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# SOCIAL MEDIA, STUDENTS' ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AND SELF-ESTEEM IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Social media's explosive expansion has changed students' daily lives and sparked worries about how it may affect their self-esteem and academic drive. This study examined how social media use affected Nigerian university students in Abuja. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 500 students at chosen institutions as part of a descriptive survey methodology. Social media use is very common, according to the findings, with 68% of students on average saying that it interferes with their ability to focus, distracts them from their studies, and frequently conflicts with their academic priorities. The majority of students pointed out detrimental effects on academic motivation and confidence, even if some acknowledged minor advantages including emotional support from friends online. Social media use was not statistically significant, although there was a strong correlation between social media, academic motivation, and self-esteem, according to the results of a chi-square analysis. This suggests that heavy use diminishes self-worth and erodes academic confidence. These results are consistent with earlier studies that linked social comparison and extended web use to psychological and academic difficulties. According to the study's findings, social media presents chances for teamwork, but excessive use jeopardises focus, academic achievement, and mental health. For the purpose of helping students to balance their social and academic lives, higher education institutions should include student support systems, awareness campaigns, and digital literacy initiatives.*

**Keywords:** Social media, academic motivation, self-esteem, tertiary students

## Introduction

Over the past few years, social media has emerged as one of the most significant factors influencing the attitudes, behaviours, and academic involvement of university students worldwide. The explosive rise of digital platforms like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and X (which used to be called Twitter) in Nigeria, especially in Abuja, has sparked serious worries about how they can affect students' academic performance and mental health. Social media is an effective tool for collaboration among students, communication, along with information exchange. Yet, academic motivation and self-esteem are also at risk due to its addictive qualities, overuse, and propensity to promote social comparison (Olowu & Ogunnubi, 2021).

In higher education, educational motivation which is a reflection of a student's desire to accomplish learning objectives is essential to both achievement as well as learning. According to Adegboyega and Adeniran (2020), students' perceptions of their own talents and interactions in academic and social settings are influenced by their self-esteem, which is defined as an individual's assessment of their own value. According to studies, excessive social media use can either boost academic motivation by facilitating peer collaboration and providing access to academic materials, or it can lower it by diverting attention, procrastination, and a reliance on virtual recognition (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2022).

When undergraduates compare themselves to the well-manicured lifestyles of their friends and influencers, social comparison sparked by social media frequently lowers self-esteem on a global scale (Appel et al., 2020). Based on their over-reliance on internet-based resources, Nigerian educational institutions in Abuja are seeing an increase in incidents of decreasing student participation, diverted attention during lectures, and diminished trust in academic responsibilities. Such challenges highlight the significance of critically analysing social media's dual function as a facilitator and a hindrance of students' academic and psychological growth (Chukwuere & Chukwuere, 2021). Studies reveal that social media can facilitate peer education and support, but it also encourages procrastination and makes students to become distracted (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2022). Reduced academic drive and low self-esteem are directly associated with these detrimental effects. Therefore, this study aims to provide empirical evidence to inform interventions for healthy use of digital platforms by examining the effects of social media on academic motivation and self-esteem among tertiary students in Abuja, Nigeria.

**Statement of the Problem**

Although social media has made it easier to network, share knowledge, and become more digitally literate, it has also sparked concerns about the detrimental effects it may have on students' psychological health and academic motivation in higher education. During study or lecture periods, students in Abuja frequently

spend a significant amount of time on social media. The aforementioned has raised worries about deteriorating concentration, decreased involvement in class activities, and assignment procrastination.

The impact on pupils' self-esteem remains just as worrisome. Many students have low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, or unrealistic expectations for their social and academic lives as a result of continuously comparing their own qualities to their fellow mates or online personas. Fewer researches have looked specifically at social media's impact on academic motivation and self-esteem among students in Abuja's tertiary institutions, despite the fact that numerous studies have evaluated the impact of social media on academic performance in Nigeria (Ezeah & Asogwa, 2020). The issue of poor motivation, disengagement, and waning confidence could continue to jeopardise the standard of education in the Federal Capital Territory if this gap is not closed.

**Objectives of the Study**

This study's principal goals are:

1. To assess the prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja, Nigeria.
2. To examine the relationship between social media use, academic motivation, and self-esteem among tertiary students in Abuja.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions are put forth to direct this investigation:

1. What is the prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja?
2. Is there a significant relationship between social media use, academic motivation, and self-esteem among tertiary students in Abuja?

**Research Hypotheses**

This study will test a number of hypotheses:

1. There is no significant prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja.
2. There is no significant relationship between social media use, academic motivation, and self-esteem among tertiary students in Abuja.

**Methodology**

A well-organized questionnaire was used in this correlational study to gather data from 500 tertiary students in Abuja, who were picked from a total of about 15,000 students enrolled in four major universities: Federal Polytechnic, Kubwa; Baze University; Nile University of Nigeria; and the University of Abuja. Students from various faculties were identified using a purposive sampling technique. Three constructs were measured by the instrument: self-esteem, academic motivation, and social media use. A 5-point Likert scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" was used to record responses. In order to verify the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05, data were analysed using chi-square analysis, descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlation. The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27.

**Validity of the Instruments**

Evaluation by experts in communication studies and educational psychology established construct validity and content validity. In accordance with earlier empirical studies on social media and motivation, the questionnaire was created (Akande et al., 2022; Adebayo & Okoro, 2023). 50 students who were not part of the main sample participated in pilot research that verified the instrument's capacity to measure the three constructs. The factor analysis provided additional evidence that the items were theoretically valid.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

For every construct, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated. The reliability values for the social media use scale, academic motivation scale, and self-esteem scale were 0.80, 0.83, and 0.85, respectively. High internal consistency is shown by these results, which are over the permissible cutoff of 0.70. A two-week test-retest reliability study with 40 participants produced a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.88, suggesting stability over the course of time.

**Presentation of Results**

The following are the findings that were examined and presented in light of the study questions and hypotheses:

**Research Question 1:** What is the prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja?

Data has been analysed and presented as follows in order to respond to the above questions;

**Table 1: Percentage Scores of the Prevalence of Social Media Use among Students in Abuja**

| S/no | Item | Agree | % | Disagree | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Social media diverts me from productive study sessions. | 340 | 68 | 160 | 32 |
| 2 | I frequently use social media for more than three hours every day. | 310 | 62 | 190 | 38 |
| 3 | I occasionally put social media above my studies. | 280 | 56 | 220 | 44 |
| 4 | During lectures, social media interferes with my ability to focus. | 360 | 72 | 140 | 28 |
| 5 | Social media is what I utilize in place of in-person study groups. | 320 | 64 | 180 | 36 |
| | **Average** | - | **64** | | **36** |

According to Table 1, 32% of the 340 respondents, or 68% of the sample, disagreed that social media distracts them from studying efficiently. This indicates that most students are aware of how social media interferes with their ability to concentrate in class. Regarding item (2), 310 respondents (62%) acknowledged using social media for more than three hours per day, while 38% denied, indicating that excessive usage of social media is typical among Abuja's university students. Regarding item (3), 280 respondents (56%) occasionally put social media above academic work, suggesting that social media and academic obligations are in conflict for a sizable majority of students. Social media has a significant impact on in-

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class participation, as seen by the 360 respondents (72%) who agreed that it interferes with their ability to focus during lectures. 320 respondents (64%) said they utilise social media to replace in-person study groups on item (5), while 36% disagreed. All things considered, the average agreement rate of 64% shows that social media use is common among students and has a big impact on their academic routines and behaviours.

**Research Question 2:** Is there a significant relationship between social media use, academic motivation, and self-esteem?
As seen below, data has been analysed and presented to address the question mentioned above.

**Table 2: Percentage Scores on the Relationship between Social Media Use, Academic Motivation, and Self-Esteem**

| S/no | Item | Agree | % | Disagree | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Using social media excessively deters me from being motivated to study. | 190 | 38 | 310 | 62 |
| 2 | Online peers provide me with emotional support. | 160 | 32 | 340 | 68 |
| 3 | Comparing myself to other individuals online makes me feel less confident in my academic abilities. | 260 | 52 | 240 | 48 |
| 4 | Because of the demands from social media, I occasionally steer clear of group discussions. | 210 | 42 | 290 | 58 |
| 5 | My productivity and sense of self-worth are impacted by social media validation. | 340 | 68 | 160 | 32 |
| | **Average** | - | **46** | | **54** |

Table 2 displays conflicting results regarding self-esteem and motivation from social media use. Regarding item (1), only 190 respondents (38%) agreed that excessive use affects academic motivation, while 62% disagreed. This suggests that many students may not publicly associate their internet behaviours with feeling less motivated. Sixty-eight percent disagreed with item (2), showing a limited reliance on social media for emotional well-being, whereas 160 respondents (32%) claimed they receive emotional support from online peers. Social comparison undermines self-esteem, as evidenced by the 260 respondents (52%) who acknowledged that comparing themselves to others online reduces their academic confidence in response to item (3). The majority (58%) disagreed with the 210 respondents (42%) who said they avoided group talks because of online demands, indicating that most students still value offline participation. Lastly, item (5) showed that 340 respondents (68%) agreed that social media validation impacts their productivity and self-esteem, which is a clear sign that online approval-seeking behaviours might influence academic results. Even while only 46% of respondents agreed overall, the average response indicates that some factors, particularly social comparison and validation have a significant impact on motivation and self-esteem.

**Hypothesis one**
There is no significant prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja.

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There is only one variable in this hypothesis, which is prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja. Test statistics: t-test of one sample mean (also known as population t-test) was employed to test this hypothesis. This involves comparing the mean obtained from the study sample with a hypothesized or reference mean. This reference mean score was obtained by multiplying the average of the scores assigned to the four response categories for each of the items on the questionnaire by the number of items used to measure prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja (which was 5).

Thus, the Reference mean score = (4+3+2+1) X 5
4 = 12.5

Testing hypothesis 1 involved comparing the sample mean on prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja with the reference mean score of 12.5.00. The statistical technique deployed to do this comparison was the t-test of one sample mean (also known as population t-test). The results of the analyses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Population t-test analysis of whether prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja (N=500)

| Variables | $\bar{X}$ | SD | t-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sample mean | 18.21 | 1.90 | 71.38* | .000 |
| Hypothesized mean | 12.5 | 0.00 | | |

* Significant at .05 level, p-value = .000, df = 499.

The results of analysis presented in Table 3 have shown the mean and standard deviation of the sample of prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja as focus in this study. The comparisons of the sample mean with the reference mean score of 12.50 yielded t-values of 71.38. The calculated absolute t-value is higher than the p-value of .000 at .05 level of significant with 199 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that prevalence of social media use among tertiary students in Abuja.

**Hypothesis two**

Academic motivation and Academic motivation do not significantly relate with self-esteem. The independent variables in this hypothesis are social media use and Academic motivation. The dependent variable is self-esteem. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

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TABLE 4: Multiple regression analysis of the relationship between social media use, Academic motivation and self-esteem (N=50)0

| Model | R | R. square | Adjusted R. Square | Std error of the estimate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .861(a) | .742 | .741 | 1.58056 | |
| Model | Sum of square | df | Mean square | F | p-value |
| Regression | 3562.957 | 2 | 1781.479 | 713.112 | .000(a) |
| Residual | 1241.593 | 497 | 2.498 | | |
| Total | 4804.550 | 499 | | | |
| Variables | Unstandardized regression weight B | Standardized regression weight | Beta weight | t | p-value |
| Constant | 6.995 | .775 | | 9.024 | .000 |
| Social media use | .429 | .122 | .237 | 3.525 | .000 |
| Academic motivation | 1.214 | .129 | .634 | 9.419 | .000 |

* Significant at .05 level.

Table 4 showed that a combination of social media use and academic motivation. The result also showed that Analysis of Variance for the multiple regression data produced an f– ratio of 713.112, which was significant at .05 level. Thus when these variables are taken together, they significantly influence self-esteem. This implied that social media use and academic motivation. A multiple $R^2$ of .742 implied that the independent variables social media use and academic motivation jointly explain 74.2 percent of the variance in self-esteem.

To find out the relative contributions of the individual factors, a test of regression weight was carried out. The result shows that the standardized regression weights (Beta) ranged from .237 to .634 and t – ratio from 3.525 to 9.419. The Beta weight of all (social media use and academic motivation) were significant at .05 level. This result implied that when the variables were taken individually, all namely; social media use and academic motivation significantly influences self-esteem. The result further showed that academic motivation (t= 9.419) made the greatest contribution to self-esteem, while social media use (t= 3.525) made the least contribution to self-esteem. The identified equation to understand this relationship was that self-esteem = 6.995 + .122 + 1.214 (social media use and Academic motivation).

**Discussion of Findings**

According to the results, social media use is very common among Abuja's university students. It is evident that social media platforms present a serious obstacle to academic production, since over two-thirds of students acknowledge that they are distracted from their studies and find it harder to focus. The findings presented here are in line with those of Adebayo and Okoro (2023), who found that Nigerian undergraduates spend a significant amount of time on social media at the detriment of their studies, which frequently leads to procrastination and a lack of concentration.

Even though a few students identified some limited advantages, such emotional support, the findings indicate that negative effects predominate. Similar to Appel et al. (2020), who found that online comparison lowers self-worth, more than half (52%) of the respondents acknowledged that social comparisons online lower their academic confidence. The dangers of approval-seeking behaviours are further highlighted by the 68% of respondents who stated that social media validation has a direct impact on their productivity and sense of self.

Chi-square studies supported these results. While Hypothesis 1 shown that social media use is common but not statistically significant, Hypothesis 2 verified that social media use has a significant impact on self-esteem and academic motivation. This supports or aligns with the findings of Ibrahim and Ahmad (2022), who showed a high correlation between social media use patterns and psychological well-being and academic engagement.

**Conclusion**

This study investigated how social media affects Abuja's tertiary students' self-esteem and academic motivation. The findings demonstrate the prevalence of social media use and its detrimental effects on focus, motivation for learning, and mental health. Despite certain advantages, such less peer support, the aggregate result suggests decreased motivation and self-worth.

The results emphasise how important it is for kids to make use of social media in a responsible and balanced manner. Although platforms can facilitate cooperation and provide access to educational materials, overuse frequently causes attention to divert from academic dedication in favour of amusement, social validation, and distraction. Furthermore, peer comparisons and continuous exposure to well-chosen internet photos undermine self-esteem, especially in individuals who are vulnerable.

These findings imply that responsible social media use and digital literacy should be incorporated into student development programs by politicians, educators, and postsecondary institutions. Establishing knowledge of the academic and psychological concerns can assist students in creating better online habits that support their academic objectives. In order to build on this study, future research should investigate intervention tactics, the significance of cultural elements, and the disparities between socioeconomic and gender groups. Conclusively, even if social media is an unavoidable aspect of contemporary student life, this study emphasises the value of self-control, institutional support, and purposeful use to lessen its detrimental effects and foster psychological health and academic motivation.

**Recommendations:**

Given the results of the study, the researcher was interested in proposing the following:

1. In order to instruct students on social media etiquette, higher education institutions ought to host workshops on digital literacy.
2. Social media awareness should be incorporated into student support

services by counselling units for the purpose of tackling poor self-esteem.
3. For decreased distractions during lectures, policies restricting smartphone use should be implemented.
4. The long-term consequences of social media use on academic outcomes should be investigated in future research using longitudinal methods.

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