



The influence of social media use and mental health among youth during the lockdown in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

Mental health issues are becoming a global concern especially among youths. During the Covid 19 lockdown, social media use increased tremendously among the youths as it was a major source of information and companion to them. However, this study focused on how young people's use of social media impacted their mental health when Nigeria's southwest was under lockdown because of the Covid 19 outbreak. The study relied on a survey for its data collection. A questionnaire was employed to collect information for the investigation. Taro Yamane's sample size method was used to choose a sample of 470 participants from the study's population of 5,168 young people in southwest Nigeria. Frequency, mean, and standard deviation calculations were used to answer research questions. In order to see whether the provided hypotheses were true, single regression was used. The study findings revealed that young people's usage of social media has a large and beneficial effect on their mental health in the southwest of Nigeria. Researchers found that young people's exposure to social media had a beneficial effect on their psychological well-being in southwest Nigeria. The study recommended that the government, stakeholders' decision makers, content providers as well as parents should formulate policies and generate healthy content, to help to regulate social media use among youths in order to maintain and sustain productivity as well as concentration among youths in the southwest of Nigeria.



Keywords: Social Media, Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Mental Health.

Introduction

In this age of accelerated growth, technical advancements and the dynamic character of information and communication channels have contributed to the creation of efficient social interaction channels. However, the absence of social connection or companionship is the root cause of mental illness in society (Mohamad, Juahir, Ali, Kamarudin, Karim, & Badarilah, 2017). In recent years, a number of mental health-related disorders have expanded across numerous countries throughout the globe. The prevalence of mental health difficulties among young has had a detrimental impact on their psychological well-being, particularly in relation to their usage of social media networks (Pua, Lai, Foong & Ibrahim, 2015).

The use of social media, particularly during the Covid 19 Pandemic lockdown, has had an alarming effect on the mental health of youths by fostering a type of competition among them in which some compare their body shape, lifestyle, and accomplishments to those of others, resulting in a decline in self-confidence and mental health issues (Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles, 2014; Pasko, & Arigo, 2021). During the lockdown, diverse behaviours developed as a consequence of boredom and idleness, as well as the excessive use of specific social media platforms, led to a variety of mental health issues, including stress, anxiety, sadness, and changes in lifestyle, among others (Zhong, Huang, & Liu, 2021).

The time spent on social media tends to rise during lockdown, not only due to its uniqueness, but also because to its widespread appeal in different aspects of life. The majority of individuals use social media improperly, and others use it excessively without considering the possible beneficial or bad outcomes. The usage of social media networks has both beneficial and bad effects on life, but the majority of users do not realise that it has a big impact on their mental health (Ahmad, & Murad, 2020).

Due to their frequent use of social media and incapacity to deal with or control the anxieties that may result from that use, youths in both developed and developing nations are growingly worried about their mental health (Longest, & Kang, 2022). In poor nations, notably in southwest Nigeria, there haven't been many researches on the connection between teenagers' use of social media and their mental health. Understanding how teens use social media and how it affects their mental health will help to maintain and restore normalcy to teenagers' effective and productive use of social media and their

mental well-being. As a result, the objective of this study is to investigate how teenagers in Nigeria used social media during the Covid 19 lockdown in the southwest of the nation. The main goal of this research is to assess the connection between adolescents' use of social media and mental health during the lockdown in southwest Nigeria. The study aims to address the following research questions: first, what is the relationship between social media usage and stress among Nigerian teenagers during the southwest lockdown? Second, what is the relationship between the usage of social media and anxiety among youths during the Nigerian lockdown in the southwest? And last, what is the relationship between the usage of social media and depression among youths during the Nigerian lockdown in the southwest? The following hypotheses were developed to solve the posed research questions: **H₀₁**: social media use has no significant influence on stress among youths during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria, **H₀₂**: social media use has no significant influence on anxiety among youths during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria, **H₀₃**: social media use has no significant influence on depression among youths during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria?

Conceptual Review

Social Media Use

As a result of the widespread sharing of knowledge enabled by social media, relationships between people of different social backgrounds have flourished. Especially during the lockdown, the role of social media in spreading information could not have been more important. Not simply because to its uniqueness, but also due to its timeliness, ease of access, and information transmission capabilities, the social media network saw far more utilisation than in prior years of lockdowns (O'Reilly, 2020).

The positive and negative effects of social media usage on young people have sparked an ongoing discussion with mixed outcomes. There are divergent opinions on the relationship between youngsters' time spent on social media and their psychological well-being. Lin, Sidani, Shensa, Radovic, Miller, & Colditz (2016) found a correlation between young social media usage and improved psychological well-being, whereas other research found no such correlation (Coyne, Rogers, Zurcher, Stockdale, & Booth, 2020).

Mental Health

Our emotional, psychological, and social health is all considered to be components of our mental state, which may be assessed. In addition to being free from sickness or disorder, mental health is often described as a condition of wellbeing that includes things like life



satisfaction, self-acceptance, and social contributions. According to the World Health Organization (2001), mental health is a condition of wellbeing in which each person is capable of realising their own potential, coping with everyday stressors, engaging in creative and successful employment, and giving back to their community.

According to Abdul-Ghani (2013), a person is in a mentally healthy condition when they are confident in their capacity to handle stress, perform efficiently, and give back to society. This implies that having good mental health is essential for both an individual's wellbeing and their capacity to contribute more productively to society. Similar to physical health, mental health is defined as the capacity of an individual or group to interact with one another in a way that promotes optimal function and makes use of cognitive, affective, and emotional abilities as well as human networking to achieve the individual or group's goals.

Empirical Review

In 2018, Kelly, Zilanawala, Booker, and Sacker investigated the association between social media consumption and teenage mental health as part of the UK Millennium Cohort Study. The research found that the link between social media usage and depressed symptoms was stronger for girls than for boys, with a 26% rise in scores for females and a 35% increase for boys after 3 to 5 hours of daily use. High levels of social media usage have been linked to increased levels of cyberbullying, insomnia, low self-esteem, and negative body image, all of which contribute to increased levels of depression. There appeared to be a number of potential mediating pathways at play, such as the correlation between social media use and body weight dissatisfaction (those who used it for more than 5 hours per day were 31% more likely to be dissatisfied with their weight) and between body weight dissatisfaction and depressive symptom scores (those who were 15% more depressed).

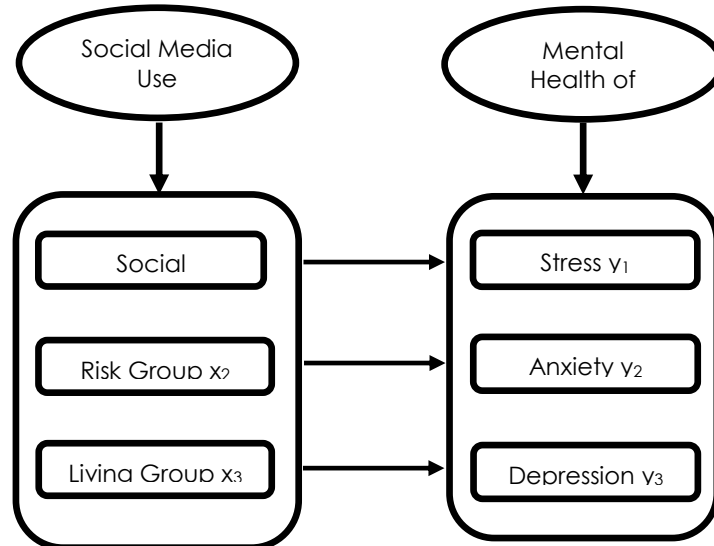
Chandran, Mathur, and Rao (2019) looked at the effects of media and cyber psychiatry on mental health. According to the study's results, the media has a significant impact on public opinion and is widely recognised as an essential gear in the wheel of health care provision. Numerous studies have shown links between media use and problems including melancholy, suicide, anxiety, drug abuse, violent behavior, obesity, and eating disorders. The use of digital technologies in psychiatry has the potential to advance the field, enhance health care delivery and therapeutic interactions, and impact the dynamic connection between media portrayals of mental illness and public comprehension. Mental health experts may provide direct advice, thoughts, and expertise on social media based on firsthand reports

from patients, unlike most journalists who must depend on second-hand stories.

Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song, and Wang investigated the impacts of social media addiction as well as how to aid those who are struggling with it (2019). The results of the research demonstrated that the intervention helped students improve their mental health and academic performance while decreasing their reliance on social media. The results of the present investigation are novel and add to the existing body of empirical evidence on social media addiction, with consequential theoretical and practical consequences.

Theoretical Review
Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

1974 saw the development of the uses and gratification theory (UGT) by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gumlir in response to the topic of what people do with social media. UGT operates on the assumption that users have several options available to them that meet their requirements. Instead of asking what social media has done to individuals, we should ask what it hasn't done. According to this hypothesis, individuals utilise social media for a wide variety of reasons, including gratification seeking and problem solving (Adamu, 2011).



Methodology
Research Design

The research strategy used in this study is a cross-sectional survey. This is due to its efficacy in gauging the attitudes of various populations

and eliciting more reliable and accurate responses about research topics. Cross-sectional survey research designs are used because they are more cost-effective and less cumbersome than other research designs.

Area of Study

Selected young people from the southwest of Nigeria will participate in this research. Nigeria is a country in West Africa that is 923,769 square kilometres in size and home to over 211 million people. The beneficial contributions of youth to the growth and development of the national economy are key to the rationale for choosing young people in the southwest of Nigeria.

Population of the Study

Southwest Nigerian youths aged 18 to 35 make up the study's primary population. Five thousand and one hundred eighteen young people from southwest Nigeria were selected at random using a convenience sample method for this research. Utilizing convenience sampling strategies, a researcher may choose participants who are both accessible and receptive to taking part in his study.

Discussion and Findings

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Table 1a Analysis of Response Rate

Variable	Respondents	Percentage
Questionnaire Returned	358	76%
Not Returned	112	24%
Total	470	100

Analysis of Personal Data

Table 1b Personal Data of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	213	59.5
Female	145	40.5
Total	358	100
Educational Qualification		
O'Level	34	9.5
NCE/ND	40	11.2
BSc./HND	193	53.9
Postgraduate Degree	91	25.4
Total	358	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey 2022

There were a total of 470 copies of questionnaire created and sent out to responders. Only 358 (76%) of the 470 copies of questionnaire sent out were filled up and sent back, while 112 (24%) were never received. As a result, 76% of responders were an accurate sample. The table displayed respondent demographics, including the distribution of sexes and levels of education.

Question One: What is the influence of social media use and stress among youth during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean ratings of respondents' comments on the relationship between youth stress and social media usage during the southwest shutdown in Nigeria

S/N	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
	5	4	3	2	1		
1	156	124	58	12	8	4.14	0.0029
2	124	156	48	20	10	4.02	0.0027
3	213	91	42	9	3	4.40	0.0034
4	197	104	37	12	8	4.31	0.0032
						4.218	0.0031

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

Table showing respondents' opinions on the correlation between social media usage and stress level among young people in southwest Nigeria during the lockdown. The average scores for research items 1, 2, 3, and 4 are all greater than 4. Due to the enormous impact social media usage had on the level of stress experienced by young people in the region of southwest Nigeria where a lockdown had been declared, it has been concluded that its use had a negative effect on mental health. All things are supported by the respondents. (The overall average of 4.218) was higher than the threshold of 3.

Question Two: What is the influence of social media use and anxiety among youth during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean ratings of respondents' comments on the relationship between youth anxiety and social media usage during the southwest shutdown in Nigeria

S/N	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
	5	4	3	2	1		
1	180	100	48	23	7	4.18	0.0029
2	126	158	64	20	10	4.20	0.0027
3	200	101	45	9	3	4.36	0.0034

4	190	111	35	12	10	4.28	0.0032
						4.255	0.0031

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

The opinions of respondents on the relationship between youth anxiety during the lockdown in southwest Nigeria were shown in this table. Participants placed high importance on items 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the study, as shown by their mean ratings of 4.0 or above. Young people's use of social media during the lockdown in southwest Nigeria was highly impacted by their level of anxiety. Everyone who responded agreed with everything. (The grand mean was 4.255, which was higher than the 3-point threshold.)

Question Three: What is the influence of social media use and depression among youth during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria?

Table 4: Average grade of respondents' comments on youth despair and social media usage during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria

S/N	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
	5	4	3	2	1		
1	126	158	64	20	10	4.20	0.0030
2	116	158	74	13	17	4.13	0.0029
3	180	100	48	23	7	4.18	0.0030
4	197	104	37	12	8	4.31	0.0032
						4.205	0.0030

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

In this table, we summarise the responses we received on how the shutdown in southwest Nigeria affected the respondents' use of social media and their level of despair. Participants placed a high importance on items 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the study, as shown by their mean ratings of 4.0 or above. The study indicated that the use of social media greatly affected young people's hopelessness during the lockdown in southwest Nigeria because of its effect on business operations. Everyone who responded agrees with everything. (The grand mean was 4.205, which was higher than the 3-point cutoff.)

Test of Hypotheses Test of Hypothesis One

H₀₁: social media use has no significant influence on stress among youth during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.917 ^a	.840	.840	.40781

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	311.992	1	311.992	1875.954	.000 ^b
Residual	59.207	356	.166		
Total	371.198	357			

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.640	.113		5.645	.000
	SEC	1.095	.025	.917	43.312	.000

Source: Researcher's Survey 2022

An examination of the hypothesis was performed via the use of a regression analysis of stress and social media use. Single-regression results provided the framework for analysing how much time spent on social media contributed to stress levels among young Nigerians during the shutdown of the southwest. The stress formula is as follows: $0.640 + 1.095\%$ of time spent on social networking sites. According to empirical data gathered during the lockdown in Nigeria's southwest, the usage of social media had a positive and immediate effect on the stress levels of young people. According to the t-test, the coefficient was statistically significant since the observed t-statistical values (43.312) exceeded the matching P-values (0.000). Overall, the regression of Hypothesis 1 was statistically significant, as shown by the F-statistical test, with an observed F-statistics value (1875.954) that was more than its p-value (0.000). The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis (r) was again 0.917, according to our data. We discovered a strong link between the two variables. We noticed a substantial correlation between the usage of social media by young people during the lockdown in Nigeria's southwest and the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: social media use has no significant influence on anxiety among youth during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.932 ^a	.869	.868	.37028

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	322.388	1	322.388	2351.338	.000 ^b
1	Residual	48.811	356	.137		
	Total	371.198	357			

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.650	.102		6.401	.000
	ES	1.109	.023	.932	48.491	.000

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

Anxiety and social media use were regressed against one another to test the hypothesis. Single-regression analysis yielded a model to examine the connection between young people's reliance on social media and their levels of worry during the lockdown in Nigeria's southwest. $Worry = 0.640 + 1.109 \times \text{Time spent on social networks}$. Empirical evidence showed that social media use reduced anxiety, as measured by a positive coefficient of utilisation. Since the observed value of the t-statistics (48.491) was greater than the corresponding P-values, the coefficient was statistically significant (0.000). Results from the F-statistical test indicated that the overall regression of Hypothesis 1 was significant, as the observed value of the F-statistic (2351.338) was more than its critical value (0.000). Once again, our data utilising the Pearson product-moment approach revealed a fairly robust correlation ($r = 0.932$). We discovered an extremely high connection between the two variables. We found that young people's usage of social media strongly influenced their level of fear during the lockdown in Nigeria's southwest, leading us to reject the null hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: social media use has no significant influence on depression among youth during the lockdown in southwest, Nigeria

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.941 ^a	.885	.884	.34657

Source: Researchers' Survey 2022

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	328.438	1	328.438	2734.409	.000 ^b
1	Residual	42.760	356	.120		
	Total	371.198	357			

Source: Researcher's Survey 2022

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.195	.086		2.275	.024
	FS	1.015	.019	.941	52.292	.000

Source: Researcher's Survey 2022

Regressing social media usage vs depression was used to test this theory. Based on the results of the single-regression analysis, we can now predict the association between young Nigerians' usage of social media and the onset of depression symptoms during the Southwest Shutdown. Using social media + feeling down Equals 0.640 + 1.105. A positive association between social media usage and lower levels of depression was found empirically, suggesting a causal relationship between the two. Since the observed value of the coefficient (42.292) was greater than its respective P-values, the t-statistics concluded that the coefficient was statistically significant (0.000). Since the observed value of the F-statistics (2734.409) was more than its P-value, the findings of the F-statistical test indicate that Hypothesis 1's overall regression is statistically significant (0.000). As before, our data indicated that the Pearson product-moment correlation was 0.941. (r). There was a substantial relationship between the two metrics. To the contrary, we discovered that young Nigerians' usage of social media during the lockdown had a substantial effect on their levels of depression, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis.

Researchers found that teenagers in Nigeria who used social media during the lockdown had much less stress than those who did not (0.000). A positive and statistically significant correlation was also found between adolescent anxiety and social media usage during



the lockdown in southwest Nigeria (t-statistics (48.492) > critical threshold) (0.000). The research also shows a positive and statistically significant correlation between young depression in Nigeria and social media usage during the lockdown (t-statistics (52.292) > critical value) (0.000).

Implication

The literature review has expanded our understanding of the research on the impact of social media usage and mental health among adolescents in southwest Nigeria during the lockdown, and the findings of this study support the research's theoretical underpinnings. The study's foundation is the literature review. However, our research adds to the corpus of information and literature about youth usage of social media and mental health during the southwest Nigerian lockdown. Furthermore, this work offers a strong foundation for further investigation in this field. The findings have applications in real-world settings that decision-makers, stakeholders, and researchers may choose to pursue. This research also contributes to our knowledge of how social media usage affects young people's mental health in southwest Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

This research examined the relationship between youths' usage of social media and mental health during the lockdown in southwest Nigeria. Social media usage was compared to dependent variables as an independent variable in the research (social media use). The statistical relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variables was measured, presented in accordance with the research questions using descriptive, and the hypothesis was tested using single regression analysis in order to meet the study goals. After considering every factor, the study's conclusions demonstrated that youths in southwest Nigeria who utilise social media had a considerably favourable impact on their mental health. Social media usage therefore has a big impact on the mental health of young people in southwest Nigeria.

Recommendation

According to the study's results, it is advised that social media usage be restricted in order to maintain/sustain/restore normality in young people's mental health and youth productivity in society. More specifically, stakeholders, the government, decision-makers, parents, and society as a whole should investigate fresh concepts and laws that will aid in rewriting social media content for young people and



enact laws that will aid in boosting the growth concentration and productivity of young people in southwest Nigeria.

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