



Influence of Social Media and Deviant Behaviour on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Asaba Urban, Nigeria

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Abstract

Social media contributes to deviant behaviour (such as bullying, violence, and drug abuse) among secondary school students, which in turn negatively impacts their academic performance. Thus, this study examined the influence of social media and deviant behaviour on academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban. Three (3) research questions were raised for the study. The population of the study comprised all the three hundred and forty-five (345) public secondary school teachers from the 21 public secondary schools in Asaba Urban. One hundred and twelve (112) teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation at Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba. One hundred and twelve (112) copies of the validated questionnaire were administered to the teachers from the 10 selected public secondary schools in the study area by the researcher with the help of two research assistants and it was retrieved and analysed using mean and standard deviation statistics. Findings of the study revealed, that addiction to social media had negative influence on the academic performance of the secondary school students in Asaba Urban. It was recommended that educators should incorporate character education into the curriculum and provide academic intervention programmes for students exhibiting social media deviant behaviour.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Deviant Behaviour, Social Media

Introduction

The world today is experiencing rapid technological advancements that have reshaped how people interact, access information, and socialise. Social media platforms have become central to modern communication, particularly among young people, including secondary school students.



While the platforms offer valuable resources for learning and staying connected, they also pose challenges, especially when students engage excessively or inappropriately on social media. One significant concern is the potential influence of social media on deviant behaviour, which includes actions that deviate from accepted norms, such as academic dishonesty, substance abuse, and disruptive behaviour.

Social media is a range of online platforms and applications that enable users to share content, communicate, and collaborate in real-time across different geographical locations. It functions as a tool that breaks barriers of time and space, enabling users to communicate instantly across borders. It has transformed communication, allowing for interactive engagement through comments, likes, and shares, fostering a sense of community. Olawale and Adeola (2020) describe social media as digital channels that facilitate the exchange of user-generated content, fostering connections and interactions among individuals and groups. Social media is positioned as a dynamic environment where users are both consumers and creators of content. The ability to generate and disseminate information quickly has led to social media's growing influence on public opinion and awareness. Olawale and Adeola (2020) emphasise the empowering nature of these platforms, which enable users to actively participate in shaping narratives and dialogues on a global scale.

Deviant behaviour, on the other hand, is actions or behaviours that go against the accepted norms, values, and rules of a society. Okoro and Adamu (2018) submit that societal norms shape expectations of behaviour, and deviations from these norms are often subject to social sanctions. They suggest that deviant behaviour is not inherently harmful but becomes significant within the cultural framework that labels it as such. Ibrahim and Olalekan (2019) describe deviant behaviour as any conduct that challenges or violates established moral and legal standards in a community. Ibrahim and Olalekan draws attention to the dual role of morality and legality in determining deviance. They argue that behaviour considered deviant are often those that society deems morally or legally unacceptable, thus linking deviance to cultural ethics and law enforcement.



On the other hand, academic performance is the extent to which a student achieves their educational goals, often measured through examinations, coursework, and practical assessments. It has to do with a reflection of a student's progress and achievement in relation to set educational objectives. Ogunleye and Iwu (2020) describe academic performance as a measure of a student's ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills within and outside the classroom. They acknowledged that academic performance goes beyond grades; it also considers how well students can use what they have learned in real-life contexts. Their perspective underscores the importance of developing skills that have practical applications, suggesting that true academic success involves both theoretical knowledge and its application. Nnamdi and Akin (2021) view academic performance as the output of a student's intellectual engagement and consistent effort in achieving learning objectives.

Social media has become a powerful influence on the academic performance of secondary school students, affecting various aspects of their study habits, focus, and engagement (Olawale and Adeola 2020). First, social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, offer entertainment and interaction, which can be highly distracting for students. Time spent on these platforms can reduce the amount of time available for studying, as students might prioritise social interactions over academic responsibilities. Additionally, excessive use of social media can contribute to reduced attention spans, making it difficult for students to concentrate on academic tasks that require prolonged focus (Odeleye & Adekanbi, 2019).

Research also indicates that social media can disrupt sleep patterns due to late-night scrolling, which affects students' cognitive functions and overall performance in school (Chukwuere & Chukwuere, 2020). Furthermore, social media can impact academic performance by encouraging a culture of multitasking, where students might switch between tasks, such as completing assignments and browsing their feeds, which often lowers productivity. However, not all effects are negative; social media can provide educational resources, such as access to academic groups, tutorials, and educational influencers, enhancing learning if used effectively.



Some students leverage social media to collaborate on academic projects, which can improve understanding and retention of concepts.

Deviant behaviours among secondary school students include a range of actions that deviate from societal and school norms, disrupting the learning environment and often impacting academic performance. Common deviant behaviours observed in secondary schools include truancy, where students habitually skip classes without valid reasons, leading to gaps in learning and lower grades (Adewale & Ayodele, 2020). Vandalism, the deliberate destruction of school property, not only disrupts the learning atmosphere but also results in financial burdens on the school, often redirecting funds from educational resources to repairs (Eze & Akpan, 2019). Furthermore, cheating on examination or assignments compromises academic integrity and often results in sanctions, affecting a student's overall academic standing and reducing motivation for genuine learning (Ibrahim & Bello, 2017). Disrespect towards teachers and school authorities is another form of deviance that can lead to suspension or expulsion, removing students from the learning environment and contributing to lower academic outcomes (Nwachukwu & Uche, 2022). Involvement in cult activities, though less common, is increasingly reported in some secondary schools, posing serious threats to safety and leading to expulsion or incarceration (Okoro & Idowu, 2019). Sexual misconduct, including harassment among peers, diverts attention from academic pursuits and has severe psychological effects on those involved, further impeding academic engagement and performance (Adesanya et al., 2020).

The cumulative influence of this deviant behaviour on academic performance are profound. Students involved in such behaviour often miss classes, lack focus, and have a negative attitude towards schooling, resulting in low grades, high dropout rates, and poor academic achievement (Adebayo & Folorunsho, 2022). Deviant behaviour creates a school environment filled with tension and fear, lowering overall morale and disrupting the academic performance of all students.

It is therefore essential to examine the influence of social media and deviant behaviour on academic performance among secondary school students in Asaba Urban, Delta State, Nigeria.



Various deviant behaviour observed among secondary school students. Some of which are:

Substance Abuse: Substance abuse, involving the use of drugs or alcohol, is increasingly observed among secondary school students. Okocha and Onu (2020) note that in Nigeria, students may engage in substance abuse due to peer pressure, stress, or curiosity, often without understanding the health risks involved. Similarly, Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman (2018) report that substance use among American adolescents is influenced by social environments and exposure to media portrayals of drug use. Substance abuse impairs cognitive functions, which can lead to poor academic performance and disciplinary issues.

Truancy: Truancy, or skipping school without permission, is a common deviant behaviour among secondary students. Adekunle and Ayodele. (2021) explain that truancy often stems from a lack of interest in academic activities or family issues, leading students to avoid attending school regularly. In the Nigerian context, Ademola and Fashina (2018) highlight that truancy is a significant issue linked to peer pressure and low academic motivation, causing students to fall behind academically. This behaviour disrupts students' academic progress and increases the likelihood of dropping out.

Examination Malpractice: Examination malpractice, including cheating and copying answers, is a serious concern in secondary schools worldwide. Eze and Ndukwe (2018) argue that in Nigeria, examination malpractice is driven by a desire to achieve high scores with minimal effort, often exacerbated by parental pressure and societal expectations. Lambert and McCarthy (2019) add that cheating is not limited to Nigeria; it is also prevalent in Western countries where students face academic stress and competition. Examination malpractice undermines the integrity of the education system and can negatively impact students' ethical development.

Bullying: Bullying, which includes physical, verbal, and cyber harassment, is a pervasive deviant behaviour among adolescents. Olowu and Seri (2019). report that bullying is widespread in Nigerian schools, with senior students often targeting juniors to assert dominance. Internationally, Espelage and Hong (2019) describe bullying as a major issue that affects students' mental health, academic engagement, and



school climate. Both Nigerian and foreign scholars agree that bullying leads to negative emotional and academic consequences for both the victims and the perpetrators.

Cultism: Cultism, or participation in secret societies with rituals and hierarchies, is a concerning deviant behaviour in some Nigerian secondary schools. Ede and Nwogu (2019) explain that students are often lured into cults with promises of protection, power, and status, leading to violent activities within schools. Although less common internationally, Munoz and Cameron (2020) observe that similar gang affiliations can influence students in other countries, especially in marginalized communities. Cultism disrupts school safety, fosters a culture of fear, and negatively impacts students' well-being.

Vandalism: Vandalism, the deliberate destruction of school property, is another deviant behaviour seen among secondary school students. Ajibola and Adeola (2021) suggest that Nigerian students may engage in vandalism as an expression of frustration or to gain popularity among peers. Internationally, Graham and Homel (2018) note that vandalism is common in schools, often as a form of rebellion or due to a lack of respect for institutional rules. This behaviour results in financial losses for schools and creates an unsafe learning environment.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying, involving harassment or threats online, is a growing issue among secondary school students due to the increased use of social media. Akpan and Ekwere (2022) report that Nigerian students are increasingly involved in cyberbullying, often using it as an anonymous way to target peers. **Obinna** (2022). found that cyberbullying is also prevalent globally, leading to mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, among victims. This behaviour can severely impact students' self-esteem and disrupt their academic and social lives.

Sexual Misconduct: Sexual misconduct, such as inappropriate relationships or harassment among students, is a deviant behaviour with serious implications. Okeke and Amaechi (2019) discuss how peer pressure and the early exposure to sexual content can lead Nigerian students to engage in risky sexual behaviours. In Western contexts, Donnelly and Kenyon (2020) found that sexual misconduct among students is often associated with a lack of proper sex education and



exposure to media. Such behaviour poses health risks, affects students' academic focus, and can lead to long-term psychological issues.

Lying and Deceit: Lying and deceit are common forms of deviant behaviour among students, often as a way to avoid punishment or gain favour. Chukwu and Eze (2018) note that Nigerian students may resort to lying to cover up poor academic performance or misbehaviour, sometimes encouraged by peers. **Bassey** (2021). found that deception is also common in other countries, where students might lie to teachers or parents to escape consequences. This behaviour undermines trust within the school community and can hinder personal growth and responsibility.

Aggressive Behaviour: Aggressive behaviour, including verbal and physical altercations, is a common form of deviance among adolescents. Onyeka and Taiwo (2021) argue that Nigerian students may display aggression due to unresolved conflicts or frustrations at home, affecting their interactions in school. Similarly, Swearer and Espelage (2018) found that aggression among students in Western contexts is often linked to bullying and social conflicts. Aggressive behaviour disrupts the learning environment, impacting not only the involved students but also their peers and teachers.

Statement of the Problem

The pervasive use of social media among secondary school students has brought substantial shifts in how they communicate, learn, and socialize. Social media platforms offer extensive opportunities for information sharing and connectivity, yet they are increasingly linked to a spectrum of adverse influences on youth behaviour, particularly deviant behaviour. Such behaviours encompass truancy, bullying, substance abuse, and academic dishonesty, which can significantly disrupt students' concentration, self-discipline, and overall academic involvement (Ajayi & Osuji, 2020). As students allocate more of their time to online interactions, the line between acceptable social norms and deviant behaviours becomes increasingly blurred, posing potential risks to their academic performance.

Despite the significance of this issue, there remains a gap in empirical research specifically examining the direct relationship among social media exposure, deviant behaviours, and academic performance among



secondary school students within Oshimili South Local Government Area. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the influence of social media and deviant behaviour on the academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban, Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the influence of social media and deviant behaviour on academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined:

1. the influence of social media on academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban, Nigeria.
2. the deviant behaviours among secondary school students in Asaba Urban Delta State.
3. the effects of deviant behaviour on academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered:

1. What is the influence of social media on academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban, Nigeria?
2. What are the various deviant behaviours among secondary school students?
3. What is the influence of deviant behaviour on academic performance of secondary school students?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the three hundred and forty-four (344) public primary school teachers from the 21 public primary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. One hundred and twelve (112) teachers were selected from 10 public primary schools in Asaba Urban Delta State. to represent the entire population using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, titled “Influence of Social Media and Deviant Behaviour on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (ISMeDeBAPSSSQ)”. To ensure the validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were given to two experts in Measurement and Evaluation at Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba for face and content validation.



Corrections and suggestions made were reflected in the final copy of the instrument. One hundred and twelve (112) copies of the validated questionnaire were administered to the teachers from the 10-selected public primary schools in Asaba Urban Delta State. by the researcher with the help of two research assistants and same were retrieved and analysed. The method for analyzing the data collected were frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation statistics.

Results

Research Question One: *What is the influence of social media on academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban, Nigeria?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Response Scores on Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Asaba Urban Delta State.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD	Decision
1	Excessive use of social media reduces study time, leading to poor academic performance.	2.76	1.11	Agreed
2	Social media addiction causes distractions during lessons, affecting comprehension and retention.	2.89	1.03	Agreed
3	Overexposure to non-educational content on social media lowers students' focus on academic activities.	3.12	0.96	Agreed
4	Sleep deprivation due to late-night social media usage impacts students' concentration and productivity.	2.90	1.02	Agreed
5	Cyberbullying on social media platforms results in emotional distress and academic disengagement.	2.92	1.01	Agreed
6	Frequent social media multitasking leads to reduced efficiency in completing academic tasks.	2.90	1.08	Agreed



7	Dependence on social media for quick answers discourages independent problem-solving and critical thinking skills.	3.03	1.03	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.93	1.03	Agreed

Source: Researcher’s Compilation, 2024

Table 1 revealed that respondents agree with items 1-7. This is because, the mean score for items in the table were significantly higher than 2.50 bench mark for determination of a value as agree or disagree. The grand mean of 2.93 shows that addition to social media has negative effects on academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban Delta State. A grand mean of 1.03 signifies agreement with the result.

Research Question Two: *What are the various deviant behaviour among secondary school students?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Response Scores on Various Deviant Behaviours among Secondary School Students in Asaba Urban Delta State.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD	Decision
8	Truancy is a prevalent form of deviant behaviour among secondary school students in the area.	2.78	1.07	Agreed
9	Bullying and aggression are common deviant behaviour observed in secondary schools.	2.82	1.07	Agreed
10	Substance abuse, such as alcohol and drug use, is an emerging deviant behaviour among students.	2.81	1.08	Agreed
11	Cheating during examinations is a widespread deviant behaviour that negatively impacts students’ academic integrity.	2.83	1.06	Agreed
12	Violent behaviour, including physical fights and vandalism,	2.93	1.00	Agreed



	are increasingly common among students.			
13	Disrespect towards teachers and school authority is a significant deviant behaviour among students.	3.00	1.00	Agreed
14	Students often engage in skipping classes, which leads to poor academic performance.	2.84	1.06	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.86	1.05	Agreed

Source: Researcher’s Compilation, 2024

Table 2 revealed that respondents agree with items 8-14. This is because, the mean score for items in the table were significantly higher than 2.50 bench mark for determination of a value as agree or disagree. The grand mean of 2.86 shows that there is various deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Asaba Urban Delta State. A grand mean of 1.05 signifies agreement with the result.

Research Question Three: *What is the influence of deviant behaviour on academic performance of secondary school students?*

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Response Scores on Effects of Deviant Behaviour on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Asaba Urban Delta State.

S/N	STATEMENT	Mean	STD	Decision
15	Truancy leads to inadequate preparation and poor performance in examinations.	2.96	1.00	Agreed
16	Bullying causes emotional instability, which affects students’ ability to focus on academics.	2.98	0.99	Agreed
17	Substance abuse results in memory loss and poor comprehension, leading to lower grades.	2.83	1.07	Agreed
18	Examination malpractice fosters dependency on dishonest methods,	2.96	1.02	Agreed



	undermining learning and long-term performance.			
19	Disruptive behaviour in the classroom reduce overall instructional time and learning outcomes for all students.	2.80	0.99	Agreed
20	Increased absenteeism due to deviant behaviour causes gaps in knowledge and poor academic results.	3.03	0.97	Agreed
21	Students facing suspensions or expulsions due to deviant behaviour lose valuable learning time, negatively affecting their academic progress.	2.81	0.99	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.91	1.01	Agreed

Source: Researcher’s Compilation, 2024

Table 3 revealed that respondents agree with items 15-21. This is because, the mean score for items in the table were significantly higher than 2.50 bench mark for determination of a value as agree or disagree. The grand mean of 2.91 shows that deviant behaviour negatively affects the academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban Delta State. A grand mean of 1.01 signifies agreement with the result.

Discussion

The first findings showed that addiction to social media has negative effects on academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban Delta State. This is because excessive use of social media reduces study time, leading to poor academic performance; social media addiction causes distractions during lessons, affecting comprehension and retention; overexposure to non-educational content on social media lowers students’ focus on academic activities; sleep deprivation due to late-night social media usage impacts students’ concentration and productivity; cyberbullying on social media platforms results in emotional distress and academic disengagement. This agrees with Adeyemi (2018), who reported that high social media engagement was



correlated with an increase in deviant behaviours and a decline in academic performance.

The second findings revealed that there are various deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Asaba Urban Delta State. State. Truancy is a prevalent form of deviant behaviour among secondary school students in the area; bullying and aggression are common deviant behaviour observed in secondary schools; substance abuse, such as alcohol and drug use, is an emerging deviant behaviour among students; cheating during examinations is a widespread deviant behaviour that negatively impacts students' academic integrity; violent behaviour, including physical fights. This is in agreement with Okocha and Onu (2020), who noted that in Nigeria, students may engage in substance abuse due to peer pressure, stress, or curiosity, often without understanding the health risks involved.

The third findings indicated that deviant behaviour negatively affects the academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban Delta State. This is because truancy leads to inadequate preparation and poor performance in examinations; bullying causes emotional instability, which affects students' ability to focus on academics; substance abuse results in memory loss and poor comprehension, leading to lower grades; examination malpractice fosters dependency on dishonest methods, undermining learning and long-term performance; disruptive behaviour in the classroom reduce overall instructional time and learning outcomes for all students. This is in agreement with Adebayo (2022), who reported that social media-induced deviant behaviours negatively impacted students' grades.

Conclusion

This study concludes that social media addiction and deviant behaviours significantly impact the academic performance of secondary school students in Asaba Urban Delta State. The findings reveal that excessive use of social media distracts students from their academic responsibilities, while deviant behaviours further compound challenges by disrupting learning environments and diminishing students' focus. These issues underscore the need for collaborative efforts among educators, parents, and policymakers to implement strategies that



promote responsible social media use, provide guidance for behaviour management, and foster a supportive learning atmosphere.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Schools and parents should collaborate to introduce structured digital literacy programmes that emphasise responsible use of social media.
2. Schools should implement regular Counselling sessions and establish peer mentorship programmes to identify and address the root causes of deviant behaviours.
3. Educators should incorporate character education into the curriculum and provide academic intervention programmes for students exhibiting deviant behaviours.

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