PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON SECONDARY AND TERTIARY STUDENTS IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH ZONE OF NIGERIA.

BY

UGOMA ISRAEL OBEDJEMURHO (Ph.D)

ugomaisrael22@gmail.com

08033815837

AND

AUGUSTA ONYBUCHI OJOBU (Ph.D)

buchitibi@gmail.com

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF DELTA, AGBOR

DELTA STATE

NIGERIA

2024 NATIONAL CONFERENCE KEFFI, NASARAWA STATE

ABSTRACT

Social media has successfully created a web to connect mankind into a complex cycle of interactions. With its many platforms, information is passed with a speed of light. Nonetheless, social media is not without negativity and side effects. This study investigated the psychological effects of social media usage on the individual, especially teenage and adolescent students in the secondary and tertiary schools. Population of the study was 5000 students, with a sample of 650 males and females students in urban and rural secondary schools, as well as in the university. In instruments for data collection was social media usage questionnaire (SMUQ), which was fully validated. The Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, hence the alpha coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. Two research questions were raised in the study, and were answered using statistical percentage to determine the psychological effects of social media usage. Findings from the study showed that students face the risk of psychosomatic diseases due to imbalance usage of social media. Based on this, recommendations were given, such that: students should set a balance between social media usage, academic engagement and healthy quality sleep.

Keywords: social media, usage, psychosomatic, insecurity, engagement, information

Introduction:

The Advent of social media in the 21st century is an access to more information than ever, including the kind that can help an individual stay safe and healthy and the type that can also lead an individual to misinformation, misleading news, false reports and conspiracy theories that are grounded in mental and emotional health effects. Merriam (2020) define social media as a form of electronic communication which allows individual users to create, share and interact information and contents with other users. Facts of social media encompassesvarieties of platforms such as:

- Social networking site: made up of Facebook, Twitter, linkedlin.
- Content-sharing platform: where there is instagram, tiktok and YouTube.
- Online communities and forum (Redditand Quora)
- Blogging and microblogging platforms: using word press and medium.
- Virtual Worlds and Social Games, and
- Podcasting and video conferencing platforms, such as zoom and Skype.

These facets of social media allow individual users (young and old) to create and share content ranging from texting, sending and receiving images, videos, live stream, connect with others, whether friends, family colleague and even strangers. With this, news, trends events, shopping, learning and gaming are disseminated. From 2019, over 7.7 billion people worldwide and with atlest 3.5 billion online are on social media. According to Esteba (2019), who saw that about one in three people are using social media

On the whole, social media has globalized the world, and revolutionized the way people communicate, interact and share information, with a notable impact on modern society and culture.

Revolution of social medium was a round of periodic changes which impact on the user was at first insignificant but very useful. Tracing the history of social media, it dated back to 1970. According to Esteban (2019), the University of Illinois, developed the PLATO system, an early social network that was used in academia.

This was followed by Live Journal in 1999, also an earlyform of digital social communication. In 2000, Hot or Not was launched. A site where users could rate the attractiveness of others. Friendster in 2001 followed. In Friendster, users can create profile, use status update and share

their mood. In 2002.Linkedling was launched, a networking site for career minded professionals. Myspace, a site for teens quickly became popular in 2003. Mark Zuckerberg launched Wordpress in 2003 and Facebook in 2004. Reddit and YouTube followed suit. In 2005, while Twitter was in 2006. In 2010, Instagram and Pinterest were launched along with Snapchat in 2011. Finally, 2016 TikTok was launched, for short-form video creation and sharing.

Following the advent of social media, it is imperative to identify its specific objectives, so as to streamline its psychological effects on the users. According to Freberg, Graham, & McGraghey (2017) four major objectives of social median form an acronym SLIM; (Sharing, Learning, Interacting and marketing).Notably, social media objective for SLIM is highly educational, the way it was started in 1970 in the university of illionios for academia. Youths investment in social media with the launching of Myspace, 2003, Facebook 2004, YouTube 2005, Twitter 2006, Instagram 2010 and TikTok 2016, became a matter of concern.

Nonetheless it is important to note in this present study two other social media websites, (though slightly different from traditional social media platform) Yahoo and Whatspp. Whatsapp was launched in 2009. By 2020 its peak of users rose up to 2 billion monthly, Yahoo was founded in 1994.Brian & Acton (2009) classified whatsapp as a "dark social" or "private social media" and Yahoo a web portal or an online service provider. Yahoo has influence on many youths in Nigeria since 2005 till date has been alarming. At this point, it is necessary to also identify the social media platforms that has more effects psychologically on the populace especially the youths.

Recent studies by Lup (2019), Slater & Tiggermann (2018), carter (2019) and Royal society for public Health (2020) opined that all social media platform have potential risk, but Instagram is considered most detrimental social media platform for mental health, particularly for young people, (RSPH,2020). This is because, in 2019, a study published in the journal of cyberpsychology, Behavior and social Networking formed out Instagram "use" is associated with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety in young adults. And in 2020, report by cyberbullying Research Center found out that Instagram is one of the most common platforms for cyberbullying. Meanwhile is 2019, the journal of adolescent Health found out that exposure to screens in social media including Instagram before bedtime is associated with deprivation and daytime fatigue among adolescents.

An intriguing concern about Instagram why it is most effective on youth's psyche, was found on a study published in 2018 by slater and Tiggermann, that exposure to idealized images on Instagram is associated with body dissatisfaction and negative self-comparison among women and "young men". The emphasis is that this is not to mean that TikTokand Facebook platform have no potential risks on the youths as even adult, but Instagram's unique characteristics which lay emphasis on visual comparison make it more concerning for youths. Rating for addiction by youths is TikTok and YouTube, cyberbulling Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, and inappropriate content is TikTok and Snapchat. (Zhu, 2020), (Burgess & Green, 2019) (Barness, Lescault & Writght, (2015). However, other platforms such as DeviantArt, Tumblr Pinterest, Reddit are known for creativity, self-expression, education and learning channel, as well as positive community building as for gamming communities.

Moving forward, social media usage is backed up with many theories. Foremost among these theories was the social learning theory by Albert Bandura, (1977). This theory proposed that people learn behaviour and attitude by observing others, either through live model or on social media. This theory is very appropriate to the present study. It deals on the psychological effects of youths who compare themselves with others on social media positively or negatively. Another relevant theory on social media propounded byRichard and John (1986) is the Elaboration Likelihood Model. This theory examines how social media influence our attitude and persuasion through central routes and peripheral routes rooted in informational and emotional, wellbeing of the individual. These theories gave insight into the usage of social media and its effect on the individual and the society.

At this point, having considered some theories of social media, it is apt to review some studies carried out on social media usage and their effects on the individual'spsyche. First, in Nigeria a study was carried out by Adewale (2019) to examine cyberbullying and mental health of Nigeria students of Obafemi Awolowo University. The result showed that, out of 400 students sampled for the study, 40% of them experienced cyberbullying, which correlated with increases of depression and anxiety. Again, in Ghana, impact of social media on self-esteem of Adolescent Girls was conducted by Owusu (2019).The result which focused on groups and interview with 50 adolescent girls showed that social media exposure could led to decreased self-esteemed and body participation among participants. Further studies on social media usage was a longitudinal study of 1,700 participants by Ethan (2018) in the University of Michigan to ascertain social

media and Emotional Well-being, a study of Facebook use and Mental Health. The result indicated that moderate Facebook use can increase emotional wellbeing, increase life satisfaction and increased social support and connectivity. Youths and adult alike in urban rural secondary schools in the South South zone of Nigeria, at present are seriously engrossed in social media usage. Short videos, home movies, information on healthcare, modelling and contents display are bombarding social media platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Reddit and more. What are psychological effects of these social media usage on the adolescent students in the secondary schools in Nigeria? Which of the social media platforms is mostly by students in the South South zone of Nigeria? It is the aim of this study to investigate the psychological effects and academic achievement of students in both the secondary and tertiary schools in the South South zone of Nigeria.

Statement of the problem.

Overtime, social media usage has been able to sew together the complex world into a small village-where diverse behavior is frequently exhibited. The youths in this crowded village are vulnerable to these behaviors. What is the way forward for them and the general public? This paper examined the psychological effects of social media on the individual. It equally examined the kind of information passed on social media as well as their academic engagement.

Research Questions:

What is the most frequently visited social media platforms?

What is the psychological effects of social media usage on the individual?

Method

The study made use of descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate for the study because it was able to gather data, describe data document attitude of students who explore social media in order to reveal usage patterns, frequency, duration and type of activities to explore its psychological effects on the individual usage. Population of the study was 5000 secondary and tertiary schools students, while the sample was 650 male and female students. Multistage sampling technique was used to draw out the students through purposive selection of the students in the South South zone. Again, purposive technique was used to pick university of Port Harcourt and its demonstration secondary school, university of Delta, and its staff model secondary schools and Niger Delta University and its secondary schools. Instrument for data collection was social media usage questionnaire, (SMUQ)

Research question 1

What is the most frequently visited social Media platform by students?

Table 1: The most frequently visited social Media platform.

			TIKTOK	YOUTUBE	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER	NEUTRAL	TOTAL
Male	12-18	Sec Sch (Urban)	250 (38.5%)	70 (10.8%)	120 (18.5%)	80 (12.3%)	80 (12.3%)	50 (7.7%)	650 (92.3%)
Female	13-19		300 (46.1%)	70 (10.8%)	120 (18.5%)	80 (12.3%)	80 (12.3%)	0	650 (100%)
Male	13-19	Sec Sch (Rural)	100 (15.4%)	80 (12.3%)	130 (200%)	50 (7.7%)	40 (6.2%)	250 (38%)	400 (61%)
Female	12-19		150 (23%)	90 (13.8%)	100 (15%)	60 (9.2%)	60 (9.2%)	190 (29%)	460 (70%)
Male	16-22	University	300 (46%)	90 (13.8%)	100 (15.4%)	90 (13.8%)	80 (12.3%)	0	650 (100%)
Female	15-22		350 (53.8%)	100 (15.4%)	100 (15.4%)	50 (7.7%)	50 (7.7%)	0	650 (100%)

Table one showed the social Media platform that are mostly explored by students (male and female) in the secondary and tertiary (University) schools; among the platforms TIKTOK ranked highest for male secondary schools in Urban (38.5%) Aland rural (15.4%). The same platform for females students in urban secondary school; (46.1%) and rural (46%) and 23%. This is followed by Facebook and YouTube. Interestingly too, TIKTOK platform is also mostly visited by the university students. The table also showed that 100% students in the university are on social media, with females students more on the TIKTOK and other platforms than male students.

Research question 2

What is the psychological effects of social media usage on the individual?

Table 2:

Psychological effects of social media usage on the individual.

	Questionnaire Items	Respondents (Edu level)	3-5hrs	5-8hrs	8-11hrs	11-14hrs	14-18hrs	18-22hrs
1	Indicate how many hours you can spend on social media	Sec Sch (Urban)	100	150	300	100	0	0
		Sec Sch (Rural)	450	150	10	3	0	0
		University	100	30	400	100	20	0
2	When using social media, do you often feel	(Edu level)	Happy	Sad	Anxious	Angry	Insecure	
		Sec Sch (Urban)	200 30.7%	10	300 46%	100 15%	40 6%	
		Sec Sch (Rural)	310 47%	5	250 38%	50	45 7%	
		University	150 23%	5	350 53.8%	70 10.8%	75 11.5%	
3	Do you sometimes have fear of missing out when not on social media	(Edu level)	Yes	No	Never			
		Sec Sch (Urban)	450 69.2%	150	50			
		Sec Sch (Rural)	250	350 53.8%	50			

		University	500	100	50
4	Does social media usage affect your quantity of sleep?	Sec Sch (Urban)	350 53.8%	150	150
		Sec Sch (Rural)	200	400 26%	50
		University	390	200	60
5	Do you feel worried, sick, moody when your phone battery is low or exhausted?	Sec Sch (Urban)	550	80	30
		Sec Sch (Rural)	450 69.2%	150	50
		University	620	15	15
6	Does social media usage affect your reading habit?	Sec Sch (Urban)	320 45%	300	30
		Sec Sch (Rural)	200 30%	400 61%	40
		University	380 58.4%	220 33%	50
7	Have you ever bothered, moody and afraid because of so much information passed on social media?	Sec Sch (Urban)	400	150	50
		Sec Sch (Rural)	500 77%	100	50

		University	350	250	30
8.	Does social media affect your financial status	Sec Sch (Urban)	600	30	20
		Sec Sch (Rural)	630	15	5
		University	650	100	100

Table 2 showed the psychological effects of social media usage on daily basis, students in the secondary school (Urban) can spend as much as 8 hours and above (46.1%) on social media. Students in rural secondary schools can spend a minimum of 3 to 5 hours (69.2%) on social media. Students in the universities can spend a minimum of 8 to 11 hours, 11 to 14 hours (15.1%) on social media.

Moving forward, 46% are anxious, 15% angry, 6% insecure, only 30% students in urban claimed to be happy using social media. Students in the university are 53.8% anxious, 10.7% angry and the 11.5% insecure. On the issue of being worried, moody and even seek using social media comma 95% students in the university are affected, while the secondary school students in Urban 84.6% and rural (69.2%). On the quality of sleep, 53.8% of students in the Urban secondary schools are affected, while 26% in the rural secondary schools are affected. Students in the university are affected with about 60%. Missing out why not on social media, 69.2% of urban secondary schools are affected, 53% affected in rural secondary schools and the 77% for university students. Missing out if they are not on social media daily. Reading their academic works, students in urban secondary are affected by 49%, rural 30% why 58.4% are affected in the university.

Finally on the table 2, so much information passed on social media affects 77% students in rural areas, 61% in urban areas, and 53.8% in the university.

Discussions of findings

Findings from the study on social media usage indicated a lot of psychological effects on individual students in the secondary schools and in the university. While 30.7% students in urban secondary school, 47% rural schools and the 23% University said they are happy using social media about 46 to 53.8% of this students are anxious and 10 to 15% are insecured in one form or the order. Nevertheless, on serious concern is the percentage of students that are worried, sick, moody when they cannot access the media on account of low or no battery on their smartphones

69.2 to 95%. This alone can send signal to the sympathetic nervous system thereby causing psychosomatic illness to their tender body make-up. These psychological effects on the students social media usage agreed with the findings of Adewale (2019) and Owusu (2019), who found out in their studies that social media with lots of cyberbullying, and image comparisons are major cause of mental health problem among university students along with low self-esteem. Apart from this, students reading habitats academically is equally affected from 30% to 58% rural, urban secondary schools to university students. This is no wonders, in most secondary schools in the South-South zone of Nigeria, do not allow their students to bring cell phone, smartphones to schools. In the university, many decline in grade is mostly traced to the use of social media.

Another effect of social media on user is the amount of information past on the net. In the secondary and the tertiary schools about 53.8% to 77% of students are bombarded with all sorts of information ranging from health to horror news. In one of these information, the public including students were instructed to bath with salt drink some quantities of the salt mixture to prevent ebola and lassa fever disease. Another instance is spreading bitter cola and garlic lopes all over the rooms and the toilet against wall gecko that they said is dangerous to health.

Finally, students spend huge amount of money they do not have, on data and airtime. The effect of this, may lead to stealing and other form of vices.

Summarily, social media usage while it is very beneficial in our 21st century has a lot more effects on the individual negatively.

Conclusion

Since social media has successfully globalized the world into a little crowded complex village where heat of competition is high, caution is needed to care for the youths who are highly vulnerable to the glamorous mirage of social media and who are innocently stubborn to seemingly harmless features portrayed in the media. Parents, caregivers and stakeholders in education need revolution to help the youths for brighter future in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Parents of teenagers in the secondary schools should strictly monitor and supervise their children on the use of social media. This will prevent psychosomatic sickness that may befall children before their old age.

2. Again, parents can also carry out screen break, smartphone break and social media usage break on their children during periods of examinations. This will enable the children concentrate on their academic works.

3. In the university, Management should make rules to prohibit, or restrict unwholesome usage of Smartphone during lectures.

4. Students in the university should set boundaries for their use of social media. They can restrict themselves on the use of social media during bedtimes, lectures periods and mealtimes

5. Students should learn to fight the psychological id by limiting social media usage by self-discipline.

6. If students are addicted to social media, they should seek professional helps such as Psychologists, Counselors who will guide on what to do to fight the addiction.

7. To share information on social media, students make sure of the authenticity of the information before sharing. This will prevent wrong information or misinformation that can be damaging to health. We will not forget quickly the number of persons that died who were told to bathe with salt mixture and drank the mixture during Ebola and Lassa fever diseases in Nigeria.

8. Awareness campaign is necessary to alert students in urban and rural secondary schools on the dangers of over usage of social media. In the university, fresh students should be given orientation on the psychological effects of over usage of social media. These awareness can be created through seminars, Workshops which the university can organize from time to time.

9. Moreover, students on their own should set a balance between social media usage, academic engagement and healthy quality sleep.

10. Finally, research studies like this one, should be published on social media too, such as in Facebook, TikTok, Pinterest, Twitter, and Instagram to be handy to these students who regularly visit these platforms

Reference

Adewale, O. A. (2019). Cyber bullying and mental Health of Nigeria University students.Journal of American Health College Health. 67(4) 29 - 297

Barness N. G., Lescanlt A. M. and Wright (2015).The 2015 fortune 500 and social media.A longitudinal study. University of Massachnselts Dartmoults

Burgess, J. and Cireen J (2009). Yontinge. Online video and paeticipatory culture. Polity press

Carter, B. (2019). Social time and sleep in adolescents. A systematic review. Journal of Adolescent Health 65(3) 341 – 348

Esteban, O. O (2019).The Rise of Social Media. Our world in data

Freberg, K., Graham, J. and Migabghen, R. (2011). Who are the social media influencer? A study of public perceptions of personality: Public Relations Reviews 37 (1) 90 – 96

LUP.K. (2019).Instagramm: Exploring the association between instagram use and depression symptoms in young adults. Cyberpsyonology, Behaviour and social Networking, 22(10), 690 – 696

Miriam, O. (2020). Mobile Technology and Home Broadbound Paw Research centre

Owusu, A. A. (2015). The Impact of social media on the Self-Esteem of Adolescent girls in Ghana: Journal of Youth and Adolescent 48(1) 1 – 13

Royal Society for Public Health (2020).Understanding the impact of Social Medial on mental health.Newfilters.

Slater, A. and Tiggermann, M. (2018).A comparative study of the impact of traditional and social media on body image. Journal of youths and Adolescence 47 (1) 113 – 124

Zhu, Y. (2020). TikTok: A new era of smart form video sharing. Journal of visual communication 19 (1) 1 – 12