APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND STUDENTS' LEARNING IN NIGERIA

[1]A. A. OGUNDARE [2]A. B. AMBODE, PH.D [3]F. O. OLAYINKA, PH.D & [4]S. T. FAMUWAGUN, PH.D

[1, 2, 3, & 4]Science Education Department, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria
abosede.ogundare@fuoye.edu.ng; folasade.olayinka@fuoye.edu.ng
akinbiyi.ambode@fuoye.edu.ng; samuel.famuwagun@fuoye.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper discusses the appraisal of social media addiction and student learning in Nigeria. Technology integration into education is a means of drawing attention and increasing interest of students through using various emerging tools. Social media are interactive web-based media channels that provide the audience with a variety of content and places to associate, share thoughts, experiences, contacts knowledge, job searching, career tips and other allied matters. Social media consists of applications such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google, Facebook and YouTube etc., The utilization of social media platforms in education assist learners, teachers, parents, and school administrators to access valuable information and to interact with students' groups and various educational technology platforms that produce effective teaching and learning process and however, social media addiction has posed serious threats to students in various fields. Social media in education offers students the chance to locate experts in the same field or subject and these experts can offer solutions to the issues that one needs help with.

Keywords: Appraisal, Social Media, Social Media Addiction, Students' Learning

Introduction

Emerging technologies in communication have improved our societies in recent times and the whole world has turned into a 'Global village'. These technologies have widened the scope of communication and helped people to become more informed and progressive about the latest trends in our environment. Technology integration into education will help to enhance students' attention and stimulate their interest through the use of emerging tools (Ghavifekr & Rosdy 2015). It involves standards and practices of gaining knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that can bring about the survival growth, and development of a nation (Lawal, 2013).

Scientific knowledge is rapidly expanding with the use of information and communication technology resources and services. These resources include computers, digital cameras, multimedia software applications, internet etc. (Olayinka, 2019). Buetner (2017), perceived social media as computer-facilitated outfits that permit individuals or enterprises to generate, interchange information, job interest, share thoughts, virtual communities and network. As stated by Ali et al. (2016), social media encompasses a range of application software that facilitates connection among individuals for the purpose of sharing information. Examples of such software include Facebook, Google, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Instagram, Skype, and YouTube.

Nigeria is identified as one of the developing countries in which the usage of the internet and social media has pointedly expanded over the last few years (Eke et al., 2023). Social media platforms are commonly utilized by students and they allocate ample hours on these sites as part of their day-to-day existence (Asemah, et al., 2013). In recent studies the utilization of social media has a major influence

on students' learning. Azizi et al, (2019) found out that university students are the ones that utilize social media mostly among numerous age groups of learners. These platforms create many opportunities for learners in terms of enhancing teaching and learning and serve as threats to students in terms of addiction, isolation, and distraction among others. Researchers such as Wickramanayake & Jika (2018) and Adegboyega (2020) conducted studies on the relationship between social media and the academic performance of students in a variety of nations and educational institutions.

Sharma and Choudhary (2020) found a more positive connection between social media usage and academic achievement, especially when used for educational purposes. Their research examined the impact of platforms such as YouTube and Facebook where students accessed educational content, tutorials and academic forums. They observed that students who actively engaged with educational resources on social media demonstrated improved academic performance. The study suggested that social media could provide a vast array of supplementary learning materials and foster collaborative learning. Also noted that the visual and interactive nature of YouTube tutorials combined with the ability to discuss topics in Facebook study groups helped enhance their understanding of complex biological processes, resulting in higher grades in science subjects. Similarly, Alhassan and Osman (2021) explored the positive effects of social media use in secondary school students in Ghana. Their study focused on how platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook contributed to better academic outcomes. They found that students who participated in educational groups on WhatsApp or watched science-related content on YouTube gained a deeper understanding of scientific concepts. The ability to access instructional videos and engage in peer discussions online enabled these students to clarify doubts, share learning resources, and deepen their knowledge of complex topics. The research highlighted the value of social media as a supplementary educational tool, helping students reinforce what they learned in class and improve their academic results. However, the research also indicates that excessive social media use can lead to detrimental effects, especially when students lack self-regulation.

Kuss and Griffiths (2017) discussed how social media addiction could negatively impact academic performance, emphasizing that students who spent long hours on platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter often experienced lower academic engagement. Their study found that the constant stream of notifications and social interactions led to distractions, reducing time available for academic tasks such as studying or completing assignments. Students who could not regulate their social media usage reported feeling overwhelmed by the amount of time they spent online, which ultimately hindered their academic focus. This is particularly problematic, where deep focus and sustained effort are required to master complex ideas and theories. Therefore, this research was on the appraisal of social media addiction and student learning in Nigeria.

Social Media Utilization
Social media utilization refers to how students actively engage with various online platforms for a range of activities, including social interaction, entertainment, and education. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube offer a variety of functionalities that can impact students' behaviors and academic outcomes. While these platforms are primarily designed for social interaction, they have increasingly been used by students for educational purposes. Social media platforms enable students to join academic groups, share resources, watch educational videos, and participate in online discussions, all of which can enhance their understanding of subjects like biology (Alhassan & Osman, 2021). Social media is a channel that uses web-based and mobile technology to

form extremely high communication platforms where the public can co-create, share, discuss, and revise content generated by the users.

Social media utilization refers to the ways in which students engage with social media platforms for various purposes, including academic, social, and recreational activities. Studies show that social media can enhance learning by offering access to educational videos, participating in online study groups, and collaborating on academic projects (Sharma & Choudhary, 2020). However, when students use social media excessively for non-academic purposes, such as socializing or entertainment, it can detract from their academic responsibilities. This shift in focus can lead to procrastination and hinder the ability to concentrate on academic tasks, particularly in subjects that require sustained attention (Junco, 2012). As Alhassan and Osman (2021) suggest, the negative impact on academic achievement becomes more pronounced when students engage in time-consuming social media activities that do not directly contribute to their educational objectives.

The extent of social media utilization can vary widely among students, depending on factors such as age, academic focus, and personal interests. Some students are able to use social media in a balanced manner, dedicating time to both educational content and leisure activities, while others may become overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information and distractions available online. This variability in usage patterns makes it important to understand the different ways in which students engage with social media and how it affects their studies.

The various kinds of social media sites include; social bookmarking (Blink list, simple) which is a networking technique Sthat involves identifying websites and looking through others' bookmarked websites; social news where people interact by commenting on and voting for items (Blogs, Propello); social networking platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, 2go, and BB Chat allow users to communicate by adding new friends, commenting on images and videos, and sharing discussion groups; social photo and video sharing allows people to interact by exchanging images or videos and leaving comments on user-submitted content. (Fliki, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube). Wikis facilitate interaction through the gathering and modification of entries. (Wikia, Wikipedia).

Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015) opined that students mostly utilize social media platform to chat and connects with families and friends rather than for educational purpose to seek knowledge and skills. Also, Taluue, et al. (2018), claimed that the primary reason students utilize social media platforms is to gather information for academic and recreational purposes. However, social media platforms assist students to create and sustain relationships with one another where problems relating to academics can be chat with the purpose of knowledge sharing.

Features of Social Media Platforms

1.   It is an open web space platform: social media platforms offer the handlers or viewers an open web space to upload their content.
2.   It has an exceptional web address: the users have a sole web address that comprises the users' unique identity, which enhances them to disseminate their message in real-time.
3.   It creates chances for building profiles: social media platforms assist people in gaining access to like-minded individuals to communicate with each other with the likelihood of growing personal profiles.
4.   It enhances online interactions with associates and families: Social media platforms can be used for online meetings. Families and friends who are far away from each other can get in touch with each other through online social media platforms. These platforms enable sharing of vital files, photos, video, and documents with one another.

5.   It allows real-time information upload capacity: social media platforms offer the user opportunity to upload personal information or other documents at any time of the clock i.e., 24/7 throughout 365 days a year.

6.   Instant Response/comment: the instant response or feedback of social media communication makes it resemble face-to-face communication, provided the individuals involved are online at the time when the dialogue is ongoing. However, feedback is crucial to an effective communication process.

7.   Time hallmark: in social media platforms, every post has a time frame which indicates maybe the post is either new or old. (Akram & Kumar, 2017).

The Role of Social Media in Teaching and Learning

The role of social media in education has been widely debated. On the one hand, it can act as a powerful tool for learning, providing students with access to a wealth of information that can support their academic endeavors. For example, educational YouTube channels and academic Facebook groups allow students to access instructional videos, tutorials, and peer discussions related to biology. This creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment that may otherwise be unavailable in traditional classroom settings (Sharma & Choudhary, 2020). On the other hand, social media can also become a distraction, especially when used for non-academic purposes such as chatting with friends or watching entertainment content

The utilization of social media platforms in education assist learners, teachers, parents, and school administrators to access valuable information and to interact with students' groups and various educational technology platforms that produce effective teaching and learning process (Oguguo, et al., 2020). Through the websites, one can integrate social media platforms that will enhance information sharing and connection.

Another important role of social media in education is that it offers students the chance to locate experts in the same field or subject and these experts can offer solutions to the issues that one needs help with. It provides the opportunity to establish and maintain relationships with the experts and gain vital knowledge from them, this will encourage one to develop fantastic outcomes. Social media platforms can expand your view and increase your interest on various issues (Jamil, et al., 2022). Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube, Skype, WhatsApp, and Instagram among others enhance educational institutions to develop the capacity to interact with students boundlessly. These media can be used in disseminating campus news, broadcasting information, and sharing updates. This develops interactions between the institution and students which can help solve many challenges facing them through group discussions. Some social media platforms can share educational videos that stimulate the students and assist them in their subjects. Some social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram can enhance sustainable live video engagement between schools and students (Sivakumar, et al., 2023)

Social Media Addiction's Effects on Students' Learning

The prevalence of social media addiction is not low, according to empirical studies conducted globally. For instance, various studies such as Garett, Liu & Young (2018), Gıca, (2020), and Hou, et al., (2019) on student addiction to social media have been undertaken based on systematic reviews. By supporting peer-to-peer learning of knowledge and skills cooperation and other cultural manifestations, social media platforms can help learning and skill enhancement outside of official learning situations.

Identification of social media adductors can be done by pointing out those students who spent extra time on their phone surfing the internet or interacting on social media. The repercussion is that these

students' availability for chatting on social media platforms turns out to become habitual and addictive. This set of students abandons other important academic responsibilities and are committed to Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp Snapchat, and TikTok. Social media adductors usually spend time planning or thinking about how to use one social media or the other, they feel the urge to use the platforms they are addicted to more and more. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube are among the social media platforms used by students.

According to Andreassen (2015), the pervasiveness rates of social media addiction ranged from 1.6% (in a Nigerian sample) to 34% (in a sample of Chinese students). New evidence recommends that social media addiction is connected to several negative outcomes, including sleep deprivation (Xanidis & Brignell, 2016), decreased work and academic performance (Leung, 2015), decreased self-confidence and life contentment (Hawi & Samaha, 2016), and mental health issues.

Researchers have also discovered changes in brain anatomy linked to social media addiction, such as diminished gray matter volumes in the bilateral amygdala (He et al., 2017), that are comparable to those linked to other behavioral addictions (such as gambling).

There is now a ton of published evidence demonstrating how frequently college students use social media. For instance, Tang and Koh (2017) polled 1,100 college students in Singapore using the 6-item Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS), and they discovered that 29.5% of the respondents fit the definition of social media addiction. Using Young's criteria for Internet addiction, another study in China found that 34% of Chinese college students suffer from social media addiction. Furthermore, recent research found that college students' increased use of alcohol and other addictive behaviors was related to their exposure to more online social networks (Rinker et al., 2016). This shows that social media addiction among college students has become a significant societal issue that requires greater study and attention from both the public and researchers.

Conclusion

This study concludes that most of the students use diverse social media platforms including YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Google, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat to mention a few. Nowadays, it is obvious that social media is already a huge portion of our daily lives therefore; we need to embed it into the teaching and learning process. Most students use social media to communicate with friends and family, some students use it for uploading pictures, sharing videos, and for personal socialization, few use it for gaining knowledge, sharing information, and promoting social and political awareness. Average students spend one to three hours every day on social media. The behavioral addiction known as "social media addiction" shows itself as compulsive behavior, a lack of interest in other pursuits, as well as physical and psychological symptoms, including mental illness. Social media addiction will make students spend more time on the platform for education purposes, fun, and entertainment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made:

i.   Nigerian universities should organize conferences, seminars, and workshops to educate the students on the side effects or the not-too-good aspects of social media addiction on their learning process.

ii. Lecturers must discourage the utilization of social media platforms during physical lectures unless otherwise stated.

iii. Students should also be motivated to harness their capacities of using social media platforms for assignments, research, attending conferences, online learning, scholarship, security awareness, and other related academic work.

iv. The national assembly and state house of assembly should endeavor to establish laws that regulate the utilization of social media platforms by learners and what they broadcast or access through social media.

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