Relationship between Social Media Exposure and Academic Performance Among University Students

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Abstract

Social media use has become ubiquitous among university students, raising concerns about its impact on academic performance. This mixed-methods study examined the influence of social media exposure and addiction on the academic achievement of undergraduates at Prince Abubakar Audu University from 2019-2021. The questionnaire instrument was validated with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.741 and testretest reliability of 0.832. Data were collected from 150 students across faculties using quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The findings revealed a complex relationship between social media use and academic outcomes. While some respondents reported improved grades through platforms like Wikipedia (mean=3.04) and appreciated the collaboration opportunities (mean=2.91 for WhatsApp knowledge sharing), others expressed concerns about addiction negatively affecting academic work (mean=2.91) and understanding (mean=2.85 for academic forums reducing comprehension rate). Demographic factors like age and level also influenced perspectives. The study recommends implementing digital literacy workshops, integrating social media into curricula for educational purposes, involving parents and teachers, and continually evaluating usage patterns to develop effective intervention strategies. By embracing the potential benefits of social media while mitigating risks through a balanced approach, Prince Abubakar Audu University can guide students toward responsible usage that complements academic success.

Keywords: Social Media Exposure, Academic Performance, Social Media Addiction, University Undergraduates, Digital Literacy

Introduction

Social media's introduction has revolutionized communication and ushered in an era of worldwide connectedness. Geographical obstacles to engagement have been eliminated by Online Social Media Services (OSNS), which have become the cornerstone of current technology utilization (Schneider, 2015). Social media use is global phenomena that has captured the attention of people of all ages, backgrounds, and educational levels (Edmunds and Turner, 2005; Reed, 2018; McHaney, 2023). Social media is growing so quickly that, by 2015, Myspace was getting more page views than Google, and by early 2019, Facebook had taken the top spot as the world's largest social media platform. Social networking is convenient, but it has drawbacks as well. Due to the uncontrolled nature of the internet, people use it excessively and engage online even in unsuitable situations like lecture halls (Dron and Anderson, 2014). More complexity has been added by the widespread use of advanced mobile phones, which allow for continuous texting without the requirement for cybercafés (Kaigwa, 2017; Diamond, 2015).

Social media's effect on academic achievement has generated a lot of research and controversy in recent years. The connection between social media use and students' capacity to concentrate on their academic obligations has been the subject of several research. Overall, the results point to a complicated relationship between social media use and academic achievement. Numerous studies have demonstrated the detrimental effects of excessive social media use on students' ability to concentrate on their academic obligations. It was frequently difficult for students to focus on their schoolwork when they spent a lot of time on social media sites. Their focus was distracted from academic activities by distractions including notifications, continuous updates, and the attractiveness of social connections on the internet (Ahmed and Qazi, 2011; Peter, 2015; Kauser and Awan 2019; Olugbade, 2023).

Further evidence supporting these conclusions came from Beyene (2018), Rahman (2020), Zhao (2023), and Nurudeen (2023), who found a link between social media addiction and a reduction in academic performance. The condition known as "social media addiction" occurs when users spend so much time on social media that it starts to negatively impact their general well-being, including their ability to succeed in school. Procrastination, ineffective time management, and a lack of enthusiasm for academic pursuits might result from this addiction.

Time displacement is a significant issue that negatively affects academic achievement while using social media (Tokunaga, 2016). Students may use social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat excessively, which takes away from their time for studying, finishing homework, and engaging in other academic-related activities. Furthermore, students may find it challenging to completely participate in in-depth and concentrated study due to the culture of multitasking that social media's continual connectedness and rapid gratification might promote. Additionally, social

media can exacerbate the "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO) syndrome, which makes students feel pressured to keep up with events, trends, and online social circles (Wiesner, 2017). They could give up important study time in order to spend more time on social media as a result of this worry. During study periods, the urge to continuously check for updates and reply to messages might interfere with focus.

It's crucial to remember, though, that social media does not always have a detrimental effect on academic achievement. According to some research, students may benefit from the intentional and moderate usage of social media, which can promote cooperation, communication, and information exchange across academic communities (Olugbade, 2023). Social media sites, which offer information, conversations, and networking possibilities, may also be very helpful tools for education.

In summary, it is critical to understand the complex nature of this connection even while there is evidence to support the theory that excessive social media use might have a detrimental influence on academic achievement. The difficulty is striking a balance between using social media to its full potential for educational gains and avoiding its drawbacks, which include overuse that can result in distractions and a loss of academic concentration. In order to promote academic performance and encourage ethical social media use, educators, parents, and students themselves all have significant responsibilities to play.

Social media's widespread use has permeated every part of modern life and had a profound impact on many areas, including education. Nigerian university students are among the group most fully enmeshed in this digital culture. There is curiosity and worry about how students' generally usage of social media affects their academic performance, which has led to a deeper look at the complex dynamics at work (Van Dijck, and Poell 2013).

In Nigerian universities, where students place a high value on academic achievement, social media has become an influential factor in their everyday life. Olugbade's (2023) recent study illuminated the possible negative consequences of excessive social media usage on academic obligations, with a particular focus on Nigerian university students. Many students found that the results aligned with their experiences, exposing a difficult paradox between the virtual and academic worlds.

The use of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp has grown commonplace among university students in Nigeria. These platforms provide a serious risk to academic performance even while they provide opportunities for communication, information sharing, and even academic cooperation. The allure of notifications, the constant stream of updates, and the irresistible pull of virtual social interactions often divert students' attention away from the rigors of their academic pursuits. Sarafadeen's (2017) study verified Olugbade's worries by delving more into the idea of social media addiction among university students in Nigeria. The term "social media addiction" describes a situation in which students become so enmeshed in the virtual world that it negatively impacts all aspects of their lives, including their

academic performance. Procrastination, ineffective time management, and a declining desire to participate in academic activities are all signs of this addiction.

Time displacement is a common issue that social media use exacerbates. Like their colleagues throughout the world, Nigerian university students could find themselves wasting a lot of time reading through timelines and having online chats. If social media usage is unrestrained, it might interfere with study time and result in unfinished assignments.

Teachers, parents, and students themselves are key players in this digital environment. Fostering a conducive learning environment requires raising awareness of appropriate social media use, stressing the value of time management, and encouraging a balance between the virtual and academic worlds. To ensure that Nigerian university students can successfully navigate the digital era without sacrificing their academic goals, the task is to maximize the positive aspects of social media while minimizing any possible negative effects.

Statement of Research Problem

Amid this technological transformation, there has been a growing worry over how social media use affects academic performance. With over 500 million users, social media sites like Facebook have become increasingly popular, sparking discussions about the possible distracting risks they provide to students (Schneider, 2010). Recent researches in Nigeria have shown that there are concerns over how much time students spend on social media and whether or not that time might affect their grades (Olugbade, 2023; Ojo, Opeloye, and Olugbade, 2024). The educational system faces challenges leading to a decline in quality. Students' increasing focus on social media, coupled with advanced mobile phone use, has shifted attention from studies to virtual interactions. This trend, observed globally and at Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, prompts the need to explore its impact of social media use on academic performance, emphasizing behavioral patterns and academic competence. Hence, this study examines how social media exposure impacts academic achievement at Prince Abubakar Audu University as the digital landscape continues to change. It explores how students behave and perform academically in this quickly evolving technology environment in an effort to solve the issues raised by a society that is becoming more and more preoccupied with the nexus between online social engagement and academic endeavors.

Purpose of the Study

The following research objectives guided this study:

- 1. To determine if the type of social media platform Prince Abubakar Audu University students are most exposed to impacts their academic performance.
- 2. To assess the degree to which addiction to social media affects the academic performance of students at Prince Abubakar Audu University.
- **3.** To examine the influence of social media usage on the academic performance of undergraduate students at Prince Abubakar Audu University.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- 1. Does the type of social media students are most exposed to impact their academic performance?
- 2. 2. To what degree does students' addiction to social media affect their academic performance?
- 3. What is the influence of social media usage on the academic performance of students at Prince

Abubakar Audu University?

Methodology

This study collected detailed information using a descriptive survey that combined quantitative and qualitative methods. To enable conclusions about the population as a whole, a representative subset of the larger study population is sampled for the purpose of the research. Interviews are used in both qualitative and quantitative data collecting procedures, which include quantitative approaches using structured questionnaires. Using both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more nuanced view of the study situation, this mixed-methods approach guarantees a comprehensive analysis of the topic under consideration.

The study's target population of 430 students was Prince Abubakar Audu University students who have attended the institution for at least one full academic year. Purposive sampling was used in the sampling process, and this informed the selection of the study's whole population.

Students who were not frequent users of social media were intentionally selected as interview subjects. Ten interviews in all were conducted in order to collect important qualitative data. While the majority of participants (71.3%) were adults aged 18 years or older living on the PAAU campus in the Social Sciences and Education faculties, a portion of the participants (28.7%) were below 18 years of age.

This study adopted a quantitative method of data collection. The sampling method employed for this study was quantitative. A sample of 150 students was covered. However, the qualitative data involved structured questionnaire techniques that were employed to elicit information from both male and female participants who were willing to participate in the study.

The instrument utilized for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Effects of social media exposure on the academic performance of students," which was developed by the researcher through an extensive literature review and designed in accordance with the study's objectives. The structured questionnaire comprised two sections: Section A and B. Section A contained questions related to respondents' demographic data, while Section B elaborated on the research variables, with response options categorized as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire items encompassed both favorable and unfavorable aspects, with a weighting system of SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2, SD = 1. The reverse was applied to unfavorable items.

The instrument was subjected to validation procedures, and the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient, indicating internal consistency, was calculated to be 0.741. Additionally, the test-retest reliability coefficient was determined to be 0.832, affirming the stability of the instrument over time. These measures contribute to the robustness and reliability of the questionnaire in capturing relevant data for the study.

The statistical software for social science (SPSS 25) was used to handle and evaluate the quantitative data. For the analysis, descriptive statistics were used, such as frequency distribution tables, percentage distributions, and charts. In accordance with the goals of the study, this level of analysis was used to provide a thorough description of the sociodemographic traits. Concurrently, the qualitative information was gathered, organized, and examined by content analysis. This method made it easier to thoroughly review the qualitative data that was acquired for the study.

Results

Analysis of Demographical Data

Table 1. Age Distribution

	Distribution	Percentage %	
Below 15	12	8.0%	
15-17	31	20.7%	
18-20	33	22.0%	
21 and above	74	49.3%	
Total	150	100.0%	

The result on table 1 shows that majority of the respondents 74(49.3%) are within the age bracket of 21 years and above, 33(22.0%) are within the age of 18-20 years, 31(20.7%) are 15-17, while the rest of the respondents are below 15 years 12(8.0%).

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Table 2. Sex Distribution

	Distribution	Percentage %
Male	86	57.3%
Female	64	42.7%
Total	150	100.0%

The result on table 2 shows that majority of the respondents 86 (57.3%) are male, while the rest respondents 64 (42.7%) are female.

Table 3. Level Distribution

	Distribution	Percentage %
100 level	34	22.7%
200 level	31	20.7%
300 level	70	46.7%
400 level	15	10.0%
Total	150	100.0%

The result on table 3 shows that majority of the respondents are in 300 level 70(46.7%), 100 level (34(22.7%), 200 level 31(20.7%) and 400 level 15(10.0%)

Analysis of Research Question

Table 4: Analysis of type of social media students are most exposed to impact their academic performance?

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S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1	I usually have unlimited access to Facebook and this has negatively affected my academic performance.	52 (35%)	42 (28%)	24 (16%)	32 (21%)	2.76	Agree
2	I engage in academic discussions on twitter and this has improved my academic performance.	46 (31%)	36 (24%)	29 (19%)	39 (26%)	2.59	Agree
3	I make use of WhatsApp to disseminate knowledge to my class mate.	50 (33%)	62 (41%)	12 (8%)	26 (17%)	2.91	Agree
4	I Solely rely on information gotten from Wikipedia to do my assignments without consulting other sources.	67 (45%)	35 (23%)	18 (12%)	29 (19%)	2.92	Agree
5	I cannot complete my assessment test without going online or using social media platforms	54 (36%)	19 (13%)	18 (12%)	59 (39%)	2.45	Disagree

Criteria mean = 2.50

Students' opinions of how social media exposure affects their academic performance are shown in Table 4. A significant proportion of participants expressed concurrence with certain comments. First, with a mean value of 2.76, higher than the criteria mean value of 2.50, a considerable proportion of respondents stated that having unrestricted access to Facebook had harmed their academic performance. Second, students reported participating in academic Twitter chats; their mean score of 2.59 suggests that this activity has exceeded the criteria mean value and favorably impacted their

academic achievement. Thirdly, a mean value of 2.91, which is higher than the criteria mean value of 2.50, indicates that most students accepted using WhatsApp to share information with their peers. Finally, a mean value of 2.92 was obtained from the respondents, which was higher than the criteria mean value, indicating that respondents frequently relied only on material from Wikipedia for assignments without checking other sources.

However, a mean score of 2.45 indicated that several respondents disagreed with the statement that they cannot finish assessment examinations without accessing social media or the internet. Significantly, this mean value is lower than the 2.50 criteria mean value, indicating that some respondents may not primarily depend on online resources while doing assessments.

Table 5: To what degree does students' addiction to social media affect their

academic performance?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
6	Addiction to online social media	48	48	46	8	2.91	Agree
	sites is a problematic issue that affects my academic work.	(32%)	(32%)	(31%)	(5%)		
7	Online social media sites distract me from my studies.	68	14	63	5	2.97	Agree
		(45%)	(9%)	(42%)	(3%)		
8	Hours spent online can never be compared to the number of hours I spend reading and assessing my academic work.	62	34	22	32	2.84	Agree
		(41%)	(23%)	(15%)	(21%)		
9	There is no improvement in my	62	12	19	57	2.53	Agree
	grades since I became engaged into these social media sites.	(41%)	(8%)	(13%)	(38%)		
10	Students who are addicted to social media are like to have lower grades compared to students who are less addicted to social media	53	42	43	12	2.91	Agree
		(35%)	(28%)	(29%)	(8%)		

Criteria mean = 2.50

The answers to the questions about how much students' addiction to social networking sites affects their academic performance are displayed in Table 5. The data revealed that a considerable proportion of respondents agreed that addiction to online social media sites is a problematic issue affecting their academic work (mean = 2.91). Additionally, they acknowledged that online social media sites distract them from their studies (mean = 2.97) and that the hours spent online cannot be compared to the time dedicated to reading and assessing academic work (mean = 2.84).

Interestingly, the respondents agreed that there has been no improvement in their grades since becoming engaged with social media sites (mean = 2.53), suggesting a negative impact of social media addiction on academic performance.

Furthermore, the respondents concurred that students addicted to social media are likely to have lower grades compared to those less addicted (mean = 2.91), highlighting the detrimental effects of excessive social media usage on academic achievement.

Table 6: What is the influence of social media usage on the academic performance of students at Prince Abubakar Audu University?

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S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark	
11	The usage of Wikipedia for	64	30	54	2	3.04	Agree	
	research has helped improve my grades.	(43%)	(20%)	(36%)	(1%)			
12	Engaging in academic forums on	66	39	2	43	2.85	Agree	
	social media reduces my rate of understanding.	(44%)	(26%)	(1%)	(29%)			
13	I use materials gotten from	78	20	42	11	3.11	Agree	
	blogging sites to complement what I have been taught in class.	(52%)	(13%)	(28%)	(7%)			
14	I will not perform well in my	17	44	49	40	2.25	Disagree	
	academics even if I stopped using social media sites.	(11%)	(29%)	(33%)	(27%)			
15	There is no hope of academic	20	45	53	31	2.35	Disagree	
	success for me if I eventually stopped using social media platform academically.	(13%)	(30%)	(35%)	(21%)			

Criteria mean = 2.50

The answers to the questions of how social media use affects Prince Abubakar Audu University students' academic performance are displayed in table 6 above. The data shows that a significant proportion of respondents agreed that using Wikipedia for research helped improve their grades (mean = 3.04) and that they utilized materials from blogging sites to complement classroom learning (mean = 3.11). These findings suggest a positive influence of social media usage on academic performance when used for research and supplementary learning purposes.

However, the respondents also expressed concerns that engaging in academic forums on social media reduced their rate of understanding (mean = 2.85), indicating a potential negative impact on comprehension.

Interestingly, the respondents disagreed with the statement that they would not perform well academically if they stopped using social media sites (mean = 2.25) and that there is no hope of academic success without using social media platforms (mean = 2.35). This implies that while social media may have some beneficial effects, the

respondents did not perceive it as an essential determinant of their overall academic success.

Discussion of Findings

Demographic data analysis revealed details on the traits of research participants. Individuals aged 21 years and above were the largest group of responders (49.3%), with those in the 18–20 age range coming in second (22.0%). The proportion of genders was 42.7% female and 57.3% male. In terms of academic standing, the majority of respondents (46.7%) belonged to the 300 level, which was followed by the 100 level (22.7%), 200 level (20.7%), and 400 level (10.0%). These demographic specifics can affect how the results are interpreted and are crucial for comprehending the study's background.

The views of the respondents on the potential impact of social media exposure on academic achievement are displayed in Table 4. Interestingly, a sizable portion of students (mean=2.76) concurred that having unrestricted access to Facebook had a detrimental effect on their academic achievement. Conversely, participation in scholarly conversations on Twitter was seen favorably, with a mean score of 2.59. Positive feedback was also given to the usage of WhatsApp for knowledge transmission, with a mean score of 2.91. But using Wikipedia exclusively for assignments caused several people to express worry (mean=2.92). It's interesting to note that a lower mean score of 2.45 indicated disagreement with the claim that students need to use social media or the internet to finish assessments.

This aligns with previous studies that have indicated both positive and negative impacts of social media on academic performance (Kolan, and Dzandza, 2018; Lahiry et al., 2019; Olugbade, 2023). The varying opinions highlight the complex relationship between social media use and academic outcomes, influenced by factors such as the type of platform and the purpose of engagement.

Table 5 examines how students' addiction to social media affects their academic achievement. The majority of respondents (mean=2.91) admitted that their academic work is impacted by their addiction to social networking sites online. Students also concurred that social media diverts them from their academics (mean=2.97) and that they spend more time online than they do on school-related tasks (mean=2.84). In spite of this, opinions on whether grades have improved since using social media were divided (mean=2.53). These findings corroborate existing literature suggesting that excessive use and addiction to social media can negatively influence academic performance (Lahiry et al., 2019; Olugbade, 2023). The distraction caused by social media, as indicated by respondents, may lead to reduced study time and focus, potentially impacting learning outcomes.

Table 6 delves into the specific influence of social media usage on academic performance at Prince Abubakar Audu University. Respondents reported positive outcomes such as improved grades through the use of Wikipedia for research

(mean=3.04) and the use of materials from blogging sites to complement classroom learning (mean=3.11). However, there were concerns about engagement in academic forums on social media potentially reducing the rate of understanding (mean=2.85). It's interesting to note that a sizable portion of respondents (mean=2.25 and 2.35) disagreed with comments suggesting reliance on social media for academic performance. This shows that although students acknowledge the beneficial effects of social media on some areas of their academic journey, they do not fully credit social media usage for their success or failure in the classroom. Stathopoulou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides (2019) bolster this stance.

In summary, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how social media exposure and addiction can impact the academic performance of students at Prince Abubakar Audu University. The results highlight the complex interplay between different social media platforms, the purposes of engagement, and their consequences on academic outcomes. The findings emphasize the need for a balanced approach to social media use, considering both its potential benefits and drawbacks in the context of academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study unveils the intricate relationship between social media usage and academic achievement among students at Prince Abubakar Audu University. The findings underscore that the effects are multifaceted, varying based on the specific social media platforms utilized, the nature of engagement, and individual perceptions. Notably, the demographic analysis accentuates the importance of considering factors such as age, gender, and educational level when further probing this multidimensional link

While a segment of students expressed apprehensions about the deleterious impacts of unrestrained social media access, addiction, and distractions, others acknowledged the benefits, such as improved academic performance through research on platforms like Wikipedia and collaborative efforts in academic forums. This nuanced range of perspectives highlights the necessity for a holistic viewpoint that recognizes the potential advantages social media offers while concurrently addressing its inherent drawbacks.

The study's conclusions elucidate the complex interplay between social media and academic pursuits, dispelling oversimplified notions. It becomes evident that a balanced approach is crucial, one that harnesses the educational utilities of social media while mitigating potential detrimental effects. Fostering responsible and judicious usage among students emerges as a key imperative, facilitated by institutional policies, parental guidance, and individual self-regulation.

By embracing the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon, Prince Abubakar Audu University can strategically navigate the evolving digital landscape, equipping students with the necessary skills and mindset to optimally leverage social media as a

complementary tool for academic excellence, without compromising the fundamental rigors of scholarship.

Recommendations

Prince Abubakar Audu University can enhance students' academic performance by implementing several key recommendations derived from recent studies on social media usage. First, organizing workshops on digital literacy would empower students to leverage social media platforms effectively for learning purposes. These seminars could highlight the benefits of social media in networking, collaboration, and scholarly pursuits. Secondly, integrating social media into the academic curriculum could prove beneficial. By encouraging joint initiatives, research endeavors, and knowledge exchange through these platforms, students can recognize the educational value of social media. Thirdly, involving teachers and parents in discussions about students' social media usage can create a supportive environment. Together, they can foster responsible social media behavior and emphasize the importance of academic engagement. Lastly, conducting frequent evaluations of students' social media habits allow for adjustments to intervention strategies, ensuring their relevance in a dynamic social media landscape. By implementing these recommendations, the university can create an environment that maximizes the positive aspects of social media while minimizing potential negative impacts on academic success

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