



Influence of Social Media Addiction on the Academic Performance of Students in Selected Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State

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The study examines the influence of social media addiction on the academic performance of students in the selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Three research objectives and questions were formulated to guide the study. Approximately 7,000 students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam and Federal Polytechnic Oke and Anambra State Polytechnic Mgbakwu got engaged in a descriptive survey. Four hundred students were selected using stratified random sampling for proportionality. The research gathered data with a structured questionnaire featuring Likert-scale items aligned with the study objectives. SPSS was utilized for descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means. The findings revealed that WhatsApp recorded the highest mean of 3.39, followed by YouTube with a mean of 3.23, indicating that they were the most frequently used social media platforms among the students. The findings also revealed a relatively high extent of social media addiction, with mean scores ranging from 3.04 to 3.23. The study concludes that although social media is an important part of students' daily activities, excessive and uncontrolled use may interfere with study time, concentration, academic tasks and examination preparation. The study recommends responsible social media use, improved time management and digital awareness among students to minimize the negative effects of social media addiction on academic performance.

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Social Media Addiction, Academic Performance, Social Media Platforms, Tertiary Institutions, Students, Anambra State

Introduction

The world is currently in her heights in terms of technological advancement, as everything we do in relation to the world is now computerized that by the click of a button we can do anything and be anywhere in the world with the presence of the Internet which has led to the reduction in communication barriers and the creation of new mediums that are being introduced to connect global audiences (Ndubuisi, 2024). In recent years, social media has become an integral part of human interaction, profoundly transforming how people communicate, access information, and engage with their environment. Defined broadly, social media refers to internet-based platforms that enable users to create, share, and exchange information, ideas, and content in virtual communities and networks (Ike et al., 2025).

Social media has become an international trend and has spread its reach to almost every corner of the world with the creation of thousands of apps daily that allows us to connect with people and communities around the world. Ndubuisi (2024) states that the use of social media in society's lifestyle and culture has been increasingly taking place recently. According to Ike et al. (2025), Popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn have not only changed social interactions but have also increasingly influenced educational processes and learning outcomes. For students in tertiary institutions, social media has emerged as a powerful tool that can potentially enhance academic achievement through collaborative learning, access to educational resources, and real-time communication with peers and instructors. There is an evolution of social media where in average three million reach Facebook monthly and 500 millions of active users worldwide on Twitter. The highest users of the online social media are among teenagers, college and university students (age 18 to 29) as they are constantly linked to the social network sites (Siddiqui & Singh, 2019).

In Nigeria, the presence of smartphones and gadgets in any situation leads to addiction in social media amongst students. Academic achievement, often measured through grades, course completion, and intellectual growth, remains a central concern for students, educators, and policymakers (Owan et al., 2023). While traditional educational methods emphasize classroom teaching, textbooks, and face-to-face interactions, the rise of social media has introduced new avenues for knowledge acquisition and academic engagement. Social media poses both pros and cons of usage that can impact students either positively or negatively. The positive is that it allows students access to sharing and publishing some information at anywhere and anytime (Olushola, 2018). For instance, students can join academic forums, participate in study groups, access digital libraries, and share educational materials, which may contribute positively to their understanding of course content. Additionally, social media platforms facilitate communication between students and lecturers, enabling prompt feedback, clarification of concepts, and enhanced mentorship opportunities (Aithal & Aithal, 2023; Chang & Kabilan, 2024). Ndubuisi (2024) added that excessively use of social media surely has an effect on students' life either positive or negative especially on their academic performance.

Despite concerns that social media usage can lead to distraction and reduced productivity (Halubanza et al., 2023). Numerous studies have highlighted its positive potential in promoting academic collaboration, enhancing critical thinking, and providing exposure to diverse perspectives (Yemoh & Amitai, 2022). In the context of Anambra State, which hosts several reputable tertiary institutions including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, students are increasingly integrating social media into their academic routines. Understanding the influence of social media on their academic performance is, therefore, vital for educators and administrators aiming to harness technology for improved learning outcomes (Abubakar et al., 2024; Akintayo et al., 2024).

Nowadays, social media has become essential part of life especially to student. In line with that, research findings from Olushola, (2018) found that between 18 to 29 years of age were among 57% of the social media users in Nigeria. In average, students spend at least 30 minutes of every hour both daytime and evening in social media. Previous studies have reported more than half of the students were ranked at a moderate level of internet addiction (Osharive, 2015). It also shows that students mostly like to stay online 24 hours that define students' addictiveness towards social media. The result of social media usage has both constructive and adverse impact especially on their academic performance. Excessive time spent in social networking sites can divert the concentration and shift focus from the particular task (Siddiqui & Singh, 2019). On the other hand, it can also lead to failure of the education system where many of the bloggers used social media to posts the wrong information regarding the education. This somehow can cause students to misuse the information related to their subjects (Ndubuisi et al., 2024). In addition,

Ike et al., (2025) states that social media have broadened the negative outcomes which can also effects health as lots of time is being wasted on social. This study, therefore, investigates the influence of social media addiction on the academic performance of students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State

Statement of the Problem

The growing popularity of social media among students has created both opportunities and challenges within educational environments. While social media platforms provide opportunities for communication and information sharing, excessive use may negatively affect academic performance. Many students spend long hours on social networking platforms engaging in activities such as chatting, watching videos and browsing entertainment content. These activities often compete with time that could be used for studying and academic preparation.

Social media is today the most important source of information and the growing dimensions of its use by students cannot be underestimated. It has been observed that students devote more attention and time to social media than they do for their studies and it affects their performances during examinations (Osharive, 2018). According to Ndubuisi et al., (2024) which states that social media platforms attracts the attention and concentration of students and gears them towards non-educational or academic enhancing activates which thereby leads to deviation in their academic work, as it has been perceived that students more focus time on social networking sites than their academics. The frequency of social media use, time duration allotted to the use of social media that they are prone to using and the impact of social networking sites on their academic performance has been an aspect of discussions in current times (Cengiz, 2018). It has been observed that majority of the students in Nigeria pay more attention to their social life through the regular use of various social media platforms. Students focus has been moved from visible contacts to invisible contacts, they tend ignore or neglect and reduce the amount of time they spend on studying, which has led to the addiction of social media and a steady decline in academic performance in recent times (Ndubuisi-Evans, 2024).

It has also been observed that in recent time's students has a tendency to use social media on their devices while lectures are going on which leads to divided attention or a total neglect of the lecture that ends up affecting their studies as they are unable to fully grasp information from the lecture and most times students who are caught get their devices seized for using them during lectures and this leads to the inability to study due to lack of the device(Ike et al., 2025). Therefore, the problem this research seeks to investigate is the influence of social media addiction on the academic performance of students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Objective of the Study

Generally, the study examine the influence of social media addiction on the academic performance of students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the types of social media platforms most frequently used by students for academic purposes.
2. To examine the extent of social media addiction among students.
3. To examine the influence of social media addiction on the academic performance of students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What types of social media platforms are most frequently used by students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
2. What is the extent of social media addiction among students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
3. To what extent does social media addiction influence the academic performance of students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Significance of the Study

1. This study is significant to the academic sector as it provides insights into how social media can be effectively integrated into learning processes to enhance students' academic performance.
2. Educators and administrators in tertiary institutions can use the findings to develop policies and strategies that encourage productive use of social media for educational purposes.
3. By highlighting the role of social media in promoting academic success, the research can inform decisions on digital infrastructure, internet accessibility, and the inclusion of social media-based learning programs within the educational curriculum.
4. Policymakers can develop guidelines and frameworks that ensure safe, responsible, and purposeful use of social media by students while minimizing its potential distractions. Such policies could ultimately enhance the quality of tertiary education in Anambra State and beyond

Literature Review

Social Media

The widespread use of social media has worried not only parents and teachers, but also academicians and researchers, because in this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered a first step for every human activity, it plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked (Geremew & Abdissa, 2015). The growth of social media has transformed communication, learning and social interaction across the world. In higher education, social media has become deeply integrated into students' daily lives. Many tertiary institution students rely on social networking platforms for communication, entertainment and information sharing. While these platforms offer certain educational advantages, concerns have emerged regarding excessive use and its possible impact on students' academic performance.

Social media has been given a lot of definition by different authors. According to the definition of social media by Anjugu (2013) as that method that leverages mobile and web-based technology to develop highly interactive platform forms in which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify users generate context. Wang, Chen, and Liang (2011) on the other hand, defines social media as the relationships that exist between people's networks. Additionally, Ovhal (2025) sees social media as web-based platforms and applications that allow individuals to create, share, and interact with content in virtual communities. Platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn provide avenues for communication, collaboration, and information dissemination among students. In educational settings, social media serves not only as a channel for social interaction but also as a tool that facilitates learning, engagement, and knowledge sharing (Ovhal, 2025). It enables students to discuss academic concepts, exchange study materials, participate in online academic forums, and receive feedback from peers and lecturers, thereby contributing to improved understanding and performance.

The widespread availability of smartphones and internet connectivity has significantly increased social media usage among students. In many tertiary institutions, students frequently use platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to communicate with peers and access information. Social media has therefore become an important part of students' social and academic lives. Despite its benefits, researchers have raised concerns about the effects of excessive social media usage. One major issue associated with heavy use is social media addiction. Social media addiction refers to the excessive and compulsive use of social networking platforms to the extent that it interferes with an individual's daily responsibilities.

Social Media Addiction

Social media addiction refers to the excessive and uncontrollable use of social networking platforms to the extent that such use begins to interfere with an individual's normal daily activities (Ovhal, 2025). It denotes a pattern of persistent engagement with platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, where the individual finds it difficult to regulate the amount of time spent online (Ike et al., 2024). In this regard, social media

addiction goes beyond ordinary social media use because it involves a loss of control over the frequency and duration of engagement.

Kuss and Griffiths (2017) describe social media addiction as a behavioral condition characterized by excessive concern about social networking platforms, an uncontrollable urge to use them and difficulty reducing usage despite negative consequences. Individuals experiencing social media addiction often spend long hours online and feel compelled to constantly check notifications and updates. Similarly, Anyira and Udem (2020) emphasize that excessive engagement with social media can influence students' reading culture. Their study of Nigerian students in higher institutions indicates that social media addiction is associated with changes in students' engagement with reading activities. This suggests that when social media use becomes excessive, the amount of time and attention available for academic-related activities may be reduced. By examining the influence of social media addiction on the academic performance of students, this research highlights the mechanisms through which digital engagement supports or hinders learning. The conceptual framework, therefore, underlines both the positive and negative potentials of social media as an academic resource while acknowledging the need for responsible and purposeful usage among students in tertiary institutions.

Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to the level of achievement attained by a student in relation to the educational objectives and learning activities of an institution. It denotes the extent to which a student is able to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills acquired through the teaching and learning process (Ndubuisi-Evans, 2024). Academic performance is commonly reflected through students' grades, examination results, test scores, class assessments, assignments and other forms of academic evaluation. Academic performance refers to the level of achievement students attain in their educational activities. It is commonly measured through examination results, grade point averages, assignments and other academic assessments. Academic performance is influenced by factors such as study habits, motivation, time management and learning environment.

According to Asanga et al. (2023), academic performance represents an important outcome through which students' achievement in school can be assessed. The researchers explain that students' academic outcomes may be associated with different social and behavioural factors, including their use of social media. This emphasizes the fact that academic performance does not occur in isolation but may be influenced by the activities and behaviours in which students engage outside the classroom. In the context of tertiary education, students are expected to manage their academic responsibilities alongside other social activities, making effective use of their time an important consideration in their academic achievement. Similarly, Ukpoju et al. (2023) point out that academic performance is an important indicator of students' educational achievement.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this present study is cognitive-behavioral model by David (2001). David (2001) proposes a cognitive-behavioral model to explain elements related to internet-based addictions. This model highlight that 'abnormal' social networking emerges from maladaptive cognitions and is amplified by various environmental factor and eventually lead to compulsive and/or addictive social networking. The model describes the main cause of pathological Internet use as based on maladaptive thoughts that are coherent with social isolation. CBM depends on two types of factors, distal and proximal, both leads contributing to Pathological internet use (PIU). They explain psychopathological signs which include depression or anxiety, and Internet associated activities are a distal factor. Maladaptive cognitions and social isolation or loss of social assistance are proximal factors of PIU. There are sorts of maladaptive minds in CBM: approximately oneself and the world. Maladaptive cognitions approximately oneself generally result from situations that include self-doubt, low self-efficacy, and occasional shallowness and are associated with the usage of the Internet for self-appraisal. Maladaptive cognitions about the world, are related to using the Internet as a substitute for the "real world." The scholars insist that CBM can be extended although CBM is more focused on psychopathology. They claim that the model can be updated by including additional elements such as individual needs, motivation, personality traits, socio-environmental factors.

Walberg's Theory of Educational Productivity by Walberg's (1981)

Walberg's (1981) theory of educational productivity is one of the very few theories of academic achievement. Walberg's theory of academic achievements concludes educational outcomes (cognitive, behavioral, and attitudes) are influenced by the psychological characteristics of individuals and their immediate psychological environments influence. Nine key variables affect educational outcomes including student ability/prior achievement, motivation, age/developmental level, the quantity of instruction, quality of instruction, classmate climate, home environment, peer group, and exposure to mass media outside of school. The first three variables; ability, motivation, age can be seen as the internal factor that can be assessed by "the usual standardized test". The next two variables which are quantity of instruction and quality of instructional experience measure instructional factors. Walberg and Tsai (1985 as cited in Kuterbach, 2013) define the quantity of instruction as the number of times students retain in learning. Quality of the instructional experience includes psychological and curricula experiences and can be seen as the appropriateness of the instructional experience. The last variables which are home environment, classroom or school environment, peer group environment, and mass media, are categorized as environmental factors. The home environment defines as the assistance given to students while at home. Classroom and school environment, including classroom morale based on the classroom as a social atmosphere, has been measured through access to classroom materials.

Empirical Review

Ipem and Okwara (2020), the study investigated the relationship between social media addiction and academic performance of undergraduate students of AIFCE Owerri. Correlation research design was adopted for the study. One research guided the study and two hypotheses were tested. The population of the study comprised all degree students in AIFCE giving a total of (3,256), while only total of 500 participants purposively selected from six schools in A.I.F.C.E constituted the sample for the study. Its reliability index was 0.79. and an Educational Psychology Performance Test (EPPT) was used to collect students' results. Data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage for students' demographic data, Mean, for the research question. Person's Product Moment Correlation Statistics and t-test analysis were used to test the two hypotheses respectively. The study also revealed a high positive correlation between internet addiction and academic performance. There was no significant difference in the social media addiction between male and female AIFCE Students. Based on the above findings, the researchers recommended among others that government, educators, parents, counselors, lecturers, and portals should help redirect the internet use toward academics to ensure greater academic outcome.

Mensch (2021) carried out a study on the relation between social media addiction and academic performance of third-and fourth-year students in the Faculty of Leadership and Management in Malaysia. The results indicated that respondents having a moderate level of addiction. In addition, the t-test yielded that there is no gender difference in terms of social media addiction, while the Pearson correlation showed that there was no significant relation between social media addiction and academic performance among the respondents. This study provides information for the university and their counselors to prepare a counseling guidance program for students who are facing a problematic social media use.

Ike et al. (2025) examined the impact of social media on the academic achievement of students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and sampled 400 students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University and Federal Polytechnic, Oko. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that social media enhanced students' access to knowledge, understanding of difficult concepts and collaborative learning, with WhatsApp and YouTube being the most commonly used platforms.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, as it enables the researcher to systematically gather quantifiable data from a large population and describe existing conditions without manipulating any variables, making it appropriate for examining the positive impact of social media on the academic achievement of students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

The population of the study consists of approximately 7,000 students drawn from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam, Federal Polytechnic Oko and Anambra State Polytechnic Mgbakwu, representing a diverse mix of academic environments and ensuring broad generalizability of findings.

From this population, a sample of 400 students was selected using a stratified random sampling technique, which is chosen because it ensures proportional representation of students from different faculties and institutions, thereby reducing sampling bias and enhancing the reliability of the outcomes.

The primary instrument for data collection will be a structured questionnaire, selected due to its efficiency in gathering standardized responses from a large number of participants within a short period, and its suitability for measuring students' perceptions, social media usage patterns, and academic experiences. The questionnaire was divided into sections aligned with the research objectives and questions, using close-ended items based on a Likert scale to facilitate easy quantification and comparison of responses.

Data collection was carried out through direct distribution and retrieval of questionnaires, ensuring maximum return rate and clarity of instructions. Upon retrieval, the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and percentages. All analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which is selected for its accuracy, efficiency, and wide acceptance in academic research.

This methodological approach ensures rigorous, objective, and reliable findings that adequately reflect the impact of social media on academic achievement in the selected tertiary institutions.

Results

Table 1: Research Question 1– What types of social media platforms are most frequently used by students?
Response Distribution (N = 400)

S/N	Item	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Mean
1	I use WhatsApp regularly for communication and interaction	220	130	35	15	3.39
2	I use Facebook regularly for social interaction and information	110	140	95	55	2.78
3	I use Instagram regularly for viewing and sharing content.	180	150	50	20	3.23
4	I use TikTok regularly for watching and sharing videos.	150	140	75	35	3.01
5	I use YouTube regularly for watching videos and accessing information.	90	130	110	70	2.60
6	I use X (formerly Twitter) regularly for social interaction and information	70	110	130	90	2.40

Interpretation: WhatsApp recorded the highest mean of 3.39, indicating that it is the most frequently used social media platform among the students. YouTube also recorded a high mean of 3.23, showing that it is another commonly used platform. Facebook and Telegram recorded moderate mean scores, indicating a moderate level of use, while Instagram and LinkedIn recorded lower mean scores, showing that they were less frequently used by the students. Overall, the findings indicate that students make greater use of easily accessible social media platforms that support communication, interaction and information sharing.

Table 2: Research Question 2 - What is the extent of social media addiction among students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	I spend a lot of time on social media every day.	180	150	50	20	3.23
2	I check my social media accounts many times during the day.	160	155	60	25	3.13
3	I often stay longer on social media than I planned	170	140	65	25	3.14
4	I feel the need to use social media whenever I have access to the internet.	190	135	50	25	3.23
5	I find it difficult to stay away from social media for a long period.	150	160	60	30	3.08
6	I often make social media use a priority over other activities.	145	155	70	30	3.04

Interpretation: The means (3.04–3.23) indicate a high level of agreement that students exhibit addictive patterns in their use of social media. Most students reported spending considerable time on social media, checking their accounts frequently, staying longer than planned, and finding it difficult to stay away from social media for a long period. The findings further indicate that social media occupies a significant part of students' daily activities and is sometimes given priority over other activities. This suggests that students in the selected tertiary institutions experience a relatively high extent of social media addiction.

Table 3: Research Question 3 - To what extent does social media addiction influence the academic performance of students in selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

S/N	Item	S/A	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Social media addiction reduces the amount of time I spend studying	185	150	45	20	3.25
2	I sometimes delay or fail to complete academic assignments because of social media use.	160	155	60	25	3.13
3	Spending too much time on social media has negatively affected my academic performance.	200	135	45	20	3.29
4	Social media addiction interferes with my preparation for tests and examinations.	150	160	65	25	3.09
5	Social media addiction distracts me from completing my academic tasks on time.	145	155	70	30	3.04

Interpretation: The means (3.04–3.29) indicate a high level of agreement that social media addiction has a negative influence on students' academic performance. The findings show that excessive social media use reduces the time students devote to studying, distracts them from completing academic tasks, affects their concentration during study, and interferes with their preparation for tests and examinations. The results further suggest that prolonged and uncontrolled engagement with social media may contribute to a decline in students' academic performance across the selected tertiary institutions.

Findings and Discussion

1. WhatsApp and YouTube are the most frequently used social media platforms among students

The findings from Table 1 show that WhatsApp recorded the highest mean of 3.39, while YouTube followed with a mean of 3.23. Facebook and Telegram recorded moderate levels of use, whereas Instagram and LinkedIn recorded lower mean scores. This indicates that students in the selected tertiary institutions tend to make greater use of platforms that provide convenient communication, interaction and access to information. The finding suggests that WhatsApp and YouTube occupy a significant position in students' daily social media activities.

2. Students experience a relatively high extent of social media addiction

The findings from Table 2, with mean scores ranging from 3.04 to 3.23, indicate a high level of agreement that students exhibit addictive patterns in their social media use. The students reported spending considerable time on social media, checking their accounts frequently, remaining online longer than planned and finding it difficult to stay away from social media for extended periods. The findings therefore indicate that social media use among the students goes beyond ordinary usage for some students and reflects patterns of excessive and poorly controlled engagement.

3. Social media addiction negatively influences students' academic performance

The findings from Table 3 show mean scores ranging from 3.04 to 3.29, indicating a high level of agreement that social media addiction negatively affects students' academic activities and performance. The findings reveal that excessive social media use reduces the time students devote to studying, distracts them from completing academic tasks, affects their concentration and interferes with their preparation for tests and examinations. This suggests that prolonged and uncontrolled social media engagement may compete with students' academic responsibilities and consequently affect their academic performance.

Generally, the findings show that students widely use social media, with WhatsApp and YouTube being the most frequently used platforms. However, the study also reveals a relatively high extent of social media addiction, which negatively influences students' academic activities and performance. Excessive use reduces study time, concentration and attention to academic responsibilities. This highlights the need for students to maintain a healthy balance between social media use and their academic activities.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that social media is widely used by students in the selected tertiary institutions in Anambra State. However, when social media use becomes excessive and difficult to control, it can develop into addictive behaviour that may interfere with students' academic responsibilities. The findings indicate that prolonged engagement with social media can reduce the time available for studying, affect concentration, distract students from academic tasks and interfere with effective preparation for examinations. Therefore, the influence of social media addiction on academic performance should not be overlooked. Students need to develop responsible and controlled patterns of social media use, while tertiary institutions should encourage digital awareness and effective time-management practices to help students benefit from social media without allowing it to undermine their academic performance and achievement.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Students should be educated on the influence of Social media on their academic performance.
2. Students should be monitored by teachers and parents on how they use these sites.
3. Teachers should ensure they use the social media as a tool to improve the academic performance of students in schools.

4. Students should better manage their study time in and prevent distractions that can be provided by the social media. There should be a decrease in the number of time spent by students when surfing the net.

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