

# Social Computing: A Study Assessing the Impacts of Social Network Addiction among the Students in Northern Nigeria

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**Abstract**---With the advent of the cyber world around us today and how students are immersed and became to it, there is growing concern on how it affects their life. Social network sites (SNSs) like Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook are now popularly used among students especially in tertiary institutions in Northern Nigeria. This paper basically attempts to investigate the impacts of Social Network Addiction among the students of tertiary institutions in Northern Nigeria and the level at which the students are addicted to it. In addition the paper also examines the various social media sites mostly used by students and the frequency at which they make use of such facilities. The descriptive survey research method was used with structured questionnaire designed based on the research questions. Five tertiary institutions in Katsina state were used. A total of eight hundred (800) copies of questionnaires were distributed out of which 715 were retrieved. Data gathered was analyzed using frequency count and simple percentages. It was gathered that frequent and too much use of SNSs negatively affects the students’ performances in tertiary education across Northern Nigeria. Recommendations were then made, that students should learn how to manage their time appropriately and also use the social media to improve and promote learning their activities.

**Keywords**---Social Media, Tertiary institution, social networking sites, Internet

## I. INTRODUCTION

ON the internet, people engage in a variety of activities some of which may be potentially addictive [4]. Social networking sites offer individuals the possibilities of networking and sharing media content, therefore embracing the main web 2.0 attributes against the framework of their respective structural characteristics [8].

[7] Posit that school work and social interaction have been affected at the advent of these social media. Undergraduates spend more time on Facebook, Twitter and other social networks through smart phones that are now in abundance among these youths. Many youths cannot go for two-three hours without checking and updating their profiles on these social networks even at the detriment of other activities such as educational and career pursuit. [12] Explain internet addiction as the excessive use of the internet and the failure to control this usage which seriously harms a person’s life. Excessive mental preoccupation with internet usage, repetitive thoughts about limiting or controlling the use, failure to prevent the desire for access, continuation of using the internet

though functionality is being ruined at various levels, spending more and more time on the internet, craving for using the internet when access is not available are the remarkable problems with internet addiction [5]

## II. PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

In [3], social networking sites abbreviated as SNS is the phrase used to describe any website that enables users to create public profiles within that website ho access their profile . Also SNS can be used to describe community-based web sites, online discussions forums, chatrooms and other social spaces online.

According to [9] social networks are the conjunction of personal ties which are combined by a set of relations. Daily thoughts can be expressed and discussions can take place about these thoughts and new ideas come up with on social networks. Photographs and videos can be shared, tagged and updated in addition to personal details, look for jobs and even find one and the real world can be experienced within the virtual environment of a social network [3]. According to [5],The first social networking site SixDegrees.com was launched in 1997 and it allowed users to create profiles, list their friends and surf the friend’s list (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

According to [3] below are List top 10 social networking sites, the year of origination and the number of users.

SNS	YEAR OF ORIGATION	NO OF USERS
FRENDSTER	2002	10 million
MYSAPCE	2003	25 million
LinkedIn	2003	225 million
FACEBOOK	2004	1.28 Billion
BEBO	2005	15 million
YOUTUBE	2005	187million
TWITTER	2008	
BUZZ	2010	
iTUNES	2011	170 million

Source: Anthorny, C.

([www.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/newmedia/socialmedia.html](http://www.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/newmedia/socialmedia.html))

Social network sites (SNSs) such as Friendster, CyWorld, and MySpace allow individuals to present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others. These sites can be oriented towards work-related contexts (e.g., LinkedIn.com), romantic relationship initiation (the original goal of Friendster.com), connecting those with shared interests such as music or politics (e.g., MySpace.com), or the college student population (the original incarnation of Facebook.com). Participants may use the sites to interact with people they already know offline

or to meet new people[5] Social networking has become part of the daily life experiences for an increasing number of people [11]

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A study conducted by Pew Internet and American Life project in 2007 found that majority of youths, over 79% cannot tear themselves away from the use of social networks and must update and view their profiles daily [7]

In [13] Olowu, & Seri conducted a study of 884 students of different universities in Nigeria, which indicated that youths in Nigeria are spending too much time on social networking sites at the detriment of other necessary things such as their studies. They explained that Youths' use of these social networking sites even point towards obsession. The youths have made the social media their top priority and continued to need more usage in order to feel satisfied.

[7] Posits that there seem to be an alarming rate of social networking obsession among youths today; a trend that could affect their academic, social and spiritual lives negatively if not properly controlled. [9] Observed that if the dangerous trend of social network "obsession" if left unchecked could further affect an already collapsing education system in Nigeria.

### IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nowadays, tertiary institutions students in Northern Nigeria are always engaged using their handset and laptops to the access Internet thereby spending considerable time chatting and checking their Facebook profiles. They also use MySpace, updating their Twitter accounts and their LinkedIn account. This apparently happens about 5 to six hours daily, some do all night browsing. When do they have the time to make research or read their books? This study investigates the impacts of social media indulgence among the students of tertiary institutions in Northern Nigeria.

### V. METHODOLOGY

The instrument used for data collection in this study was the descriptive statistics survey method with structured questionnaire. This was because of the nature of information required and the form of analysis to be carried out. A structured questionnaire was designed considerably and administered to students from four different tertiary institutions in Katsina state, Nigeria. The institutions include: The Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina University Katsina, Umaru Musa Yaraduwa University and Federal College of Education Katsina. A total of eight hundreds (800) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents out of only seven hundred (715) were able to be retrieved. Data analysis was done using frequency count and simple percentage. The instrument was designed in two parts, namely demographic and structured questions. Data analysis was done using frequency count and simple percentage.

### VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to examine and assess the impacts of social network addiction among the students in

Northern Nigeria. However the study will determine the following:

- The social media mostly used by students
- The frequency at which youths make use of Social network sites.
- The reasons why students are addicted to Social Network sites
- The level at which students are addicted to the Social Network Sites
- Whether the social networking affects the academic performances

### VII. DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics as follows:

#### Section A: Respondents Demographical Data

TABLE I  
GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	410	57.3
Female	305	42.7
TOTAL	715	100

The above table shows that the male respondents are higher than the female respondents indicating that males make use of social media more than their female counterpart.

#### Section B: Analysis Of Other Research Questions

TABLE II  
THE SNSs MOSTLY USED BY STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION.

SNSs	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Facebook	700	97.9
Twitter	50	7.0
Whatsapp	600	83.9
2go	500	69.9
Skynet	20	2.8
Others	400	55.9

From table 2, it is observed that, Facebook is mostly used among all the available SNSs by the students with 97.9% (700) respondents, followed by WhatsApp with 83.9% (600) respondents, 2GO with 69.9% (500) respondents, Twitter with 7% (50), with Skynet 2.8% (20) and with others 55.9% (400) respondents using them daily. This shows that Facebook is the social networking site mostly used by students of tertiary institutions in Northern Nigeria.

TABLE III  
THE FREQUENCY AT WHICH STUDENTS USE SOCIAL MEDIA.

HOUR(s) PER DAY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Less Than 1	100	14
1 -2	200	28
3 -5	300	42
6 And Above	75	10.5
Never	40	5.5
TOTAL	715	100

Table 2 indicates that 14%(100) of the respondents use the SNSs for less than one hour daily, 28%(200) of the respondents use it for about 1 to 2 hour per day, 42%(300) of the respondents use it for about 3to 7 hours per day and 5.5% of the respondents use the SNSs for 6 and above hours per day while five percent of the respondents never use the SNSs. This

means that most students of higher institutions in Northern Nigeria use the SNSs for 1 to 2 hours per day.

TABLE IV  
REASONS THE STUDENTS ARE USE SNSs

REASONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Communication	203	28.4
Chatting	255	35.7
News Update	105	14.7
OTHERS	296	41.4

Table 4 above indicates that 28.4% of respondents use the SNS to keep in touch with friends and family members, 35.7% use it for chatting, 14.7 of the respondents use it to have daily news update and 41.1% of the respondents say they use the SNS for other reasons such as friendship, dating etc.

TABLE V  
THE LEVEL AT WHICH STUDENTS ARE ADDICTED TO SOCIAL MEDIA

ADDICTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Strong	397	55.5
Moderate	203	28.4
Never	115	16.1
TOTAL	715	100

As seen in the table 5 above 55.5% of the respondents are strongly addicted to SNSs, 28.4 of the respondents are moderately addicted while only 16.1% are not addicted to SNSs. This implies that, majority of students in tertiary institutions are strongly addicted to SNSs usage.

TABLE VI  
THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

EFFECT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Positively	192	26.9
Negatively	269	37.6
Never	254	35.5
TOTAL	715	100

Table 6 shows that 26.9% of the respondents agreed that, the use of SNSs positively affects their academics performances, 37.6% are negatively affected while 35.5% are not affected in any way by their use of the SNSs. This shows that majority of the respondents are of the view that, too much use of social network negatively affect their academic performances.

### VIII. DISCUSSION

This research has revealed that the frequent and too much use of the SNSs have adverse effect on the students' academic performances in tertiary education. The result obtained in this study supports the deductions of [13] which indicated that youths in Nigeria are spending too much time on social networking sites at the detriment of other necessary things such as their studies. The is also in agreement of [8] who concluded that most of the students wasting their time on social networking sites.

However the research contradicts [15] that the frequent use of Social networking sites by students has no effect on their studies

In this study, the following findings were discovered that:

- Male respondents are higher than the female respondents indicating that males make use of social media more than the females.
- Majority of the respondents use almost all the commonly available social media with the facebook having the largest number of users.
- Majority of the respondents spend 3 to 5 hours on social networking sites and as a result this affects their performances negatively.
- Majority of the respondents use SNSs for other reasons such as friendship, dating, social needs etc..
- Majority of the respondents agreed that they are highly addicted to social network
- Majority of the respondents agreed that too much use of the SNSs negatively affect their academic performances.

### IX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study it is clearly observed that students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria are spending too much time on social media at the detriment of their academic activities. Too much time spent online affects ones productivity both physically and emotionally and should therefore be reduced. The danger posed by exposing too much information online cannot also be overemphasized and students should be careful. Students should know how to limit time spent online especially viewing social networking sites. Since students can now use SNSs for their academic activities, lecturers should therefore use SNSs to enhance teaching-learning process by creating an online academic guidance and counseling, uploading academic materials etc.

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