

Influence of Social Media usage on Anxiety Disorder among the Youths in Ibadan North Local Government Area

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the influence of social media usage on anxiety disorder among youths in Ibadan North Local government and to ascertain the level at which social media usage causes anxiety disorder in youth in Ibadan North Local Government, to identify the social media platforms that triggers anxiety disorder among youths in Ibadan North Local Government and to also examine how the social media platforms can cause anxiety disorder among youths in Ibadan North Local Government. The theories applied in this study are Social learning theory, Uses and Gratification theory and Social cognitive theory. The research design used in this research study is mixed method research design, 400 as the number of respondents, online survey link was used to distribute questionnaire online. It has been concluded that Social media has some advantages and disadvantages, it has been noted that exposure to social media contents can trigger fear which is known as anxiety. It is recommended that youths must develop strong self-esteem, ethics and moral values, so that they don't develop unnecessary fear from the social media applications when using social media. This paper recommends that people think through on their actions and thoughts on social media content, they should know what is good and bad and healthy for their minds, if people want to watch anything scary on the social media, they should watch it in early hours.

Keywords: Anxiety disorder, youths, social media usage.

Introduction

Anxiety is the brain's way of reacting to stress and alerting you of potential danger ahead. Anxiety is a feeling of worry or apprehension, often about something that could happen in the future. It's a normal human emotion, but it can become problematic when it is excessive

and interferes with daily life. Anxiety disorder is a fear that hinders with normal functioning may be classified as an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are a group of mental health conditions considered by excessive fear and anxiety, often accompanied by physical symptoms like muscle tension and sleep disturbances. They are more than just normal feelings of nervousness and can significantly impact daily life, potentially causing avoidance of situations and activities that trigger anxiety. According to Prof. kursat and Prof fatma in 2025, they claimed anxiety is a mental condition that has been seen to impact a persons' life. This analyzes the mental effects of anxiety, its origins, and helpful measures. It studies the impact of anxiety on mental reasoning, its potential to disrupt social interactions and everyday activities, and the adverse implications of its physiological symptoms on long-term health.

Having discussed anxiety disorders; it is relevant to state that social media plays an integral role in anxiety disorders. Social media refers to digital platforms that enable individuals communicate interactively and selectively self-present, either synchronously or asynchronously, with both wide and targeted audiences, who offer value through user-generated content and the experience of social interaction. Social media can also be described as the means of communications where users create, share and exchange ideas and information in cybernetic societies and webs. It can also be referred to a variety of technologies that assists sharing of ideas and information amongst users. User's interactions with these platforms contributes to creating dynamic environments where individuals, communities, and organizations can share, co-create, engage in discussions, collaborate, and modify contents that are self-curated or generated by uses online.

Also, it has been reported by the Nigerian journal of psychology that there are 4.021 billion internet users worldwide, with 3.96 billion engaging regularly with social media, where an individual has eight social media accounts on average. Projections suggest that by 2025, Nigeria will have approximately 44.63 million social media users, a significant increase from around 24.59 million in 2019. Anxiety is something everyone possesses, it is not a natural disaster because it is not evident, and it is an internal problem that reflects in one's life.

Statement of the Problem

Social media has become a major part of young people's daily lives, helping them stay connected, share experiences, and access information quickly. However, constant use of these platforms has been linked to rising cases of anxiety among youths. Many young people feel pressured to appear perfect online, compare themselves to others, and worry about likes, comments, and online approval. This can lead to stress, low self-esteem, and emotional discomfort over time. However, many youths do not realize how their social

media habits may be affecting their mental health. They spend long hours scrolling, posting, and checking updates, often leading to sleep problems, mood swings, and worry. Hence, this study examines the influence of social media usage on anxiety disorder among youth in Ibadan North Local Government.

Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the influence of social media usage on anxiety disorder among youths in Ibadan North Local government, the objectives are;

- i) To ascertain the level at which social media usage causes anxiety disorder in youths in Ibadan North Local Government.
- ii) To examine how the usage of social media platforms can cause anxiety disorder.

Research Questions

The Research questions that this study is focused on are;

- i) To what level does social media usage cause anxiety disorder in youths in Ibadan North Local Government?
- ii) How can the usage of social media lead to youth's anxiety disorder?

Scope of the Study

Data was collected between May and June 2025, from youths who were serving as NYSC Corpers in the Ibadan North local Government area. The corp members often gathered once a week at the local government headquarters in Agodi, Ibadan, for their community development service (CDS).

Three of the community development service coordinators were contacted at Agodi, to arrange access to the corp members that were included in this study. Their indulgence was sought and obtained to assist in sharing the link of the survey to the various Community development service whatsapp groups. Anxiety is something everyone possesses, it is not a physical problem because it is not evident, it is an internal problem, but the youth in this population were chosen to be studied by the researcher because in the Ibadan North Local Government Area, every youth there has a chance of being selected to find out whether their anxiety has affected them through social media.

Theoretical Review

Social Learning Theory

This is a theory of social behavior that proposes that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. In addition to the observation

of behavior, learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. When a particular behavior is rewarded regularly, it will most likely persist; conversely, if a particular behavior is constantly punished, it will most likely desist. The theory expands on traditional behavioral theories, in which behavior is governed solely by reinforcements, by placing emphasis on the important roles of various internal processes in the learning individual. Albert Bandura is known for studying this theory.

Social Cognitive Theory

This theory was invented by Albert Bandura. The basics of social cognitive theory come from Edwin B. Holt and Harold Chapman Brown's work *Animal Drive and the Learning Process*, an essay toward radical empiricism. This book speculates that all animal action is based on accomplishing the psychological needs of "feeling, emotion, and desire." The most notable component of this theory is that a person cannot learn to how to imitate until they are imitated.

A behavior is imitated depending on whether the model receives positive or negative response consequences. Miller and Dollard argued that if one were motivated to learn a particular behavior, then that particular behavior would be learned through clear observations. By imitating these observed actions the individual observer would solidify that learned action and would be rewarded with positive reinforcement, a positive consequence to certain behaviour.

The theory shows how new behavior diffuses through society through psychosocial factors governing the acquisition and adoption of the behavior. By using causes people see as worthy, they justify harmful actions. SCT has been applied across different fields of study including psychology, education, mass communications, and healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought challenges to many people in relations to global health and has prompted a re-examination of human behavior and social responses through social cognitive theory. The pandemic has changed numerous different facets of society, including the way people behave.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

This is a communication theory that describes the reasons and means by which people seek out media to meet specific needs. The theory postulates that media is a highly available product, that audiences are the consumers of the product, and that audiences choose media to satisfy given needs as well as social and psychological uses, such as knowledge, relaxation, social relationships, and diversion. According to Ruggero (2000) the uses and gratification theory measures more value as modern communication technologies radically

transform the media world. Uses and gratifications theory was developed from a number of erstwhile communication theories and research conducted by fellow theorists. The theory has a heuristic value because it gives communication scholars a perspective through which a number of ideas and theories about media choice, consumption, and even impact can be viewed.

Research Methodology

The research design selected for this study is a mixed method research design which is also a descriptive research design. In a study, population is the broader set from which a sample might be drawn. The estimated population of Ibadan North Local Government in 2025 is 462,420.

Samples will be chosen by using taro Yamane formula, The Taro Yamane formula, used for determining sample size in research, is: $n = N / (1 + N * e^2)$, where 'n' is the required sample size, 'N' is the total population size, and 'e' is the margin of error or desired level of precision.

The sampling technique of this study is the simple random sampling under the Probability sampling techniques, probability sampling means that every member of the target population has a known chance of being included in the sample, while the simple random sampling, every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

Sample was derived by $n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$

$n = 462,420 / 1 + 462,420(0.05)^2$

$n = 462,420 / 1 + 462,420 * 0.0025$

$n = 462,420 / 1 + 1,156$

$n = 462,420 / 1,157$

$n = 400$. This 400 respondents are youths from Ibadan North Local Government.

Description of the Research Instruments

The research instrument used to collect data was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered through an online google survey platform. The link was generated and sent out to youths to fill in through their social media (whatsapp) platforms.

Method of Data Collection

A mixed-methods approach was used in this study. These involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. Survey was classified under my quantitative approach and use content analysis as my qualitative approach. These methods were applied to address the various objectives of the study. Survey was used to

address research objectives 1, in order to know the level at which social media usage causes anxiety disorder in youth in Ibadan North Local Government. The content analysis was used to address the research objectives 2, how the usage of social media platforms causes anxiety. Content analysis was conducted on social media platforms such as Whatsapp, X, Facebook and Instagram.

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Method of Data Analysis

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis of the quantitative data. The SPSS is a statistical software package used for analysing data and making data driven decisions. It is a widely used tool in various fields including social sciences, market research, health research and government, to analyse data and gain insights. Data obtained from the survey will be analysed to obtain descriptive statistics such as mean, mode and median and percentages especially in the aspect of Age, gender and educational attainment of the respondents. With regard to the qualitative method, content analysis was conducted, after checking for contents on various social media platforms such as whatsapp, Instagram etc, i highlighted possible areas where anxiety disorder are triggered due to social media usage.

Results and Discussion of Findings

A survey link was sent to 400 youths in Ibadan North Local Government online to fill the questionnaires, all links that were sent to 400 people online was filled representing 100% response rate. Data collected with online questionnaires were presented and analysed using the statistical package for social sciences(SPSS) and data obtained from the survey will be analysed to obtain descriptive statistics.

Demographic Data Analysis

This is the data information about the ages, gender, educational background and socio-economic status of the respondents who are youths.

Table 1. Age of Respondents

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
18-20	131	32.8%
21-25	238	59.5%
26-30	31	7.7%
Total	400	100%

Gender of Respondents

Sex	Number of respondents	Percentage
Male	174	43.3%
Female	226	56.7%
Total	400	100%

The table above shows the age bracket of the respondents used. Age 18-20 were 131 representing 32.8%, 21-25 were 238 representing 59.5% and 26-30 were 31 representing 7.7%.

Also the table above shows, 174 respondents were males representing 43.3% and 226 were female respondents representing 56.7%.

Presentation of Data**Table 2. Do you use social media?**

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
YES	400	100%
NO	0	0%
Total	400	100%

From the table above, it shows that 100% respondents use social media.

Table 3. What social media do you use?

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Instagram	60	16%
WhatsApp	150	41%
Snapchat	84	22%
X	56	14%
Facebook	50	7%
Total	400	100%

This table shows that people using Instagram are 60 measuring 16%, while those using WhatsApp are 150 measuring 41%, 22% of respondents use Snapchat, while 14% use X, 7% use Facebook.

Table 4. How much time do you spend on social media?

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
10mins	62	16%
15mins	110	27%
30mins	103	26%
1hr	75	18%
2hrs	31	8%
3hrs	19	5%
Total	400	100%

This table shows that people who spend 10mins on social media are 62 which measures 16%, while those who spend 15mins on social media are 110 respondents which measures 27%, those who spend 30mins on social media are 103 respondents which measures 26%, those who spend 1hr on social media are 75 respondents and measures 18%, those who spend 2hrs on social media are 31 and measures 8%, those who spend 3hrs on social media are 19 respondents measuring 5%.

Table 5. When do you use social media?

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Every time	123	35%
Weekly	64	13%
Monthly	18	4%
Daily	186	44%
Only on specific month	9	4%
Only on specific days	0	0%
Total	400	100%

35% of respondents use social media every time, 13% use social media weekly, 44% use social media daily, 4% of respondent use it monthly, 4% also use it on specific days.

Table 6. Where do you use social media?

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
At home	120	28%
At School	170	40%
At Office	30	10%
Anywhere	80	22%
Total	400	100%

The table shows that people who use social media at home measures 28%, respondents who use social media at work measure 10%, respondents who use social media in school are 40%, respondents who use it everywhere measure 22%.

Table 7. If you claim to use social media, have you faced any online harassment?

Responses	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	237	67%
No	163	33%
Total	400	100%

This table shows that 67% of respondents claim to have faced online harassment and 33% respondents claim to not have faced online harassment.

Table 8. Do you feel pressured to present a perfect picture online for the likes?

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	328	82%
No	72	18%
Total	400	100%

This table shows that 82% respondents feel pressured to present a perfect picture online for likes, 18% don't feel pressured.

The highlights of findings of content analysis done on Social Media to know what causes Anxiety in Youths

According to secondary data, which is the content analysis, this secondary data is recognised as a qualitative study on how to examine how the use of social media platforms triggers anxiety disorder among youths, over some time, it was seen on various snapchat and Instagram statuses, the excessive spending of cash in which is termed as naira abuse in club houses, this can cause social media to make someone develop fear of missing out, the secondary data helps to identify two aspects in which social media content and usage cause anxiety, these are;

1. Career aspect: Career Aspect can also Cause fear of missing out, which causes youths to loose focus in their academic work or official work. For instance, Celebrity works are also careers, most of them are footballers, actors, actresses, e.t.c, which most of these celebrities have social media pages to post themselves or advertise their business or careers, so they can solicit for support or to entertain fans, meaning that fans of younger age gain interest in younger celebrity. Footballer for instance we use Kylian Mbappe, a fantastic footballer who is young at age 25, who earns, a lot of talented people who are in Nigeria who have the potential to be at that level, to earn more, and they play in Nigeria, who are older, they feel they are wasting their time, some have given up due to the fear that they can never make it.

2. LifeStyle: Lifestyle aspect can also influence fear because Social media Apps are where people post more of personal lifestyle, clubbing lifestyle, a youth struggling to get employment or struggling to make more money to fend for himself, comes online on snapchat and sees extravagant lifestyle in club, where people of his age spend dollars, bundle of naira's and he is in the same country with them wondering where they get the money from, he will fear and feel like he is missing out, this anxiety can make a youth steer away from his way of life, make him do something drastic in reality.

Research Questions

The Research Question that this study is focused on is listed below;

i) To what level does social media usage cause anxiety disorder among youths in Ibadan North Local Government?

The level at which social media usage causes anxiety disorder among youths is very high, it is because of what they call 'Media dependency', youths often use it for entertainment, friendship, love and business. Media dependency is what makes the level of social media usage high enough to cause anxiety, it is created by the amount of time spent and when they use it, in table 4 and 5, table 4 shows that people spend various times on social media, 10mins, 15mins, 30mins, 1hr, 2hrs, 30mins time has the second highest respondent, and table 5 shows the various days that people use social media, in the result it is shown that 44% of the respondent which is the majority of this study use social media daily, and 15-30mins per day is enough to cause anxiety disorder among user, especially when what they depend on, on social media is not in their space and reality, they begin to fear that they miss out, it affects them mentally, it can become a disorder if not treated as soon as possible.

ii) How can the usage of social media lead to youth's anxiety disorder?

The content on social media and also being a social media influencer or a celebrity who has various Instagram pages can bring about anxiety disorder, people tend to throw insult on personality when they don't do what they like or post content that's not suited for them,

people also tend to just harass people for any slight mistake on internet, online harassment of different type like Beauty shaming, body shaming, wealth oppression, insults.

In this study, Table 7, majority of respondents face online harassment which can give them anxiety that's derived from insults seen online. Also in table 8, It shows that the pressure to post a perfect picture to meet demands of online fans also shows how the usage of social media app can cause anxiety and majority of respondents feel the pressure and when they done meet up with expectations, they fear they are missing out cause their colleagues are being liked and validated on social media.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it has been concluded that Social media has it own advantages and disadvantages, it has been noted that exposure to social media contents can trigger fear which is known as anxiety, 50% of youths experience anxiety because they are unable to meet the standards of living of other content creators. The social media space can bring a lot of pressure and can cause lots of self-esteem due to not being able to meet up with that pressure, the pressure to be liked and validated, in this study 82% of youths feel pressured to post a picture online for likes, they will do anything for the picture to be liked, clout chasing.

People must know that social media is a fun place to be, that social media can also be used to ease depression, anxiety, most people use social media to have fun, communicate with friends, video call friends, one of the most important thing people need to know social media can bring or cause any anxiety when they can't access their friends on social media, uncontrolled engagement in using social media that impairs the state of wellbeing.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are made based on the problem of the study and findings;

- i. This paper suggests that people must be well disciplined, matured, must be well guided before using social media, so that they are not easily influenced by what is bad on the social media space.
- ii. This paper recommends that people should have a real life, social media breaks the barriers of distance and communication. Social media has come to stay, people should be happy to accept and use social media as a way of life or add it as part of their existence.
- iii. This paper recommends that youths must develop strong self-esteem, ethics and moral values, so that they don't develop unnecessary fear from the social media applications when using social media.

- iv. This paper recommends that people think through on their actions and thoughts on social media content, they should know what is good and bad and healthy for their minds, if people want to watch anything scary on the social media, they should watch it in early hours.

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