

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY SOKOTO, NIGERIA

BAWA, Nura

Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology,
Usmanu Danfodio University,
Sokoto, Nigeria

&

SULEIMAN, Zubairu,
Department of Education
Gombe State University,
Gombe, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined social media addiction and how it affects undergraduate students' academic engagements in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. All undergraduate students from Usmanu Danfodiyo University formed the population of the study and four faculties (Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Management Sciences and Faculty of Art and Islamic Studies) were purposively selected to represent the target population. Research Advisors (2006) was used to determine 370 undergraduate students from the population of 12,300 across the four faculties. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from the four (4) faculties. The instrument used for data collection was researchers-developed questionnaire. Pilot study was carried out at Sokoto State University and reliability indexes of 0.87 and 0.97 were obtained for social media addiction and academic engagement components respectively. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that social media addiction level was high among the undergraduate students and academic engagement was low. The study discovered that there was strong inverse relationship was found between the social media addiction and academic engagement of the undergraduate students with $r(368) = -0.91, p < 0.05$. It was concluded that while social media addiction has remote link to students' academic performance, and it is directly connected to students' active participation in the learning process. It was recommended among others that the undergraduate students should be advised to always use social media platforms to support their studies and for academic discussions.

Keywords: Social media addiction, Academic engagement, Undergraduate students.

Introduction

The ubiquitous nature of handheld devices (android phones, smartphones, blackberry, iPad, iPhone among others) and cheaper cost of accessing Internet have made it possible for social media to be on increasing phase across the globe. What started out as a hobby for some computer literate people has become a social norm and way of life for people from all over the world (Boyd, 2010). Students have enfolded social media sites to connect with colleagues, share information and showcase their social lives (Boyd, 2010).

Social media as the name implies, are technology-based platforms (applications and web-based technologies) that give users opportunity to exchange ideas and share feelings in forms of audios, visuals and audio-visuals. The commonly used social media sites among students include Facebook, Tweeter, Whatsapp, LinkedIn, Instagram and Blogs. The emergence of social media sites has significantly affected face-to-face social interaction among teachers as well as students (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015). Social

media involve web-based technology that permits the use of social sites and platforms for communication, collaboration, sharing pictures, videos, news and personal experiences (Lusk, 2010). This gives its users opportunity to send, receive, post and share information. Social media are many relatively economical and broadly accessible electronic tools that allow anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common platform, or build affiliations (Dhiraj, 2013).

Students in higher institutions who regularly incorporate themselves to using social media platforms during school hours tend to perform poorly academic examinations (Choney, 2010). Undergraduate students consider the use of handheld devices as fashion, thus fail to take into cognizance where and when these devices are to be used and for what purpose. Many cases were recorded where students were caught chatting and listening to music, while lectures were going on. Some cases of examination malpractice among undergraduate students also involve use of handheld devices to access social media. This gradually indicates how addicted the undergraduate students become to the social media. The term 'addiction' dwells in an idea or an action that is previously tried, which leads to a certain satisfaction and has been anticipated to provide new fulfillment (Kirik, Arslan, Cetinkay, & Gul, 2015). Social media addiction was viewed in psychological perspective to include cognitive, emotional and behavioral addictions (Hazar, 2011). Social media addiction is a quite new area of concern to academics and other researchers. It has an effect on many aspects of human life, including academic performance, social relations, as well as physical and mental health (Njuguna, 2015).

Social media addiction is therefore a psychological factor that stimulates one to excessively use or visit a particular site for pleasure which may in turn leads to distraction toward academic and other engagements. Social media addiction was found to have negatively affected students' academic performance in polytechnics (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015). Social media has increased tolerability and usability and is becoming the most important communication tools among students especially at the higher level of educational pursuit. Its addiction has also been considered as having negative effect on academic performance (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2016). Some social media users spend progressively longer periods online and experience withdrawal symptoms when offline. Those preoccupied with Internet related activities may neglect academic, family and other social activities. Social media enhance social interaction, motivates student to learn, allows individualized learning and give room to learn in a collaborative environment (Wheeler, Yeomans & Wheeler, 2008). Thus, social media has the potentials to facilitate learning which in turn might lead to fruitful learning outcome. It permits for active learner participation in the process of learning when used appropriately (Rifkin, Longnecker, Leach, Davis, & Ortia, 2009). This simply means misuse of social media platforms might have a negative effect on students' academic performance. Levels of social media addiction are categorized into three based on the assertion made by Aramide, Ladipo and Adepoju (2015), low level with grand mean score of from 0.1 to 1.99, moderate level with grand mean score from 2.0 to 2.99 and high level with grand mean score of from 3.0 and above. These categories are also in agreement to the submission made by Idubor (2015) that social media addiction are classified into three, namely, lower, average and high.

Banquil and Chua (2009) asserted that social networking sites do affect students' academic performance adversely and cause a gradual drop of grades of students. This attributed to the time students spend connected to social networking sites instead of their studies. Some social media platforms such as Blogs and Wikipedia encourage problem solving and collaborative learning activities among undergraduate students. Social media enable learners and teachers to share and publish information educational or otherwise, this usually leads to an improved academic performance (Dale & Pymm, 2009). Facebook users were found to have a declined academic performance. Thus, students should be enlightened to reduce frequent use of social media platforms (Banquil & Chua, 2009). Social media addiction consequently gave rise to internet frequent usage within the last couple of decades (Mehmood, 2013).

A negative relationship was found between social media addiction and academic performance among tertiary institution students (Karpinski & Duberstein, 2009). Most of undergraduate students

believed social media to be platforms that facilitate learning but cautioned its frequent use during school hours as it might affect students' academic performance negatively (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2016). Research has shown that social media is negatively connected with academic performance of students. Facebook and Instagram users often devoted lesser time to their studies compared to time spent in online chatting and subsequently affects students' grade point averages (GPA) (Karpinski, 2009).

Research on the use of technology and student achievement revealed that use of computer might do more harm than good to students' academic achievement in schools (Lei, & Zhao, 2007). The use of social networking sites among students of tertiary institutions is becoming widespread and trendy (Munkaila, & Iddrisu, 2015). Most students do not want to be left out but get actively connected to the social media sites, and on that basis, demand for social media platform is ever increasing. Addiction to social media leads to isolation since extreme usage of it has reduced the level of human interaction (Munkaila, & Iddrisu, 2015). Banquill and Chua (2009) asserted that social networking sites affect students' academic achievements adversely. It directly instigates the gradual drop of grades of students. It affects students' academic performance if a student spends much time chatting instead of his/her studies.

Students' academic engagement is becoming a topical issue among educators. Academic engagement of students in this context refers to the level of student active participation in university studies through social media, which encourages the students to develop a better understanding of their academic work. Students' academic engagement is the time allocated by students to educational activities to contribute to the desired outcomes and as the quality of their related efforts (Kuh, 2001). Student engagement also involves the time students spend on tasks as well as the willingness to actively participate in the learning process (Stovall, 2003).

Rosen, Carrier and Cheever (2013) studied the behavior of middle school, high school and college students and observed that the respondents were distracted by social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram in less than six (6) minutes after the start of a lesson. In addition, frequent daily visit to social media sites were strong predictors of off-task behavior during study periods. Prominently, all of the media related technologies associated with increase in multi-tasking and decrease in academic engagement is now commonly accessed with a single Internet-enabled handheld device (Rosen et al., 2013).

Mobile social media present enormous number of experiences from sociological and psychological perspectives, each with potential that can result to distraction. For instance, a social media addict might spend much time on Instagram, recurrently checking his/her profile to have a hint on the number of "likes" and "comments" their latest post got from viewers significantly distract the users from academic engagements (Al-Menayes, 2015). Time spent on social media sites is inversely related to academic engagement. This is because two things are never done at a time considering the nature of human being. This suggests that the time dedicated to use social media comes more than likely at the expense of time that should have been spent for academic engagements (Al-Menayes, 2015).

Problem Statement

Heavy users of social media often perform poorly in examinations and assignments because of less academic commitments. Relationship between numerous measures of frequency of social media usage and time spent preparing for class and other school activities were examined, and hierarchical linear regression analysis from the study revealed that time spent on social media was much more than academic engagements (Mingle, & Adams, 2015). Taking into cognizance that many researches were conducted linking social media to academic performance and achievement, leaving out one of the most important factors to students' educational success (academic engagement), the researchers picked an interest to study relationship between social media addiction and undergraduate students' academic engagement in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated social media addiction and how it correlates with undergraduate students' academic engagements in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto (UDUS), Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined:

1. level of social media addiction among undergraduate students in UDUS;
2. level of academic engagement among undergraduate students in UDUS and;
3. whether there is relationship between social media addiction and academic engagement among undergraduate students in UDUS.

Methodology

This study was a descriptive research of a survey design. This design enables for examination of heterogeneous population and ability of researchers to generalize findings. All undergraduate students from UDUS formed the population of the study and four faculties (Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Management Sciences and Faculty of Art and Islamic Studies) were purposively selected to represent target the population. Research Advisors (2006) was used to determine 370 as sample size for the study from the population of 12,300 across the four faculties. Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of respondents.

Researchers-developed instrument tagged "Questionnaire Measuring Relationship between Social Media Addiction and Academic Engagement" (QMRSMAAE) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was based on the four (4) points Likert rating scale, and it comprised two (2) sections. Section one measured social media addiction, while section two measured academic engagement of the undergraduate students. The questionnaire was validated by senior colleagues and pilot study was carried out at Sokoto State University, which resulted in the reliability index of 0.87 and 0.97 for the two variables respectively. Data gathered for research questions 1 and 2 were analyzed using percentages and mean scores, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the research hypothesis based on .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of social media addiction among undergraduate students in UDUS?

Table 1:

Level of Social Media Addiction among Undergraduate Students in UDUS

Items	SD%	D%	A%	SA%	Mean
I dislike anything that has to do with social media.	55.7	34.9	6.5	3	1.57
My social media usage is on the increase since I began using it.	7	14.6	44.1	34.3	3.06
I often use social media while on the move.	5.1	23	35.9	35.9	3.03
I often check my social media site before every other things that I need to do.	5.1	14.9	33.5	46.5	3.21
I can risk any relationship because of social media.	5.9	14.3	43.2	36.5	3.10
I will be upset if I have to cut down the amount of time I spend using social media.	5.7	14.9	39.5	40	3.14
I often find myself using social media longer than intended.	4.1	13.2	28.9	53.8	3.32
I often find life to be boring when run out of subscription (data).	5.4	15.7	40.5	38.4	3.12
I get irritated if a lecturer steps in for lectures when I am chatting.	4.3	12.4	39.7	43.5	3.22
I think I am addicted to social media	2.4	12.2	39.2	46.2	3.29
Grand Mean					3.01

From the Table 1, the highest mean of 3.32 representing 53.8% of the respondents revealed that the undergraduate students often find themselves using social media longer than intended. Moreover, 55.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that they dislike anything that has to do with social media. Going by the categorization made by Aramide, Ladipo and Adepoju (2015); Idubur (2015), the grand mean of 3.01 is a clear indication that students of UDUS have high level of social media addiction.

Research Question 2: What is the level of academic engagement among undergraduate students in UDUS?

Table 2:
Level of Academic Engagement among Undergraduate Students in UDUS

Items	SD%	D%	A%	SA%	Mean
I often neglect my schoolwork when chatting with colleagues.	6.8	17.6	32.2	43.5	3.12
My school grades have deteriorated because of my social media usage.	3.2	15.7	33.8	47.3	3.25
My family complains frequently of my preoccupation with social media as it affects my academic commitments.	5.1	11.1	40.3	43.5	3.22
I experienced giving less time to my school activities these days.	5.9	18.9	41.9	33.2	3.02
I find myself thinking about what happened on social media during the time I spend in lectures.	4.6	13	39.2	43.2	3.21
I get carried away by social media even during examination period.	6.8	11.1	42.2	40	3.15
With social media, I am more engaged with my school activities.	53.8	45.9	0.3	0	1.46
I use social media to work with other students on school work outside of class.	51.1	46.2	2.2	0.5	1.52
Most of my social media activities are for academic purposes.	45.9	53.5	0.3	0.3	1.55
In spite of social media devotions, I am always committed to meeting up to my academic targets.	56.2	10	31.1	2.7	3.41

From the Table 2, the largest mean of 3.41 indicated that the undergraduate students strongly rejected the notion that they are always committed to meeting up to their academic targets in spite of social media devotion. Second largest mean of 3.22 revealed that parents frequently complain of how recurrent use of social media affects students’ academic commitments. Moreover, 53.8% of the respondents with mean of 1.46 strongly agreed with the statement that social does not affects their academic engagements. This can be deduced that undergraduate students’ academic engagement is increasingly declining as a result of recurrent use of social media platforms.

Hypothesis Testing

Ho₁: there was no significant relationship between social media addiction and academic engagement among undergraduate students in UDUS.

Table 3: Relationship between Social Media Addiction and Academic Engagement

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	R	P	Remark
Social media addiction	370	30.06	2.77	368	-0.91	0.02	Not Sig.
Academic engagement	370	26.93	2.4				

Table 3 showed the result of Pearson correlation result in respect of the null hypothesis. The mean scores for the social media addiction and academic engagement were respectively 30.06 and 26.93, while the standard deviation for the two groups were 2.77 and 2.40 respectively. The $r(368) = -0.91$, $p < 0.05$ (two tailed) revealed that there was significant but inverse relationship between social media addiction level and academic engagement among undergraduate students in UDUS. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussions

This study found that undergraduate students in UDUS have high level of social media addiction. It was revealed that students often check their social media sites before any other things when they woke up in the morning. This simply means social media sites consume students' time than even their school activities. It was also found that the academic engagement of the undergraduate students was low as a result of recurrent use of social media platforms. This is because most of the students become worried of what transpired on social media during the time they spend for lectures. A significant, strong but negative relationship was found between social media addiction and academic engagement among undergraduate students in the UDUS. This means that the relationship was negative, which is detrimental to students' academic achievement.

These findings contradict the submission that social media enhances social interaction, motivates students to learn, allows individualized learning and gives room to learn in a collaborative environment (Wheeler, Yeomans & Wheeler, 2008). The last finding is in agreement with assertion that social media addiction is negatively related to students' academic performance as well as engagement (Rosen et al., 2013). It is also in line with submission that the time dedicated to using social media comes more than likely at the expense of time that should have been spent for academic engagements (Al-Menayes, 2015). Thus, frequent daily visit to social media sites are strong predictors of off-task behavior during study periods among undergraduate students.

Conclusion

This study established that there was relationship between undergraduate students' social media addiction and academic engagement, and that as social media addiction was high, academic engagement was low. It was therefore concluded that while social media addiction has remote link to students' academic performance, it is directly connected to students' active participation in the learning process. One of the most important objectives of education is to achieve effective learning. This can strongly be determined by the relationship between students' social media addiction and academic engagements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. the undergraduate students should be advised to always use social media platforms to support their studies and for academic discussions;
2. the undergraduate students should not misconceive social media addiction as higher academic engagement;

3. chart rooms, mail boxes and other online discussion tools can be used to design and develop instruction for the undergraduate students to ensure that as social media addiction level increases, the students' academic engagements also increase.

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