

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS OF SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This paper looked at the connection between social media use and academic performance among the students in the selected tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. In particular, it explored the impact of time spent using social media on study behaviors, how tolerance towards social media can affect assignment and tasks completion, and how compulsive social media use affects academic engagement. The research design was descriptive survey and 394 students were purposely chosen in universities, poly-techniques and colleges of education. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data, which were analyzed with the help of mean scores, standard deviations, and correlation coefficient of Pearson in order to evaluate the hypothesized relationships. The results showed that there is a strong positive correlation between time on social media and study behaviors ($r = .995, p < .01$) meaning that more time spent on social media is associated with impaired studying behavior. On the same note, social media tolerance was found to have a strong positive correlation with assignment and task completion ($r = .992, p < .01$), which indicates that, high tolerance can have a negative influence on timely and quality submission of academic assignments. Moreover, academic engagement was largely linked to compulsive social media use ($r = .995, p < .01$), and it indicates that uncontrollable and excessive internet use lowers the active involvement and attention to the learning process. The research finds that the use of social media especially in excessive or compulsive usage impacts negatively on academic behaviors and activity among tertiary students. It proposes the usage of structured digital literacy interventions, time management interventions, and awareness interventions to alleviate these adverse academic outcomes.

Keywords: Social media usage, Study habits, Assignment completion, Compulsive use, Academic engagement, Social media tolerance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media is now a determining part of the everyday life of students with digital media becoming an inspiring platform of communication, entertainment, and academic based interaction between the youth. As online systems promoting the sharing of user-generated content by using digital devices, social media has become the tool that defines how students can access information, communicate, and interact socially and academically (Carr and Hayes, 2015; Aichner et al., 2021; McJilton, 2021; Azizi et al., 2019). Students spend much time online having multitasked between school and online activities with the intensive use of platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube (Ahmad et al.,

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2020; Fernandes et al., 2021; Boateng and Amankwaa, 2016; Schonning et al., 2020; Kapoor et al., 2018). This dependence on social media has led to fears that the time spent on these media could be restricting academic preparation of students especially with regard to the way they plan their educational programs, the time spent reading and the way they learn in a disciplined schedule.

Moreover, it is now being researched that the length of time on social media is one of the best predictors of alteration in the study habits and academic behavior of students. The continuous use of online platforms can cause a decrease in the number of hours dedicated to studying every day, irregular reading habits, poor concentration, and inattention when performing academic assignments, particularly in young individuals when online access is unlimited and unmonitored (Ndaku, 2013; Kuss and Griffiths, 2011; Cioban et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2016; Talaei et al., 2018). The students spending several hours daily online can struggle to adhere to disciplined schedules of studying, go through lecture notes regularly, and work on the course (Apuke and Ezeah, 2018; Ahmad et al., 2020; Afolabi et al., 2022; Fernandes et al., 2021; Peris et al., 2020). Therefore, the amount of time spent using social media is a quantifiable behavioral variable that can directly influence the study behaviors of students and can also be a major route through which a student weakens their performance.

Besides spending time on internet, social media tolerance has also become another vital factor that determines academic performance of students. Tolerance is the growing demand to spend more time on social media to reach the same satisfaction or emotional reaction, which makes students spend more time on the Internet (Azizi et al., 2019; Kapoor et al., 2019; Frederick and Run, 2018; Peris et al., 2020; Cioban et al., 2021). Scholars have attributed this gradual rise to delays in completing academic tasks, decreased interest in coursework, and deterioration in submission of assignments in time (Ndaku, 2013; Beyens et al., 2022; Kuss and Griffiths, 2011; Tosun and Mihci, 2020). Students with greater tolerance problems can quickly complete their assignments, fail to meet deadlines or they can deliver inadequate academic work because the time they would have used to read and prepare is replaced by longer social media sessions. Therefore, tolerance is one of the biggest psychological aspects of addiction that influences quantifiable academic outcomes including assignment completion, timeliness and general academic productivity.

Compulsive use is a third key element in the association between social media addiction and academic performance. Compulsive use can be defined as the desire to go online constantly, despite the desire of the user to not do so, and frequently being accompanied by anxiety or even emotional discomfort in the absence of social media (Frederick and Run, 2018; Peris et al., 2020; MacQueen et al., 2017; Davies et al., 2012). This habit minimizes the capacity of the students to be psychologically in contact and engaged in the learning process. Research reveals that problematic users often look at their gadgets during classes, group assignments, academic discourses, and even when studying on their own, which leads to split attention and poor academic performance (Ali et al., 2016; Azizi et al., 2019; Cassidy et al., 2011; Beyens et al., 2022; Christensen, 2018). Subsequently, compulsive use reduces academic interactions and degrades the quality of engagement with academic actions and is therefore a major psychological variable that influences the way students interact with academic settings.

Those dimensions of social media addiction, in their turn, are explained theoretically to explain the impact of these aspects on academic performance. According to Uses and Gratifications Theory, students choose to use online platforms deliberately to fulfill the need, which includes entertainment, information, peer affiliation, and emotional release that can be improved through repetitive gratification, which gradually transitions into excessive and routine usage which lowers the focus of learning (Vinney, 2024; Azizah, 2020; Carr and Hayes, 2015; Kietzmann, 2012; Shimoga, 2019). Cognitive-behavioral schools of thought suggest that the continuity of online activity promotes the formation of negative adaptations to the cognition system like reliance on online confirmation and evasion of stressful school assignments (Davis, 2001; Zeng et al., 2023; Frederick and Run, 2018; MacQueen et al., 2017). Displacement Theory goes a step further to argue that time spent on digital platforms is obtained at the cost of the study time, academic interaction, and engagement in learning experiences, which promotes the realization that time spent, tolerance, and compulsive use may all combine to diminish study habits, procrastinate assignments, and academic engagement (Beyens et al., 2022; Ndaku, 2013; Kapoor et al., 2019; Cioban et al., 2021; Christensen, 2018).

Nevertheless, with the growing research interest across the globe, little research has conducted a thorough study of how particular aspects of the social media addiction level include time spent online, tolerance, and compulsive use on the academic performance indicators of study habits, assignment completion, and academic engagement among the tertiary

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institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. Most of the previous research involved exploring the use of social media in general or not in the Nigerian context (Ahmad, 2019; Mfaume, 2019; Defede et al., 2021; Christensen, 2018; Apuke and Ezeah, 2018). It has been observed in the region that the prevalence of long-term social media use among students is high with average times consumption being between two and five hours a day, but the exact academic impacts associated with study discipline, promptness in coursework, and engagement with learning have not been thoroughly studied (Ahmad et al., 2020; Ayatalumo and Ukegbu, 2018; Afolabi et al., 2022; Fernandes et al., 2021; Ndaku, 2013). The growing level of digital use is raising questions regarding its replacement of academic work, and thus, a systematic investigation into the effects of the three constructs (time spent, tolerance, and compulsive use) on quantifiable academic performance among Imo State students is necessary. The research was therefore, particularly aimed at:

1. Determining the effect of time spent on social media on the study habits of students in selected tertiary institutions in Imo State.
2. Assessing how tolerance for social media influences assignment and task completion among students in selected tertiary institutions in Imo State.
3. Examining the impact of compulsive use of social media on students' academic engagement in selected tertiary institutions in Imo State.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was a quantitative survey research design, which was considered best suitable in the collection of standard data of a large population of respondents in a number of states that were selected to carry out the study in Imo State. The research design enabled the researcher to study the impact of social media addiction systematically to academic performance using a well-planned questionnaire as the primary tool in data collection. The sample included all final year students of universities, polytechniques and colleges of education registered with the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), having a population of 23,250 students as of March 2023. This group of people was deemed as heterogeneous and sufficient to make generalizable results. It was calculated that a sample size of 394 respondents was adequate to make a credible analysis based on the formula of Taro Yamane at margin of error of 5% level.

Multi stage stratified sampling was used. First, institutions were divided based on the universities, poly-techniques, and colleges of education, and two institutions of each category were taken randomly, and these were six institutions. The 394 respondents were then selected in proportion to the student population in the individual institutions. The participants were selected through simple random sampling within their respective institutions and thus all students in the final year had equal opportunity of being sampled. The structured questionnaire employed five points Likert scale that included the statement that included Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree. In peer-reviewed articles of Scopus rank, the measurement of each construct: time spent on social media, tolerance, compulsive use, study habits, completion of assignments and academic engagement included at least five items based on validated scales. The questionnaires were conducted in person, using the help of trained research assistants, so there was no ambiguity and the questionnaires were filled properly.

Cronbachs Alpha reliability was done on the questionnaire to provide internal consistency. All constructs had coefficients that were greater than the minimum standard of 0.70 ranging between 0.82 and 0.91, and a total instrument confidence of 0.90 that are very good and can be analyzed effectively. The findings proved that the measures of the dimensions of social media addiction and academic performance were valid and they can be applied to additional statistical tests.

Data collected were coded and analysed in SPSS version 21, and multiple regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between the independent variables (time spent on social media, tolerance and compelling use) and the dependent variables (study habits, completing assignments and engaging in academic activities). The null hypothesis was rejected when the coefficient of determination (R²) and correlation coefficient (R) and t-statistics and the p-values were below 0.05 and 1.960 respectively. This research design made sure that the effect of social media addiction on academic performance of the students in the identified tertiary institutions in Imo State produced strong, reproducible, and statistically valid results.

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III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Three major findings were made in the study, thus:

1. Time spent on social media has a strong correlation with the study behaviour of students in the selected tertiary institutions in the Imo State.
2. Tolerance to social media and assignment and task completion among students in the chosen tertiary institutions in Imo State have a great correlation.
3. Compulsive use of social media and academic activity among students in the chosen tertiary institutions in the Imo State are significantly related.

IV. CONCLUSION

According to the findings, one may assume that social media addiction plays a significant role in determining the performance of students in tertiary institutions in Imo State. All dimensions of social media addiction, including the amount of time spent, tolerance, and compulsive use, possess the quantifiably adverse effects on the study habits, completion of assignments, and academic engagement, respectively.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Colleges and universities need to establish awareness initiatives to sensitize students about the adverse consequences of social media addiction on their school performance.
2. Learners need to be empowered by training them on time management and self-regulation skills so that they can balance between social media and studies.
3. Students with compulsive social media use should have monitoring systems and counseling facilities provided to them by institutes.
4. Instructors need to use social media in guided learning to boost academic activities with limited time on unproductive utilization.
5. The moderating variables that should be examined in the future include self-efficacy, influence by peers, and digital literacy in the correlation between social media addiction and academic performance.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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