



**RETHINKING EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
TECHNOLOGIES (SMTs) ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS: A
CASE STUDY OF DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY, ABRAKA, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Excessive use of Social Media Technologies (SMTs) has become an issue of international concern which is giving educationists, policy makers and parents of students of tertiary institutions cause to fear that it might lead to health problems. This research assessed the effect of social media technologies on students' academic performance in the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka. Three research questions guided the study which adopted the descriptive survey design. The sample was 480 students purposively taken from the FSS, DELSU. Uses and Gratifications, and Media Dependency theories were the anchors of the study. Frequency tabulation, simple percentages and explanation building were used to present and analyzed the data collected. Findings show that there is a positive relationship between time spent on social media platforms and academic work that has however not turned many students to social media addicts. The study also found that the nature of social media activities which the students engage in positively enhanced their academic performance. The conclusion of the study is that excessive of SMTs cannot be said to categorically lead to addiction. The study recommends that students should become more discerning users of SMTs to intellectually and effectively separate their academic lives from their social lives.

Keywords: Social media, Academic performance, Core categories and characteristics, SMTs.

1. Introduction

Vivian (2012) says "it is fair to say we now live and work in an information society. In an information society, the exchange of information is the predominant economic activity". The internet, "a high capacity global telephone network that links computers" is emerging as the delivery vehicle of choice for any kind and all media products. Vivian (2012) says the technological basis called digital, is distinctive. Messages, whether text, audio, image or a combination, are broken into millions of bits of data, The bits are transmitted one at a time over the internet, which has incredibly high capacity and speed, then reassembled for reception at the other end. A digitization revolution is in progress. Proliferation of social media technologies and the widespread adoption of these media tools have brought dramatic changes in the university environment. The use of social media has rapidly become ubiquitous among adolescents and young adults, and is now excessive among university students. Osharive (2015) avers that modern communication technology has indeed turned the world into a 'global village'. However, as it is, he adds, technology has two sides, like a coin – both the negative and the positive. Technology, especially social media help people to be better informed, enlightened, and keep abreast with world developments. Social media include; Twitter, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook, Blackberry Messenger, WhatsApp, Skype, Snap chat, Google talk, Google



Messenger and search engines like Mozilla, Explorer, Chrome Wikipedia. Agwi and Ogwueleka (2018) opine that the use of social media have exploded and evolved into online platforms where people create content, share it, bookmark it and network at a prodigious rate. They add that the prominent users of the social media are students. This may be the reason Echeburua and De Corral (2010) state that researchers have suggested that the excessive use of new technologies (especially online social networking) may be particularly addictive to young people. Mowafy (2018) agrees. She says it is not surprising that social media usage is one of the most trending activities among children, adolescents and young adults nowadays. Mowafy (2018) adds that 'it (ICTs) offers today's youth a portal for entertainment and communication and is becoming one of the main platforms for accessing information and news'. This is what Kuss & Griffiths (2011) call the individualist culture (ego centric sites) where the user is the focus of attention. In other words, users, or specifically, students get addicted to the fares of the internet. This is why scholars and commentators are debating the impact of the internet on social relationships in general and their academic performance in particular. This is because the internet-social media generates new patterns of communication, expression and motivation. This is why Tapscott (1998) described adolescents' 'lives as being characterized by media privatization in a multi-media environment. Technological determinism, according to Bimber (1994) is 'an independent force that drives social change. Vorderer (2016) says that 'aggressive adoption of social media among the younger generation could be attributed to their up to date knowledge of and comfort within the latest technology and convenient accessibility to these social media' tools. The younger generation can access social media from their smart phones or cell phones, any time any place. Obar & Wildman (2015) opine that this encourages them to use social media not only for receiving and retrieving information, but also for connecting with others online, and from being consumers and participants to 'prosumers' which means that they consume and produce media on the social media platforms. The social media phobia and craze (addiction) is becoming a trend among the University and post secondary institutions which are most vulnerable to this rapidly changing technology (Dumpit & Fernandez, 2017). This reminds one of Junco (2012) who had earlier stated that the reasons for this mass appeal of social media include social media use by university administrators, students' affairs units, and faculty members to use SMTs as means of communication between the universities and students. Selwyn (2009) had informed that most universities now have official web pages where students, professors and staff can share resources and interact. DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Stanfield and Fiore (2012) support this assertion. DeAndrea *et al* (2012) say many universities have established their own social media networks in order to help students socialize and connect with faculty members, staff, and alumni primarily to establish a sense of connection and or belonging to the institution. This helps new students in facilitating the process of knowing about campus facilities, and ultimately adjusting to university life. Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015) reminisce and cite Boyd (2007) as saying that what started as a hobby to some computer literate people (students) has become a social norm and way of life for people all over the world. Boyd (2007) had opined that young adults have especially embraced the social media, especially SNSs, as a way to connect with their peers, share information, re invent their personalities, and showcase their social lives. The emergence of social media has given the young generation a new way to interact with one another and communicate with the world. Human communication



via social media has not only become a vogue, a way of life but has allegedly become increasingly addictive.

This study thus examines the effects of the excessive use of social media on the academic performance of students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University. Englander, Terregrossa, and Wang (2010) had found that social media (Internet) usage is negatively associated with academic performance. The issue arer: Do users especially the youth get addicted to the new media? What is internet or social media addiction? Hou, Xiang, Jiang, Song & Wang (2019) submit that the ubiquitous social media platforms and the easy access to the Internet bring about the potential for social media addiction. They add that social media addiction has been found to be associated with a host of emotional, relational, health, and (academic) performance problems. Talaue, Alsaad, AlRushaidan and AlHugail (2018) are of the view that when social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, Fox Mozilla, Explorer, Google, and Wikis started, the world was divided into online and offline. Li (2010) avers that there is now a divide, which is “a generation gap between those who master and do not master digital technology. It is the assumption that children (undergraduate students) media technologies develop a wider and more substantial knowledge base on how to use them from their parents and grandparents (Aarsand, 2007).

Children may excessively use this digital and generational divide and probably become internet addicts. Starceviv (2013) says social media addiction can be viewed as one form of internet addiction where individuals exhibit a compulsion to use social media to excess. The inference is that individuals with social media addiction are often overly concerned about social media which drives their urge, uncontrollably, to log onto and use social media (Andreasen & Pallensen, 2014; Guedes, Nardi, Guimaraes, Machado,& King, 2015) corroborate this view by saying it is worth highlighting that a frequent complaint in psychiatric practices is one of the patients or even the parents worried about their children’s increase in social isolation, and worsening school performance. Li (2010) opines that supposedly, the egocentric construction of SNSs may facilitate the engagement in addictive behaviour that may thus serve as a factor that attracts people using it in a potential excessive way. Social media addiction, says About.com “is a phrase used to refer to someone spending too much time using Face book, Twitter and other social media so much so that it interferes with other aspects of daily life”. Addiction usually refers to compulsive behaviour that leads to negative effects. People feel compelled to do certain activities so often that these activities become harmful habits, which then interferes with other important activities, such as work or school.”Sakhieva, Sizova, Zakharova and Sergeeva (2017) aver that among the negative social and psychological consequences or impact the internet has had is the so called internet addiction which has been the subject of scientific debate for the past 20 years depending on the development of information technology and its availability. They argue that addictive behaviour is one of the forms of deviant behaviour, characterized by a constant desire for a pleasant subjective emotional state which is expressed in an active change in their mental state. The internet, as beneficial as it is to mankind, seems to have so much negativity that scholars have expressed misgivings about its effect on academic performance of students globally. Thus, the problem is: does the excessive use of the social media platforms have impact on academic performance of Nigerian Students? Are students of Faculty of Social Sciences of Delta State University, Abraka social media addicts?



Englander, Terregrossa, and Wang (2010) had found that social media (Internet) usage is negatively associated with academic performance. This study intends to find out or confirm if this is correct or not. Hussain (2012) says the trend of using social media among university students seems to be increasing day by day and a large number of them are relying on it for interaction and communication forgetting about their mental, physical and psychological health. The problem therefore is, are social media technologies addictive? Does the excessive use of social media have effects on the academic performance of students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences of Delta State University? Is there sufficient empirical evidence that excessive use of Social Media Technologies affect academic performance? In order to reduce the fuzziness and assumptions surrounding the use of SMTs this investigation was embarked upon. Does heavy usage of the Internet – social media impair academic performance of students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka? However, the objectives of this study is to find out how and the extent to which students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University are addicted to social media technologies; to ascertain the core social media technologies/platforms most patronized by the students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University and the reasons for patronizing these platforms; and to examine the effects of the excessive use of social media platforms on the students' academic performance (class attendance, assignments and home works).

2. Literature Review

New Media or Social Media

According to Trottier and Fuchs (2015), a social theory approach of clarifying the notion of 'social media' can be advanced by identifying three social information processes that constitute three forms of sociality: cognition, communication and cooperation. According to Trottier and Fuchs (2015) view individuals have certain cognitive features that they use to interact with other so that shared spaces of interaction are created. In some cases, these spaces are used not just for communication but also for the coproduction of novel qualities of overall social systems and for community building. In their words: the three notions relate to different forms of sociality: the notion of cognition is related to Emile Durkheim's concept of social facts, the communication concept to Max Weber's notions of social actions and social relations, the cooperation concept to the notions of communities and collaborative work. According to this model, media and online platforms that primarily support cognition (such as the websites of newspapers) are social media, those that primarily support communication (such as e-mail) are social media, and those that primarily support community building and collaborative work (such as Wikipedia, Facebook) are social media. This means that social media is a complex term and that there are different types of social media.

Mesch (2010) says social media should be viewed as cultural artefact considering how the technology is incorporated in the everyday life of individuals and how it is used as a means of communication, expression, and content production within an offline social world". Croteau and Hoynes (2003), argue that the emergence of new, digital technologies signals a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experiences and resources. This is what Aarsand (2007) calls digital divide: a generation gap between those who master and do not master digital technology. This is why Neuman (1991) had earlier stated that whilst the new media have technical capabilities, to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back



in the opposite direction. Of importance, however, is that we are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video, and electronic and text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication". In other words, new media or social media provide the potential for a democratic post modern public sphere in which citizens can participate in well informed, non-hierarchical debate pertaining to their social structures.

Manovich (2003), in an introduction to the New Media Reader defines new Media using eight propositions, namely. New media versus cyber culture; new media as computer Technology as Distribution platform.; new media as Digital Data controlled by New media as the mix between existing cultural conventions and the conventions of software; new media as the Aesthetics that accompanies the early stage of every new modern media and communication technology; new media as faster execution of Algorithms previously executed manually or through other technologies; new media as the encoding of modernist Avante-Grade; new media as media; and, new media as parallel articulation of similar ideas in post WWW 11 Art and modern computing. Rice (1984) had defined new media as "communication technologies that enable or facilitate user-to-user interactivity and interactivity between user and information". This means social media integrates technology, social interaction and content creation to collaboratively connect online information. Through social media people can create, organize, edit, comment on, combine and share content. Social media, simply put, is a term used to collectively describe "a set of tools that foster interaction, discussion and community, allowing people to build relationships and information" (Digital.com). The ABC (2011) had produced a Technology Explained Website where definitions and explanations are provided for modern technical and online terms. It defines social media to encapsulate digital tools and activities that enable communication and sharing across the net. Social media is used prolifically by all areas of society, business politics, media, advertising, police, and emergency services. It adds that it has also become a key tool for provoking thought, dialogue and action around, particular social issues. Kaplan and Haenlin (2010) technically define social media as "a group of internet based applications that build on ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content". Web 2.0 is described "as platform where by content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion". Suffice is to state that definitions of new media/ social media are legion. The import of this is that social media mean many things to different scholars. In essence, social media in this study are mainly the core SMTs, the interactive media used by students to interact, connect and exchange ideas, information, video and data.

Categorization of social media

Kaplan & Haenlin's (2010) categorizes social media thus: collaborative projects – this enables the joint and simultaneous creation of content by many users which allow users to add, remove, and change content; these also help the group based collection and rating of internet links or internet content. Blogs- the earliest form of social media which grew from personal web pages and display date-stamped entries in reverse chronological order. Content Communities - this refers to the sharing of media content between users, including texts, photographs, videos and power points presentations. This type of social media does not require the creation of a personal



profile page. Social network sites allow users to create personal information profile and the invitation of friends and colleagues to gain access to the profiles and to send emails and instant messages. Such profiles usually include photographs, videos, audio files, blogs and so on. Examples that readily come to mind are Face book and My Space. Virtual game worlds are platforms that replicate a three dimensional environment in which users appear in form of personalized avatars and interact according to the rules of the game. A good example is World of War craft, and, (f) Virtual social worlds that allow inhabitants to choose behaviour more freely and live in a virtual world similar to real life. An example is second life. Personal observation shows that students are involved in all the categories of Kaplan and Haenlin's (2010) categorization of social media.

In this study, social media technologies are confined to (i) Google Apps – such as Google documents (ii) Social Networking such as Facebook and Instagram (iii) Social News sites such as Reddit, Sahara Reporters (iv) Wikis such as Wikipedia and Wikimedia, and (v) Blogs such as word press and bloggers. These are some of the social media platforms Smith (2017) refers to as core categories and characteristics of social media technologies (SMTs) that undergraduates use in their school settings. The above categorization agrees with Herrington, Reeves and Oliver (2010) who described social media as emerging technologies and cognitive tools that allow the collaborative shared knowledge and development of participatory cultures. According to Fallows (2008), there are many ways a person can satisfy an information need, including visiting a library, calling someone on the phone, or searching digital resources. Fallows (2008) adds that Increasingly the Internet has become a key information source, and people find information online by browsing web pages, posting a question to a Q&A site, or using IM or email to contact someone directly. Search engine use is the most popular approach to online information seeking. Put differently, this study seeks to find out whether students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences of the Delta State University are addicted or otherwise to the categories or classification above, namely, collaborative projects, blogs, content communities and social networking sites. This is what Smith (2017) refers as the core categories and characteristics of the social media technologies (SMTs) that undergraduate students use in their campuses and or school environment. However, it is imperative to note that “the boundaries between the different types have become increasingly blurred”. For example, Shi, Rui and Whinston (2013) argue that Twitter, a combination of broadcasting service and social network, is better classified as a social broadcasting technology.

Characteristics of Social Media Technologies' Usage

Kangas, Toivonen and Back (2007) and Smith, Pattia and Ramon (2009) opine that user participation and or user generated content is the basic characteristics of the social media. Mayfield (2007) submits that open standards and the possibility to change platforms by using open source software is another feature. This simply means that coupled with openness, an imperative characteristic is the plurality and wide availability of any form of social media. Thus, characteristically, social media must not only be open to the public, they must be widely available. One other characteristic mentioned by communication scholars is that social media public must be heterogeneous and collectively gathered. This places social media in the corridors of the mass media. Still, social media is simply well suited for communication with and within a loosely defined peer group (Brussee & Hekman, 2009). They further add that



“since a desire to be part of a group is a fundamental characteristic of human beings and communication tends to strengthen the adherence to a group, the use of social media for creating and nourishing a community is common”. The above refers to conformity and belongingness that enhances community, collective gathering as a characteristic of social media. One other characteristics of social media is the creation of valuable user-generated content which Brussee and Hekman (2009) say is inherent even in a peer group, for, according to them, ‘even a small fraction is a large group compared to the relatively small group of professionals in a media supply chain where production is carefully restricted. A large enough group can produce a lot of content’. The elucidation of the characteristics of the social media usage cannot end without mentioning members of the virtual communities, especially those who get addicted, usually set to advertise themselves, their profiles and desire to belong to a group. It is appropriate to mention that apart from characteristics of social media being similar and dissimilar at the same time from traditional media, there are some notable distinctions between social media and industrial mass media. These distinctions include quality, reach, frequency, accessibility, usability, immediacy and performance. Most importantly, traditional media require significant/enormous resources to publish information, more so there are gate-keepers in media establishments. This is unlike social media that enable individuals to connect with one another without anyone editing or vetting the user generated content. Social media audiences are networked publics that support sociability, just as unmediated public-spaces do.

Relationship between use of Social Media and Academic Performance

According to www.csufresno.edu/honorsocieties/phi_kappa academic excellence is the demonstrated ability to perform, achieve, and/or excel in scholastic activities. Academic excellence has been identified with achieving high grades and superior performance. Academic excellence or achievement plays an important role in an individual placement, be it in the academic institutions or job placement. Due to this, many people are concerned with the ways they can enhance their academic achievement. This is in tandem with Tuckman (1975) who had earlier defined performance as the apparent demonstration of understanding, concepts, skills, ideas and knowledge of a person. Tuckman (1975) proposed that grades clearly depict the performance of a student. The emphasis on academic excellence which is also prevalent worldwide has encouraged many studies about the conditions promoting it. The role of academic achievement as one of the predictors of one’s life success and also in the aspect of academic placement in schools to higher institutions as well as the level of employability in one’s career is inevitable (Kyoshaba, 2009). Academic performance, which is measured by the examination results, is one of the major goals of a school.

Hoyle (1986) argue that schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance. Hence, the academic performance of students must be efficiently managed bearing in mind that factors that can positively or negatively affect their academic performance include Social media use.

Osharive (2015) cites Annie, Howard and Mildred (1996) as saying academic performance or achievement is the outcome of education, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic performance is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best



tested or which aspects are most important, procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as fact.

Characteristics of Excessive Social Media Technology Usage

According to Young (1998), Scherer (1997), as Internet use has proliferated, so too have reports of Internet Addiction and Problematic Internet Use. Different terms are used to refer to serious dysfunctional patterns of excessive Internet use. Excessive Internet/social media use has been termed “Internet Addiction” or “Internet Dependency”, defined as the “inability to control one’s use of the Internet which leads to negative consequences in daily life”. This definition emphasizes the ways in which signs and symptoms of Internet addiction are parallel to substance use disorders and pathological gambling disorder. Specifically, symptoms of Internet Addiction include: preoccupation with Internet activities; increasing tolerance; development of psychological dependency and withdrawal symptoms; inability to reduce Internet use; Internet use to cope with negative moods and reduce stress; and, replacing other activities and relationships with recurrent Internet use despite awareness of the deleterious consequences (Scherer, 1997). Other theorists conceptualize these symptoms differently. For these theorists, symptoms associated with Internet-related problems are labeled “Compulsive Internet Use.” Compulsive Internet use is conceptualized as more similar to obsessive-compulsive disorder than addiction (Shapira, Goldsmith, Keck, Khosla, & McElroy, 2000). Still other theorists recognize a continuum of less severe Internet-related problems, often referred to collectively as “Pathological Internet Use” or “Problematic Internet Use.” For these theorists, Problematic Internet Use is conceptualized as using cognitive and behavioral theories, and defined as a maladaptive coping mechanism for stress and psychological distress, resulting in adverse effects on psychosocial functioning (Davis, 2001)

Types of Excessive Social Media Technology Usage

Excessive usage of social media technologies usually refers to compulsive behaviour that leads to negative effects. Many excessive users feel compelled to do certain activities so often such that they become a habit which then interferes with other important activities such as work or school. According to Kuss and Griffiths (2011), a behavioural addiction such as excessive use of Social media may be seen from a psycho social perspective. They opine that just like substance related addictions, social media addiction incorporates the experience of the drug or substance addict symptoms, such as mood modification, a favourable change in emotional states, salience (behavioural, cognitive and emotional preoccupation with the Social media excessive usage. Kuss and Griffiths (2011) believe that the excessive use of social media, particularly SNSs leads to tolerance, withdrawal symptoms (i.e experiencing unpleasant physical and emotional symptoms when SNS use is restricted, or stopped). They conclude that excessive use of social media engenders conflict (i.e interpersonal and intra-psyche problems, and relapse (i.e addicts quickly revert back in their excessive usage after an abstinence period). This perspective is in tangent with this study because it is a human behaviour based investigation that involves the biological, psychological and sociological aspects of human beings in society.

"Moreover, scholars have suggested that a combination of biological, psychological and social factors contribute to the etymology of addiction (Shaffer, LaPlante., Labrie, Kidman, Donato, & Stanton 2004). Put differently, social media addiction commonly refers to an individual's



inability to control his/her use of the social media which eventually causes one's marked distress and functional impairment in daily life. (Shek & Yu, 2013). They found that: research findings have shown that excessive use of internet adversely affects one's physical health, family life, academic performance, one's physical health. Shek and Yu (2013) aver that excessive social media use increases persistence of sleep deprivation that may harm one's immune system thus increasing one's vulnerability to assorted diseases. They surmise that academic problems caused by internet addiction include decline in study habits, significant drop in grades, missing classes, increased risk of being placed on academic probation, and poor integration into extra-curricular activities.

However, Griffiths, Kuss, Lopez-Fernandez and Pontes (2017) argue that many issues are problems without being disorders. They had stated that this is because many problems behaviour are normative reactions to difficult situations. Even though they were talking about the need to err on the side of caution in including internet gambling in the International Classification of Disorders (ICD -11), this argument is apt in arguing that excessive use social media is a normative reaction to the difficult situation of the academic environment. In Mueller's (2012) words social media 'addiction is best understood as the dependency and habitual use of something that we eventually can't live without. An addiction is characterized by an uncontrollable and compulsive use of that thing which eventually has negative health and/or social consequences'. Addiction is a 'compulsive craving, seeking and using, no matter what'. Can the students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences not live without social media engagement? Does excessive use /engagement means not being able to live without SMTs/platforms?

Shek, Tang and Lo (2009) say " different terms have been used to describe internet addiction problems, such as problematic internet use(PIU),pathological computer use (PCU) and internet addiction disorder(IAD)".They further explain that the Centre for On-Line Addiction (1998) defined five specific types of internet addiction, namely: cyber sexual addiction-Addiction to cyber pornographic materials and interaction (such as adult chat rooms); cyber relationship addiction-Addiction to online friendship which replaces one's relationship with friends and family in real life; net compulsion-Obsessive online activities include online gaming, online auction and online trading; information overload-Obsessive web surfing or searching of data bases; and computer addiction-Excessive computer game playing or efforts paid to computer. Cabral (2011) says the first step to identifying social media (internet) addiction is to see "where the emotional and mental attachment lie. Researchers conclude that there are classic mass media motivations: surveillance, escape, companionship, identity and entertainment" (Gordon, Juang, & Syed, 2007).

In conclusion, it is apt to say that despite numerous studies on the effects of excessive use of social media on the academic performance of students, it is apt to remind scholars of what Al-Menayes (2015) says that Internet or social media excessive use is not yet considered a disorder because it is excluded from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-V) formalized by the American Psychiatric Association. This is in tandem with Al-Menayes (2015), Dahlstrom and Bichsel (2014) who had found that students like to keep their academic social lives separate. This also reminds one to be cautious in drawing conclusions about excessive use of social media because Jones, Blackey, Fitzgibbon and Chew (2010) had also



demonstrated in their study that students separate their academic and social spheres, especially concerning technologies. In other words, excessive use of social media does not confirm addiction because as Mezirow (1991) says our actions towards things are based on the meanings that the things have for us. Mezirow (1991) adds that these meanings are handled in and modified through the interpretative process that we use in dealing with the things we encounter. This reminds one of Postman (1992) who had said 'machines (Social Media Technologies) cannot feel and, just as important, cannot understand. It is meaning, not utterance that makes the mind unique. Postman (1992) argues that meanings include those things we call feelings, experiences, sensations, that do not have to be, and sometimes cannot be, put into symbols. This affirms the view of Smith (2017) that human meaning (use of SMTs) differs from the logical processes and computer language upon which our technologies are based. Smith (2017) postulates that human meaning making involves understanding, communication, interactions that relate to and represent feelings, emotions, experiences and values developed within ourselves and through interactions with other people. Smith (2017) concludes meaning makers may mediate and share these experiences through the use of technologies, such as social media, but to give meaning and bring understanding is an inherently human (rather than technological) process.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, two theories of mass communication were used as anchors. These are: Uses and Gratification theory, and Media Dependency theory. Uses and Gratifications: Mc Quail (2000) lists four major categories of need which the mass media serve to gratify such as: diversion, personal relationship; personal identity-Personal reference, reality exploration, value reinforcement, and surveillance-need for information in a complex world. The uses and gratification theory is in agreement with the primary process of analysing human motivation. According to Watson and Hill (2003), the uses and gratification theory 'explores life...to gain information, to keep an eye on the world and to clarify what we think about it'. The uses and gratification theory has two basic assumptions. These are: that media content choice is generally rational and directed towards certain specific goals and satisfaction (thus the audience is active, and those audience members are conscious of the media-related needs which arise in personal and social circumstances and can voice these in terms of motivations (Mc Quail, 2000). Alabi (2013) says uses and gratifications theory is concerned with what people (audience) do with the media. The theory posits that people are not passive users of (social) media messages but active influencers of the message effect. That is, the consumer of (social) media messages has the free will to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them. As active influencers of the effect process, media audiences selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain such messages. The locus is not on media production and transmission functions, but on media consumption functions. He adds that uses and gratifications theory indicates a positive relationship between social media and the level of gratification derived from such activity. Generally, users of social media are motivated by similar intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Nyland, Marvez and Beck (2007) listed five motives of using social media as these include meeting new people: entertainment, social events, maintaining relationship and media creation.

Riffe, Lacy and Varouhakis (2008) says the media dependency theory emerged from a 1976 article by Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur that attempted to explain why media could have



very cognitive, affective and behavioural effects on different people. They add that it is a theoretical approach to studying how people interact with media. It covers a wider range of behaviours towards the media. The theory posits that the more a person depends on having needs met by the media, the more important the media's role will be in that person's life and thus more influential. In other words, the more students use social media platforms, the more addictive they will become. The assumptions of the media dependency theory is that it proposes an integral relationship among audiences, media and the other social media platforms. The theory predicts that you depend on media information to meet some certain needs and achieve some certain goals like uses and gratifications theory. Two factors influence the degree of social media dependence. First you will become more dependent on social media that meet a number of your needs than on social media that provide just a few. The second source of dependency is social stability. Put differently, students now depend on social media platforms as avenues for meeting new people, for entertainment, socializing, academic performance and maintaining relationships. This attitude has become so widely spread that it is appallingly scary.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the survey method of research which is a non experimental descriptive research method with which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time. to describe what exists and in what amount. The population of study for this research effort was the entire registered students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka. The sample size of the study is four hundred and eighty respondents selected purposively from the eight departments of the Faculty of the Social Sciences of the Delta State University, namely: Accounting, Business Administration, Economics, Geography and Regional Planning, Mass Communication, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. Sixty students who were surveyed from each of the eight departments were administered the questionnaire on a convenient basis. The questionnaire consisted of 12 close-ended questions in two sections. Section A contain questions on the (bio data) respondents' demographics such as age bracket, gender, department of study, level of study, and marital status of the respondents. Section B consisted of questions posed specifically to answer the research questions of the study. This was used to elicit specific information used to fulfil the objectives of the study. Thus, the appropriate data was collected, comparison made, amenably analysed and bias minimized.

4. Results

Simply put, simple percentages and frequency tables were used to present data gathered from the questionnaire. The research questions were answered using the explanation building technique. It is the descriptive analysis of the survey method that described what exists.

Table 1 below contains the gender, age bracket, department of study, marital status and level of study of the 451 respondents who returned copies of the research instrument (questionnaire).

Table 1 confirms what Vorderer (2016) says that 'aggressive adoption of social media among the younger generation could be attributed to their up to date knowledge of and comfort within the latest technology and convenient accessibility to these social media' tools. It also affirms what Revoir (2008) had opined that females are at greater risk than males for developing addiction to SMTs, especially SNSs.



Table 1: Biodata of Respondents

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	119	26%
Female	332	74%
<i>Age Bracket</i>		
16-20years	144	32%
21-25years	128	28%
26-30years	116	26%
31years & above	63	14%
<i>Department of Study</i>		
Accounting	56	12%
Business Administration	55	12%
Economics	57	13%
Geography	57	13%
Mass Communication	59	13%
Political Science	55	12%
Psychology	57	13%
Sociology	56	12%
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	289	64%
Married	124	28%
Divorced	15	3%
Separated	23	5%
<i>Level of Study</i>		
1001	106	24%
2001	109	24%
3001	108	24%
4001	128	28%
Total	451	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

Table 2 Awareness and use of Social media platforms by Respondents

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	442	98%
No	76	1%
Do not Understand	3	1%
Total	451	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

Awareness and use of social media technologies (SMTs) is ubiquitous. This is why Tapscott (1998) described adolescents' 'lives as being characterized by media privatization in a multi-media environment. Apparently it will be difficult to find a student who does not know of SMTs or at least use Social media.



Table 3: Social media technologies used by students (Most Preferred by Respondents)

Categories of SMTs	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Google Apps	112	25%
Social Networking	107	24%
Social News sites	103	23%
Wikis	107	24%
Blogs	22	5%
Total	451	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

Table 3 shows that respondents use most of the social media platforms studied. This confirms what Dahlstrom and Bichsel (2014) found that students like to keep their academic and social lives separate.

Table 4 Perception of Effect of Social media technologies Use on Students Academic Performance

Perception	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Positive	318	71%
Negative	96	21%
Both	37	8%
Total	451	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

This finding indirectly indicates that students of FSS, DELSU are not addicted to SMTs even though they depend on SMTs a lot. This agrees with Mesch (2010) who had opined that social media should be viewed as cultural artefacts...considering how the technology is incorporated in the everyday life of individuals and how it is used as a means of communication, expression and content production within an offline social world.

Table 5 Respondents' uses of SMTs

Usage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
For social interaction	111	25%
To search for course related materials	113	25%
To exchange course relate materials	114	25%
To interact with the University	112	25%
Total	451	100%

Source: Field work, 2019.

The table above agrees with Mowafy (2018) who stated that ICTs (SMTs) offers today's youth a portal for entertainment and communication and is becoming one of the main platforms for accessing information and news. This confirms what Fallows (2008) had stated, that increasingly the Internet has become a key information source, and people find information online by browsing web pages, posting a question to a Q & A site, using IM or email to contact someone directly. Table 5 also confirms the description of social media as emerging technologies and cognitive tools that allow the collaborative shared knowledge and development of participatory cultures (Herrington, Reeves & Oliver 2010).



Table 6: Most used SMTs /Application(s)

Applications	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Blogs	33	7%
Wikis	98	22%
Social news sites	111	25%
Social networking	101	22%
Google Apps	108	24%
Total	451	100%

Source: Field work, 2019.

This finding corroborates Trottier and Fuchs' (2015) view that the social theory approach clarifies social media as identifying three social information processes that constitute three forms of sociality: cognition, communication and cooperation such that shared spaces are created not just for communication but also for the coproduction of novel qualities of overall social systems and community building. Vorderer (2016) had informed that the aggressive adoption of social media among the younger generation could be attributed to their up to date knowledge of and comfort within the latest technology and convenient accessibility to these social media tools.

Table 7 Relationship of Social media technology usage and Academic Performance

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	341	76%
No	96	21%
Sometimes	14	03%
Total	451	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

Interestingly, data tabulated in Table 7 confirms Madge, Meek, Wellens and Hooley's (2009) finding that the use of Social media enhances educational access and interaction. This finding tally with the opinion of Obar and Wildman (2015); that the use of social media technologies not only encourages students to receive and retrieve information but also enables them to connect with others online. Social media is a force that drives social change (Bimber, 1994).

Table 8: Relationship between Social media use and school work

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	247	55%
No	172	38%
Not Really	32	07%
Total	451	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

Table 8 confirms Dahlstrom and Bichsel's (2014) finding that students are discerning users of SMTs who are able to separate their academics from their social lives. This finding agrees with Hussain's (2005) finding that social media is promoting virtual learning communities and virtual learning environment. According to Hussain (2005) students share information and study experiences, research projects and job opportunities. Selwyn (2009) had informed that most



universities now have official web pages where students, professors and staff can share resources and interact.

Table 9: Happy and satisfied with life because of Social media use

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	361	80%
No	69	15%
Sometimes	21	05%
Total	451	100%

Source: Field work, 2019.

That majority of the respondents are happy and satisfied with life because of Social media use affirms what Armstrong And Franklin (2008) had found: that students use social media in different manners for enhancing and strengthening their learning through reflection and collaborative activities in virtual communities This is why Mesch (2010) says youths operating within an online community may be geographically dispersed, experiencing different hours of the day in different locales, but they share an identical interest, virtual space and rules, shared activities, and a sense of belonging. This is a confirmation of the view of Abbas et al (2019) that the acceptance, its ease of use, and its perceived benefits play a decisive role in students' decision to use SMTs excessively.

Table 10 Support of the view that Social media use causes delay in doing home works and assignments

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	174	39%
No	245	54%
Not Really	32	7%
Total	451	100%

Source: Field work, 2019.

This finding is quite interesting because the difference in the number of respondents who agreed that Social media use caused delay (174) (39%) and respondents who did not agree (245) (54%) that social media caused delay in doing school home works and assignments is much. This is in tandem with Hussain (2012) who found that the prevalence of social media and its use has revamped the scenario the world over. According to Hussain (2012), social media's innovative use has generated new opportunities of sharing of knowledge, experiences and research practices of the eminent scholars of the world.

This finding implies that students are attached to their SMTs. This agrees with Hussain (2012) who had opined that the present time is an information age, providing access to all, where the Net generation appears to be much inclined towards having information by using modern technologies. This corroborates what Smith (2017) says, that: meaning makers (social media users) mediate and share (their) experiences through the use of modern technologies. That to give meaning and bring understanding is an inherently a human (rather than technological) process.



Table 11: Response to the view that Respondents cannot spend a day without Social media

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	117	25%
No	313	69%
Cannot say	21	05%
Total	451	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

Data tabulated in Table 12 is a confirmation of Herrington, Reeves and Oliver (2010) view, that social media are emerging technologies and cognitive tools that allow the creation of collaborative shared knowledge and development of participatory cultures. This reminds one of Junco (2012) who had earlier stated that reasons for this mass appeal of social media include the use of SNSs by university administrators, students' affairs units, and faculty members as a means of communication between the universities and students. This study adds that social media use also affords opportunity to relate with relatives, friends and significant others.

Table 12 Source of Knowledge of Social media

Source of Knowledge	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Friends	105	23%
Relatives	79	18%
Course mates	123	25%
Parents	19	6%
Lecturers/Faculty staff	125	%
Total	451	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

The discussion of findings of this study is premised on using data analysed to provide answers to the research questions posed for the study. Therefore to find out how and the extent to which students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University are addicted to social media technologies. Students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences use and depend on SMTs a lot for their social and academic pursuits. Table 2 shows that 442(98%) respondents were aware and used SMTs. This finding is also an affirmation of Vorderer (2016) who adduced the 'aggressive adoption of social media among the younger generation' to 'their up to date knowledge of and comfort within the latest technology and convenient accessibility to these social tools. This is in line with the Media Dependency theory, one anchor of the study which posits that the more a person (students) depends on having needs met by the (social) media, the more important the media's role will be in that person's life. Table 3 corroborates this finding where the core categories of SMTs used by students of FSS, DELSU had almost equal options with the exception of Blogs. Table 4 had 318 (71%) respondents agreeing that SMTs had positive effects on their academic and social lives. Table 7 further confirms that students of the FSS, DELSU believed that there is a positive relationship between social media usage and academic performance, thus aligning with the uses and gratifications theory used as one of the theories of the study. In Table 8, two hundred and forty seven respondents (55%) submitted that there is a positive relationship between social media usage and school work. Data tabulated in Table 9 explains that 361 (80%) respondents were happy and satisfied with life because of social media use. This is what Armstrong and Franklin (2008) had found in their study, that



students use social media in different manners for enhancing and strengthening their learning through collaborative activities. This is apparent in Table 10 where 245 (54%) disagreed that excessive use of social media caused a delay in doing academic home works and assignments. In Table 11, three hundred and thirteen respondents (69%) (students) agreed that that they could not spend a day without their SMTs. These findings infer and prove that Hussain (2012) was right when he stated that 'the present time is an information age, providing access to all, where the Net generation appears to be much inclined towards having information by using modern technologies. This is what Smith (2017) stated that meaning makers (social media users) mediate and share their experiences through the use of technologies', adding that giving meaning and understanding to symbols is an inherently human process. Simply put, students of the FSS, DELSU, were excessive users of social media/SMTs but were at the same time able to separate their academic from their social lives, thus confirming what the studies of Dahlstrom and Bichsel (2014) had found. This is in line with Al-Menayes (2015), who had informed that internet or SMTs use is excluded from the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-V).

To ascertain the core social media technologies/ platforms most patronized by the students of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University and the reasons for patronizing these platforms. The answer to this research question was provided by data analyzed in Tables 3, 5, 6 and 12. Data in Table 3 shows that all the respondents used the core categories of SMTs studied. This infers that students of FSS, DELSU were in complete control of their lives as they could separate their social interactions from their school work. This confirms what Dahlstrom and Bichsel (2014) had found in their study: that students like to keep their academic and social lives separate. Smith (2017) had also found that meaning makers (SMTs users) mediate and share experiences through their use of SMTs. This is in line with the Media Dependency theory because respondents consistently used social media and depended on SMTs a lot as the factors that influences media dependence were found in their use (Fieldwork, Table 4). First, the respondents became more dependent on the (social) media that met a number of their needs than social media that provided just a few. Secondly, the excessive use of social media provided social stability as students of FSS, DELSU extensively used SMTs for social interaction, searching for course related materials, social news sites, interacting with their Universities and even bloggers.'The social media phobia and craze has become a trend among students (of the FSS, DELSU) as predicted by Dumpit and Fernandez (2017). Table 5 corroborates this finding where all the SMTs studied had equal respondents in percentage terms. This confirms (Junco,2012; DeAndrea *et al*, 2015) findings, that reasons for this mass appeal of social media include social media use by university administrators, lecturers and staff who have established their own social media networks to help students socialize and connect with faculty members, for communication and a sense of belonging. SMTs encourage students of FSS of DELSU to use social media not only for receiving and retrieving information but also for connecting with others online (Obar & Wildman, 2015).

The aggressive adoption of social media among the younger generation could be attributed to their up to date knowledge of and comfort within the latest technology and convenient accessibility to these social media tools (Vorderer, 2016). Table 6 further affirms this finding which confirms what Madge, Meek and Hooley (2009) had found: that the use of social media



enhances educational process and interaction. This is a disclaimer of Englander, Terregrossa and Wang's (2010) finding which has it that internet usage is negatively associated with academic performance. On his part, Hussain (2005) had found that social media is promoting virtual learning communities and virtual learning environment. Table 12 shows that students of FSS, DELSU, Abraka learnt to use SMTs from parents, friends, course/school mates, lecturers and faculty staff thus confirming Herrington, Reeves and Oliver's (2010) finding that SMTs are emerging technologies and cognitive tools that allow the creation of collaborative shared knowledge and development of participatory cultures.

To examine the effects of the excessive use of social media platforms on the students' academic performance (class attendance, assignments and home works). The answer to this research question was provided by data analyzed in Tables 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10. In Table 4, majority (71%) of the respondents perceived the effects of social media technologies, digital engagement as positive. This finding agrees with the uses and gratifications theory which posits that people (students) are not passive users of social media but intelligible persons and social meaning makers. Alabi (2003) had opined that the uses and gratifications theory indicate a positive relationship between (social) media and the level of satisfaction and gratification derived from digital engagement. Table 5 corroborates that students derived satisfaction from using the (social) media considering that students of the FSS, DELSU, Abraka were able to separate their academic from their social lives. as they used SMT for social interaction, search for course related materials, exchange course related materials, and to relate with the DELSU management. This is why Jones, Blackey, Fitzgibbon and Chew (2010) advise us to be cautious in drawing conclusions about excessive use of social media because they had demonstrated in their study that students separate their academic spheres from their private lives, especially concerning social media technologies' use. Table 7 shows that 341 (76%) respondents returned that there is a positive relationship between SMTs usage and academic performance. Table 8 further supports this finding where 247 (55%) respondents submitted that there was a positive relationship between social media and school work. Students of the FSS, DELSU, Abraka, shared information, study experiences, research projects and, later, job opportunities via social media. Fallows (2008) alluded to this when he stated that there are many ways a person can seek information need, including visiting a library, calling someone on the phone or searching digital resources. This reminds one of Tuckman (1975) who had defined performance as the apparent demonstration of understanding, concepts, skills, ideas and knowledge of a person in order to achieve what Kyoshiba (2009) called one of the predictors of one's life success as well as employability. Thus, students know that it is essential use SMTs to enhance their academic performance. Academic performance is a 'problem' without being a disorder ' because many problem behaviours are normative reactions to difficult situations' (Griffiths, Kuss, Lopez-Fernandez & Pontes, 2017). Table 9 shows that students of the FSS, DELSU, Abraka were satisfied with their lives because of their social media use, thus proving Armstrong and Franklin (2008) right: students use social media in different manners for enhancing and strengthening their learning through reflection and collaborative activities. Youths operating within an online community may be geographically dispersed, experiencing different hours of the day in different locales, but share an identical interest (improved academic performance), virtual space, rules and a sense of belonging (Mesch, 2010). Table 10 is a predictor of this positive relationship as 245 (54%) respondents submitted that SMTs, social media and digital media



engagement did not cause delay in doing academic home works and assignments, thus affirming Hussain's (2012) view that social media innovative use has generated new opportunities of sharing of knowledge, experiences and research practices of eminent scholars of the world.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that the use of SMTs, digital technologies /social media does not, in all cases, lead to poor academic performance. This is why Jones, Blackey, Fitzgibbon and Chew (2010) admonish us to be cautious in drawing conclusions about excessive use of social media use because they were able to demonstrate in their study that students separate their academic and social spheres, especially concerning technologies. In other words, excessive use of social media does not confirm addiction, because, according to Mezirow (1991), our actions towards things are based on the meanings that the things have for us. Mezirow (1991) adds that these meanings are handled in and modified through the interpretive process that we use in dealing with the things we encounter. That is why Postman (1992) asserts that SMTs - machines cannot feel and, just as important, cannot understand. It is meaning, not utterance that makes the mind unique. Postman (1992) argues that meanings include things we call feelings, experiences, sensations, that do not have to be, and sometimes cannot be put into symbols. Karderfelt-Winther (2017) says to describe a student as addicted to digital technology has not been empirically proved because not all students who use digital technologies have clear functional impairment on multiple domains of life. Thege, Woodin, Hodgins and Williams (2015) had concluded in their study that excessive social media use 'tend to be fairly transient for most people'. Karderfelt-Winther (2017) avers that researchers have not yet been able to present convincing evidence that excessive engagement with SMTs/digital technology is followed by severe life impairment overtime. Griffiths *et al* (2016) also argue that at present no consensus exists on how to define this behaviour (excessive social media use or how to measure it). In addition, the American Psychiatric Association is yet to include excessive media in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (Al-Menayes, 2016). In conclusion, this study agrees with Abbas, Aman, Nurunabi and Bano (2019) that technology acceptance, its ease of use, and its perceived benefits play a decisive role in students' decision to use social media. That is why Karderfelt-Winther (2017) argues that it is unfortunate and inaccurate to compare excessive SMTs, digital engagement with other substance addiction. This study aligns with van Rooij, Ferguson, Colder Carras, Kardefelt-Winther et al (2018) and other researchers in Psychiatry, Psychiatric epidemiology, and the Social Sciences who propose that before excessive social media use or SMTs engagement can be classified as a clinical disorder, research efforts should rest on the foundations of rigorous, transparent and standardized methods. This is why Griffiths, Kuss, Lopez-Fernandez and Pontes (2017) had suggested that multiple stake holders should be involved in the process of formalizing excessive social media use as a potential disorder.

It is recommended that taking a wary and balanced approach can help students avoid the consequences of social media use. That is why education technology advocates say 'it aint what you got it's what you do with it' (Anderson, 2019). University administrators should develop policies that enhance innovative use of SMTs for academic purposes like data bases for collaborative research projects, discussions, and discussion groups. Seminars should be organized to educate students on proper time management in order to strike a balance between



using SMTs for academic purposes and social interaction. University administrators should strictly enforce and sanction defaulters of school policy that disallows the use of SMTs, smart phones during class learning sessions. The American Psychiatric Association (2017) has Internet Gaming Disorder in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-V). However, the conditions and criteria does not include general use of the Internet or social media. This is probably why Aarseth, Bean, Boonen et al (2016) had argued that formalization of internet gaming as a disorder in the International Classification of Diseases -11 has potentially problematic, medical, scientific, public health, societal and rights based repercussions that should be considered. This study recommends that excessive use of SMTs should not be included in ICDs or DSMs since it has not been empirically and clinically proved that excessive engagement with SMTs or social media has long-term harm or impairment.

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