addiction" and the dependent variable "academic procrastination". The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.350, showing a moderate positive relationship between internet addiction and academic procrastination. The R-squared is 0.122, suggesting that 12.2% of the variance in academic procrastination can be explained by the predictor variable "internet addiction". The t-value for "internet addiction" is 7.986, and the associated p-value is 0.000. At a standard significance level of 0.05, this suggests that the coefficient for "internet addiction" is statistically significant in predicting academic procrastination. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that internet addiction significantly affects undergraduates' academic procrastination is accepted. Higher levels of internet addiction are linked to higher levels of academic procrastination, according to the moderately positive relationship between the two.

4. Discussion

The hypothesis 'Internet addiction will significantly influence academic procrastination among undergraduates' was tested using linear regression. The findings indicated a somewhat positive correlation between undergraduates' academic procrastination and internet addiction. Thus, the propensity to procrastinate in academic work rises in tandem with internet addiction. Academic procrastination is significantly impacted by internet addiction, which accounts for about 12.2% of the variance in academic procrastination. The coefficient was statistically significant, as indicated by the t-value of 7.986 and the associated p-value of 0.000. These results support the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis and provide evidence that internet addiction has a substantial influence on academic procrastination.

The findings support the growing body of research identifying internet addiction as a significant predictor of academic procrastination. For example, a recent study among Chinese undergraduates revealed that smartphone addiction predicted academic procrastination through the mediating role of self-control and self-efficacy (Zhao *et al.*, 2025). Similarly, Liu *et al.* (2022) emphasised that ineffective time management and learning approaches explain how excessive device use delays academic responsibilities. In alignment with our results, Aung *et al.* (2023) found that procrastination accounted for about 11% of the variance in internet addiction among Thai students, reinforcing the reciprocal nature of these behaviours.

The findings suggest that individuals who are more addicted to the internet may struggle with self-regulation and time management, leading to increased delays and procrastination of academic tasks. This aligns with the study conducted by Hayat *et al.* (2020), which demonstrated that internet addiction significantly influences academic procrastination. The study found that higher levels of excessive internet usage are associated with increased academic procrastination among medical students. These results also correlate with research by Aznar-Díaz *et al.* (2022) regarding academic procrastination and internet usage.

4.2 Conclusion

The results indicate a moderate positive relationship between internet addiction and academic procrastination, suggesting that undergraduates with higher levels of internet addiction are more likely to procrastinate on their coursework. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the detrimental effects of heavy internet use on academic performance and time management skills. Therefore, interventions targeting internet addiction, such as counselling programmes, educational workshops, and technology management strategies, should be implemented to help students develop healthy online habits and reduce academic procrastination.

4.3 Recommendations

Education and Awareness: Recent studies emphasise the need for digital wellness programmes. Rosen *et al.* (2011) and Liu *et al.* (2022) advocate for structured institutional efforts to inform students about the risks associated with excessive internet use and to help them cultivate mindful usage habits.

Time Management Training: Effective training tailored to students' digital behaviours is essential. Tikinget *al.* (2024) suggest that integrating academic counselling and time management workshops can help reduce the likelihood of technology-fuelled procrastination. Institutions should incorporate time management training into their academic curriculum, teaching students efficient skills to prioritise their work, meet deadlines, and overcome procrastination.

Counselling and Support: Universities and colleges should offer counselling services specifically addressing internet addiction. Students struggling with this issue should receive guidance from professionals to help decrease their addiction.

Collaborative Efforts: An integrated approach that includes educators, therapists, and medical experts may be beneficial. Collaboration can be used to identify students who are at risk of procrastinating academically, provide early support, and implement tailored measures based on each student's specific needs.

4.4 Limitations of the study

While this study contributes valuable insights into the relationship between internet addiction and academic procrastination among undergraduates, it is not without limitations. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, which limits the capacity to conclude causality. To determine directionality between variables and look at changes over time, longitudinal studies would be more appropriate.

Second, the study used self-reported data, which could be skewed by reporting errors or social desirability bias. Participants may have underreported their internet usage or procrastination habits. Thirdly, only two Nigerian universities were included in the sample: Covenant University and the University of Lagos. This may restrict the findings' applicability to a larger student body. Including institutions across diverse geopolitical zones and public-private sectors would enhance external validity.

Last but not least, the study did not account for possible confounding factors that could also affect procrastination or internet use patterns, such as socioeconomic background, academic workload, or mental health status. To give a more comprehensive understanding of the problem, future studies should take these extra factors into consideration.

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