

# Effect of Freedom Monitoring Tool on Students' Social Media Addition and Academic Performance

NDUKWU, EDITH NKEIRUKA<sup>1</sup>, JOSEPH C. ONUOHA<sup>2</sup>, NJIDEKA D. ENEOGU<sup>3</sup>, GRACE O. UGWONNA<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>*Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka*

**Abstract-** *This study investigated the effect of freedom monitoring tool on social media addition and academic performance of university undergraduates. Three null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted an ex-post-facto research design to determine how freedom monitoring tool affect students' social media addictive behavior and academic performance. The sample for the study was made up of 98 students from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka who accepted to be part of the study. Mean ratings, simple percentage and t-test were used for data analyses. It was revealed that freedom monitoring tool was able to determine how long students stay on social media per day. The study also showed that freedom monitoring tool has a significant effect on students' academic performance. Similarly, the study revealed that freedom monitoring tool significantly affects students' academic performance. Similarly, social media addiction affects academic performance negatively.*

**Key Words:** *Academic Performance; Addiction; Freedom Monitoring Tool; Social Media.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Students go to school to learn new values and skills. A student is someone who is learning to do something or who attends a school. In Nigeria both secondary school learners and higher school learners are called students. Anyone who submits to acquire a new knowledge is a student. Students are those who are learning to do something or who attends a school. Today's students often consult the internet to enhance their learning abilities.

In the world today, most people use the internet regularly. A good number of persons that use social media on daily basis are students. Students are among the main people who prefer these channels to know the latest updates and to establish connections with people. Most of the students who are engrossed with the social media are university students (undergraduates). Undergraduates are those students

who depend on social media for a happy life. Most of such students are addicted to use of social media, such that they cannot do without it. Many students spend hours on social media instead of focusing more on their studies (Vocabulary Dictionary, 2025).

Social media refers to third-party internet-based platforms that mainly focus on social interactions, community-based inputs, and content sharing among its community of users (Alfonso, Alessandro, and Bhatiasavi, 2022). Social media has become a progressively more popular activity over the last decade. Social media is a powerful instrument which may be used for good or for bad in the absence of adequate control (Kolan, Dzandza and 2018). Social media is now a household word due to its power to connect people irrespective of distance, place and time. Social media have made the whole world a global village (Ndukwu, Igbo and Ndukwu, 2022) Social media have become an essential part of everyday life, especially for university undergraduates. Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song and Wang (2019) posited that social media can provide exposure to new ideas and information, raising awareness of current events and issues. Interactive media also can provide opportunities for the promotion of public participation and engagement.

Social Media is a compendium of online social and technological handles. Social Media is made up of all the online social networks which includes; Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and others. Lateef (2019) opined that the emergence of social media as a result of advancement in technology and expansion in internet software has raised concern among academics on its (social media) influence on studies. Bharwani. (2023) averred that social media has become a playground for the students of this generation. They spend much of their time playing games, watching videos and making online

connection. Social media is integral to contemporary life. It offers significant connectivity and entertainment benefits. Ndukwu, Igbo and Ndukwu (2022) postulated that social media is causing several negative impacts on students.

Social media has revolutionized the people communicate and interact with each other. It has become an integral part of peoples' daily lives especially university students. Amirthalingam and Khera (2024) said that due to the inordinate use of social media, a large number of college and university students have swerved away from their career development goals. Bharwani. (2023) averred that more students are becoming more addicted to social media daily basis. Pervasive use of social media, particularly among the university students is very alarming, characterized by excessive screen time, compulsive checking, and having detrimental effects on real-life relationships and responsibilities (Sümen and Evgin, 2021).

It is hardly likely that a human invention will not have some disadvantage, and social media is not an exception to this assertion. Thus, the social media seems to have come with both positive and negative influences on students' academic performance. Excess use and dependency on social media is called social media addiction (Bordbar, Mirzaei, Bahmaei, Atashbahar, and Yusefi, 2025) This addiction is driven by a combination of psychological factors, such as low self-esteem and mental health issues, technological mechanisms like infinite scrolling and personalized notifications, and social influences, including peer pressure and exposure to idealized content (Amirthalingam and Khera, 2024). For some students, having access to social media platforms transforms into addiction.

Addiction is a psychological and physical inability to stop consuming a chemical, drug, activity, or substance, even though it is causing psychological and physical harm. A person who cannot stop doing a particular thing or taking a particular substance is an addict. When a person experiences addiction in an activity like charting on social media he/she becomes dependent on it to cope with daily life (Ndukwu, Igbo and Ndukwu, 2022). Addiction can manifest in several ways, such as avoiding personal and professional

obligations and experiencing significant distress when unable to access any social media platforms (Sümen, and Evgin, 2021). Majority of peoples' use of social media is non-problematic, there is a small percentage of users that become addicted to social networking sites and engage in excessive or compulsive use (Gashaj, 2025).

There is a link between social media addiction, risky sexual behaviour and poor academic performance of students of the faculty of education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Amirthalingam and Khera (2024) viewed that social media addiction is a behavioral addiction that is characterized as being overly concerned about social media, driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on to or use social media, and devoting so much time and effort to social media that makes them neglect other important areas of their life such as their academics. Aparicio-Martinez, Perea-Moreno, Martinez-Jimenez, and Redel-Macías(2019) found that for individuals, social media had a significant detrimental effect on many aspects of life including relationships, work and academic achievement. This is why many students have lost interest in real life. Amirthalingam and Khera (2024), found that when social media is used for social uplifting, literacy and tutoring, it can produce outcomes and possible improve the students' academic performance. Social media addiction is increasingly acknowledged as a significant factor impacting mental health. Hou, .Xiong, Jiang, Song, & Wang (2019) opined that protracted use of these platforms has been linked to heightened levels of academic failure, particularly among university students. Many individuals resort to social media addiction as a coping mechanism to manage academic failure (Bharwani, 2023). Social media has a detrimental impact on cognitive function in addition to its impact on academic performance.

Academic performance among students is a critical metric for assessing the effectiveness of educational systems worldwide. Suleiman, Okunade and Dada (2024) found that academic performance is the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by learners in a specific subject or academic field It is determined through the assessment, evaluation, and judgment of learners' progress over a defined period (Bordbar, Mirzaei, Bahmaei, Atashbahar, & Yusefi, 2025).

Academic performance is a vital indicator for measuring the success of an educational system in achieving its goals. Despite significant government investments in higher education, many learners fail to achieve satisfactory academic performance especially in developing countries. Academic performance is a multifaceted aspect of a student's educational journey, influenced by various factors that come into play during their time in school (Suleiman, Okunade, Dada, 2024). Academic performance is considered as a complex student's behavior that inspires a number of abilities like memory, previous knowledge or aptitude, as well as psychological factors. Shahjahan, Rumana, Hadrami, Rabiul, Sharmin and Khan (2021) said that nowadays, in most of the university students' academic performance has become an important issue for researchers. Educators, trainers, and researchers have given emphasize in discovering variables that have a significant contribution to the performance of learners. Suleiman, Okunade, Dada, (2024).

Academic performance of the students influences a country's social and economic development as a result, studies focusing on aspects related to academic performance, particularly those emphasizing institutional, psychological, pedagogical, social, and demographic variables for institutional reform, have grown in importance. Ndubuisi-Evans (2024) posited that academic performance is the assessment of a student's ability in a variety of academic areas. Classroom performance, graduation rates, and standardized test results are commonly used by teachers and education administrators to evaluate student accomplishment (Bordbar, Mirzaei, Bahmaei, Atashbahar and Yusefi, 2025). Among these factors, study hours, previous scores, past questions studies, and extracurricular activities which include going through some social media platforms. To determine how often the university students use social media, freedom monitoring tool was employed.

Addressing this social media addiction poor academic performance requires an online monitoring tool like the freedom monitoring tool. The freedom monitoring tool is software used in monitoring and regulating how people use online data or social media. It is expected that a multidisciplinary approach with freedom monitoring tool may lead to the reduction in the use of social media addiction and help them to improve their

academic performance. Promoting awareness through education, and technology will create more tools for both subjective and objective measurements of addiction, and fostering open communications about the topic can help reduce the negative impacts on students. The excessive use of social media has been shown to negatively impact cognitive function and reduce attention span (Ndubuisi-Evans, 2024). Social media platforms' constant digital stimulation encourages attention to be diverted and affects the ability to focus on tasks for an extended amount of time both educational achievement and the ability to engage deeply and meaningfully with the subject matter might be impacted by this brief attention span. The harmful effect that social media addiction has on student performance is another significant concern for parents. Sümen, and Evgin (2021) averred that. social media addiction can often result in distraction from learning responsibilities, which has an adverse effect on students' performance in educational settings, particularly among university students. Lower grades and diminished academic motivation could result from social networking's appeal and periodic updates, which can cause one to find themselves sidetracked from their educational pursuits (Amirthalingam and Khera, 2024). This sort of distraction is especially harmful when learning is at its most vital, and success is contingent upon commitment and focus.

All things taken into account, social media helps individuals connect and share information; however, it also poses challenges that may negatively impact children's academic performance and the quality of their interpersonal relationships. Social media addiction is characterized by excessive and compulsive usage that affects daily functioning and overall well-being. Alfonso, Alessandro and Bhatiasevi (2022) are of the view that social media addition encompasses more than just spending an excessive amount or time online; it involves compulsively checking for updates, feeling anxious when offline, and suffering from negative impacts on real-life relationships and responsibilities. Social media addiction among undergraduate students is a growing concern with far-reaching effects on freedom monitoring tool, and academic performance. One wonders if on freedom monitoring tool can be used to check social media addition on students' academic performance, hence the reason for this study.

RQ1: What is the effect of freedom monitoring tool on social media addiction?  
 RQ2: What is the effect of freedom monitoring tool on academic performance?

**Methods**

This study adopted ex-post-facto research design to the effect of freedom monitoring tool on social media addiction academic performance. Ex-post-facto design is that in which the independent variable is not manipulated, establishes a causal-comparative a relationship between two or more variables (Ali 2006). An Ex-post-facto design shows a cause and effect relationship. It depicts how one event leads to another naturally. The design is appropriate for the study because no variable was manipulated in this study. Ex-post-facto research design can only be used to examine the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variables.

**Participants**

In executing this research study, out of the 100 university students were considered eligible for the study (50 Female and 5 Male). The criteria for participating in the study includes; being addicted to social media and experiencing academic difficulty or low academic performance. The participants are undergraduates aged 18-25, who accepted to be part of the study. The respondents were from different universities in Nigeria. The right participants were identified through an initial pilot study designed to know those that will be used for the study.

**Instrumentation**

The instruments used for data collection were: the Freedom Monitoring Tools (FMTs), Social Media Addiction Questionnaire (SMAQ) and Academic Performance Questionnaire (APQ). Questionnaire had 20 items each. The Questionnaire was adapted from Joshua Duarte’s Social Media and Sexual Cognitions Behaviors Questionnaire (2016). The Questionnaire was a four point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

**Results**

Table 1 Frequency of Social Media Use Based on Age

Age	N	18-21
22-25		
%		54%
46%	100	
Duration on Social Media		3-9 Daily
		2-8 Daily

*Note:* Frequency of social media use based on Age.

A total of 100 questionnaires were analyzed. Table I shows the Frequency of social media use based on age. 54% of the respondents were 18-21 years old while 46% of the respondents were 22-25 years old. There was no significant difference between the number of males and females who use social media. The data in table 1 shows that both age ranges use social media very often, however, the data show that students whose fall between 18-21 age range last longer time on social media than their 22-25 age range counterparts. The table above shows that as 54% of the respondents whose ages range 18-21 years stay on the social media between 3-9 hours daily, their counterparts whose ages range between 22-25 stay on social media between 2-8 hours daily.

What is the effect of freedom monitoring tool on social media addiction?

Table 2 Freedom Monitoring Tool and Social Media Addiction

Freedom Monitoring Tool	N	Mean SD
Social Media Addiction	100	3.34
		0.41

*Note:* Freedom Monitoring Tool and Social Media Addiction.

Table 2 shows the mean rating effect of freedom monitoring tool on students’ social media usage. The table above also indicates a mean score of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.41 of freedom monitoring tool on students’ social media addiction.

H<sub>1</sub>: Freedom monitoring tool has no effect on students’ social media addiction.

Table 3 A t- test on Freedom Monitoring Tool and Students' Social Media Addiction.

Freedom Monitoring Tool	T	D/F
Social Media Addiction	0.61	99

0.01

Note: freedom monitoring tool *and* students' social media addiction *t-test*

Data in table 3 show that freedom monitoring has significant effect on students' social media addiction. This is indicated by the calculated t-value of 0.61 which is significant at 0.01 levels and therefore significant at 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that freedom monitoring has no effect on students' social media addiction is rejected.

What is the effect of freedom monitoring tool on students' academic performance?

Table 4 Freedom Monitoring Tool and Students' Academic Performance

Freedom Monitoring Tool	N	Mean
Academic Performance	100	3.07

0.43

Note: *Freedom Monitoring Tool and Students' Academic Performance.*

Table 4 shows the mean rating effect of freedom monitoring tool on Students' Academic Performance. The table above also indicates a mean score of 3.07 and standard deviation of .043 of freedom monitoring tool on Students' Academic Performance. Table 4

H<sub>2</sub>: Freedom monitoring tool has no effect on students' academic performance.

Table 5 A t- test on Freedom Monitoring Tool and Students' Academic Performance.

Freedom Monitoring Tool	T	D/F
Social Media Addiction	0.69	99

0.01

Note: *freedom monitoring tool and students' academic performance t-test*

Data in table 3 show that freedom monitoring has significant effect on students' social media addiction. This is indicated by the calculated t-value of 0.69 which is significant at 0.01 levels and therefore significant at 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that freedom monitoring has no effect on students' students' academic performance is rejected.

Discussions on Freedom Monitoring Tools and Social Media Addiction

The result of this study is in accord with the findings of Moreno study (2012) which revealed that freedom monitoring tool affects students' social media usage and addiction significantly. According to Livingstone (2008) Media use around or after bedtime can disrupt sleep/health and negatively affect school performance. Livingstone (2008) added that the use of media while engaged in academic tasks has negative consequences on learning. Both the present study and the study of Wight, Williamson and Henderson (2006) show ardent use of social media has a negative impact on the sexual behaviour and social wellness of many adolescents. Both the present study and the study of Adenike, Wusiu and Olugbenga (2009) depict that there are many risky sexual behaviour among adolescents. The study of Chou, Hunt, Beckjord, Moser and Hesse (2009) and the current study show that the use of social media is a source of sexual information (Chou, Hunt, Beckjord, Moser & Hesse, 2009). Like the current study, the study of Joshua Duarte found that females tend to post more sexual content on social media compared to their male counterparts.

Discussions on Freedom Monitoring Tools and Students' Academic Performance

The findings of this study revealed that freedom monitoring tools affects Students' Academic Performance significantly by reducing their social media usage. The above assertion is supported by the study of Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song, & Wang (2019) on Social media addiction. The study revealed that freedom monitoring tools limit social media usage and addiction. Social media addiction negatively affects students' mental health and academic performance. This result is similar to the result published by Asemah, Okpanachi and Edegoh (2013) which revealed that exposure to social media by the undergraduate students of Kogi State University, has negative effect on their academic performance. The study of Cookingham and Ryan (2015) also found that social media influence students' academic achievement a great deal. It was revealed that social media affect students' academic performance significantly and negatively. The researchers also noted that the use of social media is an integral part of daily life for most adolescents. The above assertions are in harmony with the following research findings: Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010) argued that social networks distracts the attention and concentration of students toward learning and converts it towards non educational activities such as useless and unnecessary chatting. Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), that over-involvement or obsession with social networking sites (SNSs) by students can have negative impacts on their academic performance. Osharie (2015) and is not taken in its usage. Contrary to the results above, the study of Wheeler (2008); Rifkin, Longnecker Maya (2015) opined that social media can be problematic to students' academic life if caution, Leach and Ortia (2009) postulated that social media usage has the following merits; enhancing relationship, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material, and developing collaborative abilities. Kolan and Dzandza (2018) revealed that social media facilitates academic discussions with lecturers.

#### CONCLUSION

It has been found that freedom monitoring tools have social media addiction and academic performance. Social media addiction has negative effect on students' academic performance.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Amirthalingam J. & Khera ,A.(2024) Understanding social media addiction: A deep dive, 27;16(10):e72499. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11594359/> doi: 10.7759/cureus.72499
- [2] Aparicio-Martinez, P., Perea-Moreno, A. J., Martinez-Jimenez, M. P., Redel-Macias, M. D., Pagliari, C. & Vaquero-Abellan, M. (2019). Social media, thin-ideal, body dissatisfaction and disordered eating attitudes: An exploratory analysis. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(21), 4177. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16214177>References
- [3] Alfonso , P. Alessandro, S. & Bhatiasevi, V. ( 2022). Research trends in social media addiction and problematic social media use: A bibliometric analysis doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2022.1017506 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9707397/>
- [4] Bharwani. V. (2023). The impact of social media on student <https://yourcommonwealth.org/social-development/the-impact-of-social-media-on-students/>
- [5] Bordbar, S., Mirzaei, S., Bahmaei, J., Atashbahar, O. & Yusefi, A. R. (2025). Predicting students' academic performance based on academic identity, academic excitement, and academic enthusiasm: evidence from a cross-sectional study in a developing country. *BMC medical education*, 25(1), 768. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-07374-6>
- [6] Gashaj, A. (2025) "Analysis of Social Media Addiction in Teens and Young Adults: A Recommendation Report", *Undergraduate Journal of Public Health* 9. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3998/ujph.7607>
- [7] Hou, Y., Xiong, D., Jiang, T., Song, L., & Wang, Q. (2019). Social media addiction: Its impact, mediation, and intervention. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 13(1), article 4. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5817/CP2019-1-4>

- [8] Kolan, B. J. & Dzandza, P. E. (2018). Effect of Social Media on Academic Performance of Students in Ghanaian Universities: A Case Study of University of Ghana, Legon. University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal).
- [9] Lateef, O. A. (2019). Influence of social media on sexual behaviour of youth in Kwara State, Nigeria: Implications for counselling practice. *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth / Le Journal Canadien de Famille et de la Jeunesse*. 11
- [10] Ndubuisi-Evans, N. B. (2024). Social media addiction and academic performance of undergraduate students. *Journal of Professional Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 5(1). Retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> /11/2025 <https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/JPCPR/article/view/2554>
- [11] Ndukwu, E. C., Igbo, Janet N. & Ndukwu, E. N. (2022) Effect of social media addiction on in-school adolescents' academic achievement and sexual Behaviour
- [12] Shahjahan M., Rumana, Hadrami, Rabiul, Sharmin & Khan (2021) Factors influencing poor academic performance among urban university students in Bangladesh: international Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE) Vol. 10, No.,1140~1148 1140pISSN: 2252-8822, doi10.11591/ijere.v10i4.21158 Journal homepage: <http://ijere.iaescore.com>
- [13] Suleiman, I.B., Okunade, O.A. & Dada, E.G. (2024). Key factors influencing students' academic performance. *Journal of Electrical Systems and Inf Technol* 11, 41 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43067-024-00166-w>
- [14] Sümen, A. & Evgin, D. (2021). Social Media Addiction in High School Students: A Cross-Sectional Study Examining Its Relationship with Sleep Quality and Psychological Problems. *Child indicators research*, 14(6), 2265–2283. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-021-09838-9>
- [15] Vocabulary.com Dictionary. (2025) Vocabulary.com, <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/student>. Retrieved on 29 November, 2025.