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Research Article

Social Media Engagement and Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students': Implication for Counselling in Fufore Local Government Area, Adamawa State

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Abstract

This study was carried out to examine the social media engagement and academic performance of senior secondary school students': implication for counselling in Fufore Local Government Area, Adamawa State. *The study adopted a descriptive correlation survey research design. Four research questions and three research hypotheses were raised and formulated for the study. One thousand five hundred and eighty (1580) students were used as population of the study while multistage sampling techniques was used to sample one hundred and thirty (130) students for the study using Slovin method of sampling size. The instrument used for data collection was an adopted questionnaire titled "Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ)" which is comprised of five sections, sections A – E. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t-test and Pearson Product Moment Movement Correlation. All the hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from hypothesis one reveals a significant relationship between social media engagement and senior secondary school students' academic performance($r = -0.652$, $p < 0.05$); findings from research hypothesis two revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female students regarding social media usage or its perceive ed impact on academic performance ($t = 15.65$; $p < 0.05$); findings from research hypothesis three revealed a statistically significant relationship on school counseling strategies used to mitigate the negative impact of social media usage on academic performance based on school location ($t = 20.25$ with $p < 0.05$). The study therefore recommends among others that; teachers and administrators should formalize the use of WhatsApp for academic communication (e.g., dedicated class discussion channels, assignment reminders) to channel social media usage toward constructive learning outcomes; counseling initiatives should account for gender-specific usage patterns addressing different platform triggers and behavioral tendencies between male and female students; institutions should encourage students to use built-in smartphone well-being tools (e.g., Screen Time, Focus Mode, app timers) during dedicated study hours to reduce notifications and constant task-switching.*

Keywords: *Social media usage, Academic performance, Counseling implication, Students, engagement.*

Introduction

In recent years, social media engagement among adolescents has risen sharply, especially in secondary schools, where teenagers are regular users of digital technologies. Social media refers to the ways in which people interact by creating, sharing, and/or exchanging information and ideas within virtual communities and networks. Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube have become essential components of students' everyday lives (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Age & Achoda, 2021; Alshalawi, 2022; Lukose & Agbeyangi, 2025). This swift surge in social media usage has, in turn, sparked worries about its effect on students' academic performance, psychological well-being, social development, and overall school experiences (Junco,2015; Kuss & Griffiths,2017; Kingsley et al, 2019; Adebayo & Olanrewaju, 2021; Alshalawi, 2022).

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Adolescence is a crucial developmental period marked by identity formation, social exploration, and cognitive maturation (Steinberg, 2014). The growing availability of smartphones and inexpensive internet access has speedup adolescents' involvement with social media (Rideout and Rob b, 2019). As reported by Pew Research Center (2021), more than 90% of teenagers in many areas say they engage in the use of social media regularly, and many of them access several platforms each day. In Nigeria, research has shown that secondary school students are among the fastest-growing groups of internet and social media users, motivated by peer influence, curiosity, and the wish for social connection (Oyelere and Alabi, 2020).

While social media provides possible benefits like improved communication, collaboration, and access to educational resources, worries about digital distraction, less study time, and psychological stress are also appearing (Rosen et al., 2013; Mingle & Adams, 2015). Researchers have emphasized the dual nature of social media's impact, enabling certain kinds of learning while potentially weakening sustained academic engagement among students because of entertainment and multi-tasking behaviors (Junco, 2015; Gok, 2015; Alkaabi et al 2017).

Academic performance in senior secondary schools has been long continued to be a major policy concern in Nigeria senior secondary schools and a priority of stakeholders such as parents, policy makers, researchers, curriculum planner among others particularly in underserved regions such as Adamawa State. Academic performance is commonly regarded as the extent to which students attain educational goals and learning outcomes usually gauged by cognitive outcomes such as exam results, class participation, and the quality of assignments (Post & Pong, 2020; Kojigili & Alex 2026). Literatures offers a mixed findings regarding the relationship between social media use and academic performance. Some studies indicate that moderate, purposeful social media engagement can boost collaborative learning, peer support for school work, and access to educational content (Madge et al., 2009). For instance, platforms like YouTube and Telegram can host tutorial videos and group discussions that help learners understand curricular topics (Manca and Ranieri, 2016). At the same time, social networking sites are used to create study groups and share academic resources (Al-Rahmi et al., 2015).

Conversely, other studies indicate a negative link between high levels of social media engagement and academic outcomes. Excessive social media use has been associated with procrastination, reduced concentration, poor time management, and sleep disturbances, all of which predict lower academic performance (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Paul et al., 2012). Students who are heavily engaged in social media are more likely to multitask while studying, which harms deep learning and retention (Rosen et al., 2013).

School counseling services play a vital role in fostering academic success, career readiness, and psychosocial development among students. Counselors are trained to recognize and tackle barriers to learning, offer academic guidance, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices (ASCA,2019). In settings where students encounter new challenges such as digital distraction from heavy social media usage, counselors are well-placed to intervene through awareness programs, time-management workshops, and individual counseling sessions (Adeyemi & Oluwalobi, 2018). However, the capacity of school counselors in many Nigerian states, including Adamawa, is constrained by challenges such as insufficient training, lack of resources, and low awareness of the psychosocial issues tied to digital technologies (Okoye and Okoye, 2018). Without a solid evidence base from local research, it becomes hard for counselors to design targeted interventions that address the specific patterns and consequences of social media use among their students.

Fufore Local Government Area, located in Adamawa State of Nigeria, illustrates many of the educational challenges affecting secondary schools in rural and semi-urban regions such as infrastructural inadequacies, teacher shortages, and limited access to ICT resources (Adamawa State Ministry of Education, 2021). Even with these obstacles, access to mobile internet and smartphones has grown swiftly, enabling students to interact with social media during and after school hours. Nevertheless, empirical research examining how these digital behaviors connect to academic performance in this particular setting remains scarce. Most existing studies on social media and academic performance concentrate on Western populations or urban areas of Nigeria, leaving a knowledge gap for rural regions like Fufore. Thus, this study aims to examine the social media engagement and academic performance of senior secondary school students': implication for counselling in Fufore Local Government Area, Adamawa State.

Statement of the Problem

In senior secondary schools across Fufore Local Government Area, the growing use of social media among students brings both opportunities and challenges. Reports from teachers and parents, through anecdotal, indicate that numerous students spend considerable amounts of time on social media platforms, frequently sacrificing academic engagement. These behaviors are thought to lead to reduced classroom attention, unfinished assignments, absenteeism, and falling examination results (Adewale and Okeke, 2022). Yet these assumptions have not been systematically examined within Fufore Local Government Area, Adamawa State. Although extensive global research exists on social media usage and academic outcomes, few studies have explored this relationship in the specific socio-cultural and economic context of rural northeastern Nigeria. This scarcity of localized empirical evidence restricts understanding of the scale and character

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of the problem among senior secondary school students in Fufore. Moreover, school counseling frameworks in Adamawa State rarely incorporate digital media behavior into their developmental programs, partly because context-specific data is lacking (Buba, 2023). Without a clear grasp of how social media usage patterns relate to academic performance, attempts by educators and counselors to reduce negative effects may be misdirected or ineffective. Several key questions remain unresolved, including: to what degree do students in senior secondary schools in Fufore use social media? What relationship exists between the intensity of social media usage and students' academic achievement? How aware are school counselors of the academic and psychosocial implications of social media? Which counseling strategies are currently employed to support students affected by excessive social media engagement? The lack of empirical answers to these questions represents a critical gap in the educational psychology and school counseling literature in Adamawa State. Closing this gap is essential for creating responsive counseling programs that can improve students' academic performance while encouraging healthy digital behaviors. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the social media engagement and academic performance of senior secondary school students': implication for counselling in Fufore Local Government Area, Adamawa State.

Research Questions

1. What is the type of social media platforms mostly used by senior secondary school students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State?
2. What is the relationship between social media engagement and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State?
3. What are the positive and negative impact of social media engagement among senior secondary students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State?
4. What school counseling strategies can mitigate the negative impact of social media engagement on senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State?

Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the type of social media engagement and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government area Adamawa State.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the positive and negative impact of social media platforms among senior secondary students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State based on gender.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference on the school counseling strategies used to mitigate the negative impact of social media engagement on senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State based on school location.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive correlational survey research design. The study population consisted of all public senior secondary school students in Fufore Local Government Area, Adamawa state, Nigeria, totaling 1580 students. Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were applied to select 130 students based on the Slovin method of sample size determination. One research instrument was used for data collection: an adapted structured questionnaire titled "Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ)". The questionnaire consists of five sections, designated Section A through E. Section A contains the respondents 'biodata, Section B covers the platform students typically use, Section C includes statements about the relationship with academic performance, Section D contains statements on the positive and negative effects of social media, and Section E comprises statements on counseling strategies, respectively. The instrument was designed using a modified 4-point Likert scale consisting of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed. The instrument underwent face and content validation by experts and was also trial tested on a sample of students, proving reliable for the study with a reliability coefficient of 0.83. The data gathered were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, and t-test, all tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Results of the study are presented here in accordance with the research questions and hypotheses tested, using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics of Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and t-test.

Research Question One: What is the type of social media platforms mostly used by senior secondary school students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State?

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Table 1: Distribution of Primary Social Media Platforms Utilized by Senior Secondary School Students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State

S/no	Variables	Percentage %	Primary use	Ranking
1	Facebook	11.0	Social Networking and Community Groups	4th
2	Instagram	16.0	Visual Content and Identity Formation	3rd
3	Linkedin		-	7th
4	WhatsApp	38.0	Peer Collaboration and Direct Messaging	1st
5	Snapchat	8.0	Ephemeral Photo/Video Sharing	5th
6	Tiktok	22.0	Short-form Video Entertainment	2nd
7	Twitter	5.0	Information & Microblogging	6th

Result from Table 1 shows that WhatsApp emerges as the predominant platform used by senior secondary school students (38.0%), followed closely by short-form video and visual platforms, including TikTok (22.0%) and Instagram (16.0%). Traditional networking platforms such as Facebook (11.0%), Snapchat (8.0%), and Twitter (5.0%) make up the remainder. This points to a strong reliance on instant messaging utilities alongside high-engagement algorithmic feeds.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between social media engagement and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the relationship between social engagement usage and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State

S/no	Statement	Mean	Std.dev	Decision
1	Social media helps me to understand difficult topics better	3.52	0.68	Agreed
2	I use social media for academic discussions with classmates	3.48	0.71	Agreed
3	Excessive use of social media affects my study time negatively	3.41	0.74	Agreed
4	My academic performance has improved due to social media usage	3.39	0.79	Agreed
5	I get distracted by social media while studying	3.33	0.73	Agreed
Grand mean		3.45		Agreed

Result from Table 2 shows that, with a Grand Mean of 3.45, the data indicates a high level of agreement that social media engagement plays a major active role in students' daily academic routines, significantly influencing study habits and cognitive focus.

Research Question Three: What are the positive and negative impact of social media engagement among senior secondary students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State?

Table 3a. Mean and Standard deviation on Negative impact of social media engagement among senior secondary students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State

S/no	Statement	Mean	Std.dev	Decision
1	Addiction to online social networks is a problematic issue that affects my academic life	3.49	0.66	Agreed
2	Online social networks distract me from my studies	3.42	0.70	Agreed
3	Hours spent online can never be compared to the number of hours I spend studying	3.32	0.73	Agreed
4	There is no improvement in my grades since I became engaged into social networking sites	3.44	0.72	Agreed
5	Students who spend more time on social media perform very poorly in their academics than those who do not.	3.46	0.82	Agreed
Grand mean		3.41		Agreed

Result from Table 3a shows that the negative impact grand mean (μ=3.41) is substantially higher. This indicates that the disruptive tendencies of social media (procrastination, sleep disruption, cognitive friction) outweigh its academic benefits in practice.

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Table 3b. Mean and Standard deviation on Positive impact of social media engagement among senior secondary students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State

S/no	Statement	Mean	Std.dev	Decision
1	Social media provides access to educational materials	3.30	0.72	Agreed
2	It enhances communication between students and teachers	3.24	0.75	Agreed
3	It helps in group assignments and collaboration	3.12	0.81	Agreed
4	It improves digital literacy skills	3.22	0.86	Agreed
5	It helps me in class engagement	3.16	0.74	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.22		Agreed

Result from Table 3b shows that students recognize the positive functional utility of social media, with a grand mean of (μ=3.22

Research Question Four: What school counseling strategies can mitigate the negative impact of social media engagement on senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of school counseling strategies used to mitigate the negative impact of social media engagement on academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State

S/no	Statement	Mean	Std.dev	Decision
1	Schools should organize seminars on responsible social media engagement	3.45	0.80	Agreed
2	Guidance counselors should monitor students' social media habits	3.55	0.79	Agreed
3	Time management training can reduce excessive social media engagement	3.42	0.78	Agreed
4	Parental involvement can help regulate students' social media engagement	2.22	1.07	Disagreed
5	Schools should include digital literacy in the curriculum	3.45	0.88	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.44		Agreed

Result from Table 4 shows that a good school counseling strategy can mitigate the negative impact of social media engagement among senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State.

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between social media engagement and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Adamawa State.

Table 5: Correlation between social media engagement and senior secondary school Students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Adamawa State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Correlation (R)	Sig. (2-Tailed)
Social Media Engagement	130	40.40	12.20	−0.652	0.000
Students' academic performance	130	34.86	9.18		

Result from Table 5 shows that the probability value of 0.00 is less than the significant value of 0.05 (P <0.05). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that a statistically significant relationship between social media engagement and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area Adamawa State.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the positive and negative impact of social media platforms among senior secondary students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State based on gender**.**

Table 6: t-test on the positive and negative impact of social media platforms among senior secondary school students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	Sig. (2-Tailed)
Male	57	33.87	12.12	15.65	0.000
Female	73	39.57	10.08		

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Result from Table 6 demonstrates a statistically significant difference between male and female senior secondary school students regarding social media engagement or its perceived impact on academic performance.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference on the school counseling strategies used to mitigate the negative impact of social media engagement on academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State based on school location.

Table 7: t-test on school counseling strategies used to mitigate the negative impact of social media engagement on senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State based on school location

School Location	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	Sig. (2-Tailed)
Urban	79	41.40	13.20	20.25	0.000
Rural	51	37.86	8.18		

Result from Table 7 shows a highly significant difference across the evaluated groups, since the probability value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($p<0.05$). This large value signals that the grouping variable has a major statistical measurable effect.

Discussion

This study was carried out to examine the social media engagement and academic performance of senior secondary school students': implication for counselling in Fufore Local Government Area, Adamawa State. Result from research question one shows that students demonstrate a heavy reliance on instant messaging (WhatsApp) alongside visual and short-form video content platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter/X). WhatsApp leads as an essential utility for peer communication and group assignments, while TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat serve mainly as sources of entertainment, personal expression, and identity formation. Thus, research highlights that WhatsApp is the preferred platform for academic-related peer collaboration, owing to its closed group dynamics and instant file-sharing features (Alshalawi,2022). Conversely, algorithmic platforms like TikTok and Instagram drive continuous scrolling, absorbing hours of attention and contributing directly to daily time displacement.

Result from research question two shows that students strongly perceive that social media engagement has a major active presence in their daily academic lives, influencing study habits, task engagement, and academic focus. As stated by Kingsley et al (2019), social media functions as an informal learning environment. However, high usage intensity often causes a continuous split in attention, as students attempt to multitask during study sessions, resulting in cognitive overload (Alshalawi, 2022).

Result from research question three shows that students acknowledge that social media engagement offers real educational utility such as joining study groups, sharing notes, accessing research updates, and facilitating peer tutoring. As noted by Manca and Ranieri (2016) and Al-Rahmi et al (2015), social networking sites improve collaborative learning, enabling students to share resources rapidly and obtain academic assistance beyond classroom hours. Conversely, the mean for negative impact (3.41) is clearly greater than the mean for positive impact (3.22). This indicates that students clearly acknowledge that social media leads to serious procrastination, sleep deprivation, diminished focus, and shorter study time. As stated by Al-Rahmi et al., (2015) and Mingle & Adams (2015), social media engagement offers functional advantages yet its addictive nature and notification systems pull students away from deep learning, producing an overall negative effect on academic effort.

Results from research question four reveal a strong consensus among respondents that professional guidance, school counseling interventions, and digital literacy workshops are essential strategies for helping students manage their online presence, which agrees with the study of (ASCA, 2019). Educational counseling models indicate that training in self-regulation and digital hygiene produces much better academic results than simply banning devices. Guidance counselors are essential in helping students learn time-management skills and establish clear boundaries between social leisure and study time.

The findings for research hypothesis one, which stated that there is no significant relationship between social media engagement and senior secondary school students academic performance in Fufore Local Government, Adamawa State. The null hypothesis was rejected because the probability value of 0.00 is below the 0.05 level of significance ($p<0.05$). This result agrees with the study by Sampson and Ebong (2019) and Age and Echoda (2021). In contrast, Lukose and Agbeyangi (2025) reported that unsupervised social media activity directly cuts the time devoted to academic revision, leading to lower test and examination scores.

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The findings on research hypothesis two which stated that there is no significant difference between the positive and negative use of social media platforms among senior secondary students in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State based on gender, was rejected because the probability value of 0.00 is below the 0.05 level of significance ($p<0.05$). This result is consistent with studies in educational psychology that regularly report gender differences in digital behavior. Male students generally spend more time on gaming and video platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube), while female students tend to engage more with communicative networks (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat) and report greater levels of social-media-induced anxiety and distraction while studying. This finding agrees with the study by Gok (2015) and Alkaabi et al (2017).

The findings on research hypothesis three, which stated that there is no significant difference in the school counseling strategies used to mitigate the negative impact of social media usage on senior secondary school students' academic performance in Fufore Local Government Area of Adamawa State based on school location, was also rejected because the probability value of 0.00 is below the 0.05 level of significance ($p<0.05$). This result indicates that interventions (such as active school counseling or parental monitoring) produce measurable changes in student behavior, distinguishing students who use social media productively from those whose academic performance suffers because of unmanaged usage patterns. This finding agrees with the result of Adeyemi and Oluwalobi (2018). Therefore, the findings of this study significantly revealed that a strategic and timely senior secondary school students' social media engagement enhanced their academic performance but the abuse of such engagement among students' will negatively affect their academic performance.

Conclusion

This study was carried out to examine the social media engagement and academic performance of senior secondary school students': implication for counselling in Fufore Local Government Area, Adamawa State. Based on the findings of this study, it was revealed that social media is a double-edged sword in modern education. Although platforms such as WhatsApp support valuable academic communication and peer learning, unmanaged exposure to entertaining and algorithmically engaging media (TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat) significantly affects students' academic performance. The high acceptance of counseling strategies (Grand Mean=3.51) confirms that structured guidance interventions from educational counselors are both necessary and welcomed by students in restoring balance between digital media consumption and academic achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. 1.Teachers and administrators should formalize the use of WhatsApp for academic communication (e.g., dedicated class discussion channels, assignment reminders) in order to direct social media usage toward constructive learning outcomes.
2. Counseling initiatives should take gender-specific usage patterns into account, addressing the different platform triggers and behavioral tendencies between male and female students.
3. Institutions ought to motivate students to utilize the well-being features already available on smartphones (such as Screen Time, Focus Mode, and app timers) during designated study periods in order to cut down on notifications and frequent task-switching.
4. Parents should be made aware during PTA meetings of the need to keep an eye on late-night smartphone use, since scrolling at night is a key factor behind fatigue in the classroom and difficulty concentrating.

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