

INFLUENCE OF TIKTOK DEPENDENCY ON ACADEMIC CONCENTRATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of TikTok dependency on academic concentration among secondary school students in South-South Nigeria. The increasing dependence on social media platforms, particularly TikTok, among adolescents has generated concerns regarding students' concentration during learning activities. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised secondary school students in selected states within South-South Nigeria, namely Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers. Data were obtained through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Findings revealed that excessive TikTok usage negatively affects students' academic concentration, reading habits, classroom attention, and study discipline. The study concluded that TikTok dependency significantly influences academic concentration among secondary school students. The study recommended parental monitoring, digital literacy education, regulated screen time, and school-based counseling programs to address the challenge.

Keywords: TikTok Dependency, Academic Concentration, Social Media Addiction, Secondary School Students, South-South Nigeria.

Introduction

The emergence of social media platforms has transformed communication, entertainment, and learning across the world. Among these platforms, TikTok has gained remarkable popularity

among adolescents and secondary school students due to its engaging short-video content, entertainment features, and interactive nature. Although TikTok provides opportunities for creativity and information sharing, excessive dependence on the platform has raised concerns regarding students' academic concentration and educational outcomes.

According to Nneji S. O. (2025), Academic concentration refers to students' ability to focus attention during learning activities such as classroom instruction, reading, assignments, and examinations. Concentration is essential for effective learning because it enhances comprehension, retention, and academic achievement. However, the addictive nature of TikTok may reduce students' ability to concentrate on academic activities due to constant exposure to short-form digital content.

In Nigeria, the rapid increase in smartphone usage and internet accessibility has contributed to greater dependence on social media among adolescents. Studies indicate that social media distractions negatively affect students' study habits and academic discipline. Excessive social media use has also been associated with reduced attention span and poor academic performance among students.

The rapid growth of social media platforms has significantly transformed the lifestyle, communication patterns, and learning habits of secondary school students across the world, as shown by Irele A. O. & Arowolo F. O. (2025), Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most popular applications used by adolescents for entertainment, communication, and content creation. Its short-video format, attractive features, and continuous stream of content have increased students' engagement and dependency on the platform. Bassey A. U. (2024) observed that TikTok provides opportunities for creativity and social interaction, excessive use among students has raised concerns regarding its influence on academic concentration and educational performance.

Academic concentration is an essential factor in effective learning because it enables students to focus attention on classroom activities, assignments, and academic goals. However, dependency on TikTok may negatively affect students' ability to maintain attention during study periods. Many Account to Akpadaka v. o & Akpadaka O. S. (2026) students spend long hours watching videos, participating in online challenges, and interacting with peers on the platform, thereby reducing the time devoted to academic activities. This excessive engagement may lead to poor reading habits, divided attention, reduced classroom participation, and declining academic achievement.

According to Gertrude Akunna (2026), teachers have ethical responsibilities in managing and guiding students' online behavior in order to reduce distractions associated with social media dependency. The author emphasized that proper monitoring and digital guidance can help students develop healthier academic habits and improve concentration in school-related activities. Teachers, parents, and educational stakeholders therefore play important roles in helping students balance social media usage with academic responsibilities.

According to Ojuri O. S. (2023), in Nigeria particularly among secondary school students, the increasing accessibility of smartphones and internet services has contributed to the widespread use of TikTok. This growing dependency has generated concerns among educators and parents regarding students' declining attention span and commitment to learning. Consequently, there is a need to examine the influence of TikTok dependency on academic concentration among secondary school students in order to provide recommendations that can promote responsible social media use and improved academic outcomes.

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Secondary school students in South-South Nigeria are increasingly exposed to TikTok usage due to improved internet penetration and smartphone availability. While TikTok may offer educational benefits when used appropriately, dependency on the platform can interfere with students' academic concentration and learning behavior.

This study therefore investigates the influence of TikTok dependency on academic concentration among secondary school students in South-South Nigeria.

The growing popularity of TikTok among adolescents has become a major concern within the educational sector. Many secondary school students spend several hours daily watching short videos, participating in online trends, and engaging in continuous scrolling activities. These behaviors may reduce students' concentration during classroom learning and study periods.

Teachers and parents have increasingly observed reduced reading culture, shortened attention span, classroom distraction, and declining academic focus among students who excessively engage with TikTok. Studies on social media distractions among secondary school students suggest that frequent exposure to social media notifications and entertainment content negatively affects academic activities.

Despite existing studies on social media and academic performance, there is limited empirical research specifically examining TikTok dependency and academic concentration among secondary school students in South-South Nigeria. This study seeks to fill this gap.

The major objective of this study is to examine the influence of TikTok dependency on academic concentration among secondary school students in South-South Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- iii. Determine the extent of TikTok dependency among secondary school students.
- iv. Examine the influence of TikTok usage on classroom concentration.
- v. Investigate the relationship between TikTok dependency and reading habits.
- vi. Determine whether TikTok dependency affects students' study discipline.
- vii. Examine gender differences in TikTok dependency and academic concentration.

- viii. Investigate the level of TikTok dependency among secondary school students
- ix. How does TikTok dependency influence classroom concentration?
 - 3. What is the relationship between TikTok dependency and reading habits?
 - 4. Does TikTok dependency affect students' study discipline?
 - 5. Is there any gender difference in TikTok dependency among students?

H₀₁: TikTok dependency has no significant influence on classroom concentration among secondary school students.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between TikTok dependency and reading habits among students.

H₀₃: TikTok dependency does not significantly affect students' study discipline.

Concepts

TikTok Dependency

TikTok dependency refers to excessive reliance or addiction to TikTok characterized by compulsive usage, inability to reduce screen time, and continuous engagement with short-form video content.

TikTok dependency refers to a behavioral condition where an individual develops excessive and compulsive use of the TikTok application, leading to difficulty in controlling time spent on the platform as shown by Agbajeola O. R. (2024). It is characterized by repeated engagement with short-form videos, constant scrolling, and a strong urge to check the app frequently. This dependency is largely driven by TikTok's algorithm, which personalizes content based on user preferences, making the platform highly engaging and difficult to disengage from.

In educational contexts, TikTok dependency can negatively affect students' productivity and learning habits. Students who are heavily dependent on the platform often spend significant time consuming entertainment content rather than engaging in academic tasks. This may result in reduced study time, poor time management, and decreased motivation for academic work. Psychologically, TikTok dependency is linked with instant gratification, where users prefer quick entertainment over tasks that require sustained attention.

Furthermore, continuous exposure to fast-paced video content may alter attention span and increase distractibility. Over time, students may find it difficult to concentrate on long academic materials such as textbooks or lectures. Therefore, TikTok dependency is increasingly recognized as a modern digital behavior that requires monitoring, especially among adolescents and secondary school students.

Academic Concentration

Academic concentration refers to the ability of students to maintain attention and focus during academic activities such as classroom instruction, reading, assignments, and examinations.

Falope B. G. Akinfolami, O. A, Ibrahim I. A. & Agegunde I. T. (2025), Sees academic concentration as the ability of a learner to focus attention fully on educational tasks such as reading, listening, writing, and problem-solving without being easily distracted. It is a key factor in effective learning and academic success. A student with strong concentration can process information deeply, retain knowledge longer, and perform better in assessments.

Concentration in academics is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include interest, motivation, mental health, and cognitive ability, while external factors include learning environment, noise level, teaching methods, and availability of learning resources. In modern times, digital distractions such as smartphones and social media platforms have become major threats to students' ability to concentrate.

Poor academic concentration can lead to low academic performance, incomplete assignments, and difficulty in understanding complex concepts. On the other hand, improved concentration enhances critical thinking, comprehension, and overall academic achievement. Strategies to improve academic concentration include time management, creating a quiet study environment, setting academic goals, and limiting exposure to distractions such as social media. Thus, academic concentration remains a fundamental requirement for educational success at all levels.

Social Media Addiction

Social media addiction is the excessive and uncontrollable use of social networking platforms that interferes with daily activities and responsibilities.

Social media addiction is a behavioral disorder characterized by excessive and uncontrollable use of social networking platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, to the extent that it interferes with daily life activities as shown by Falope B. G. Akinfolami, O. A, Ibrahim I. A. & Abegunde I. T. (2025). Individuals with social media addiction often feel compelled to check notifications repeatedly, spend long hours online, and experience anxiety when unable to access their accounts.

This form of addiction is driven by psychological reinforcement mechanisms such as likes, comments, and shares, which activate the brain's reward system. Over time, users begin to seek constant validation and entertainment from these platforms. Among students, social media addiction can negatively impact academic performance by reducing study time, disrupting sleep patterns, and weakening attention span.

Social media addiction also affects emotional and social behavior. It may lead to isolation, reduced face-to-face communication skills, and increased comparison with others, which can affect self-esteem. In academic environments, it contributes to procrastination and lack of

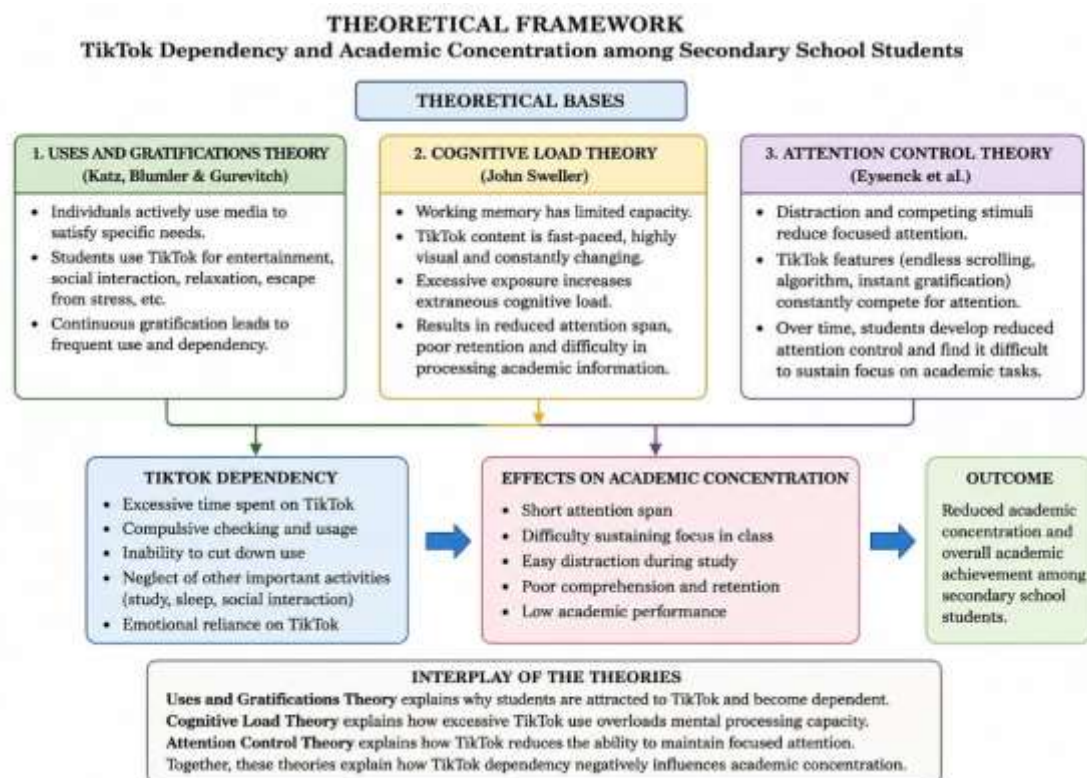
focus. Addressing social media addiction requires digital discipline, parental guidance, awareness programs, and self-regulation strategies. Therefore, it is an important contemporary issue affecting both educational development and mental well-being.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Media Dependency Theory developed by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976). The theory explains that individuals become dependent on media platforms for information, entertainment, and social interaction. The greater the dependency on media, the greater its influence on users' behavior and cognition.

The theory is relevant because students who become highly dependent on TikTok may experience reduced academic concentration due to continuous exposure to entertainment-oriented content.

The study also adopts the Uses and Gratification Theory, Rubin A. M (2009) explains that individuals actively use media platforms to satisfy personal needs such as entertainment, social interaction, and relaxation. Studies on TikTok addiction among students have applied this theory to explain excessive social media engagement.



TikTok Usage Among Adolescents

TikTok has become one of the most widely used social media applications among adolescents globally. The platform allows users to create, watch, and share short videos. Due to its algorithm-driven content delivery system, users often spend prolonged periods scrolling through videos.

Research indicates that students spend several hours daily on TikTok, often at the expense of academic activities. A study on undergraduate students in Nigeria found that excessive TikTok use negatively affected academic performance.

According to Young K. S. (2004), TikTok usage among adolescents has increased rapidly in recent years due to the popularity of smartphones and internet accessibility. Adolescents use TikTok mainly for entertainment, communication, creativity, and social interaction. The platform allows users to create and share short videos, making it highly attractive to young people. While TikTok can provide opportunities for learning, talent development, and self-expression, excessive usage among adolescents may also lead to negative effects such as addiction, poor time management, reduced academic concentration, and exposure to inappropriate content. Many adolescents spend long hours scrolling through videos, which can interfere with their study time, sleep pattern, and social responsibilities. Therefore, monitoring and regulating TikTok usage among adolescents is important in order to promote healthy academic and social development.

Social Media Dependency and Academic Concentration

Social media dependency refers to the excessive and uncontrollable use of social networking platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to the extent that it begins to affect an individual's daily activities and academic performance. Among secondary school students, dependency on social media has become a growing concern because many students spend long hours watching videos, chatting, browsing content, and participating in online trends instead of focusing on their studies. This excessive engagement often reduces students' ability to concentrate during classroom lessons, private study, and homework completion. Academic concentration is essential for effective learning, comprehension, memory retention, and academic achievement; however, constant notifications and the urge to remain active online can easily distract students from educational tasks.

Furthermore, social media dependency can negatively affect students' reading habits, time management, and sleep patterns, all of which contribute to poor concentration in school activities. Quadri M. O. (2020) opined that students who are highly dependent on social media may find it difficult to maintain attention during lectures because their minds are often occupied with online interactions and entertainment. In some cases, students develop anxiety or restlessness when they are unable to access social media platforms, thereby reducing their commitment to academic responsibilities. Despite the educational benefits that some social media platforms may provide, uncontrolled usage can lead to reduced productivity, poor academic engagement, and declining academic performance. Therefore, there is a need for

parents, teachers, and school administrators to guide students on the proper and balanced use of social media in order to improve their academic concentration and overall educational outcomes.

Academic concentration is critical for effective learning and academic success. However, dependency on social media platforms can reduce students' attention span and concentration during academic activities.

A study conducted in Enugu State revealed that social media usage negatively influenced students' concentration and reading skills. Another study in Ondo State found that social media distractions significantly affected academic activities among secondary school students.

Similarly, according to Nneji S. O. (2023) studies on internet addiction among Nigerian students established that excessive internet usage negatively affects academic performance and concentration.

TikTok Dependency and Reading Habits

Reading habits among students have reportedly declined due to excessive social media engagement. Then addictive nature of TikTok's short-form content reduces students' patience for prolonged academic reading and concentration.

Digital distraction studies in Rivers State indicated that social media usage contributed to poor study discipline and reduced academic performance among secondary school students.

TikTok Dependency and Attention Span

Short-form video applications have been linked to reduced attention span and cognitive distraction. Discussions and recent research findings indicate that continuous exposure to short videos may weaken sustained attention and study motivation among adolescents.

TikTok dependency has also been linked to reduced attention span among secondary school students. Attention span refers to the ability of an individual to concentrate on a task or learning activity for a reasonable period without distraction. TikTok's short and fast-paced video format encourages continuous scrolling and instant gratification, which may gradually weaken students' ability to focus on lengthy academic tasks such as reading, classroom learning, and assignment completion. Many students who spend excessive time on TikTok often find it difficult to maintain concentration during lessons because their minds become accustomed to constant entertainment and rapid changes in content. This reduced attention span can negatively affect memory retention, comprehension, and overall academic performance. Therefore, uncontrolled dependency on TikTok may contribute to poor learning habits and decreased academic concentration among students.

Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers.

The population comprised all senior secondary school students in selected public secondary schools in South-South Nigeria.

A sample size of 600 students was selected using stratified random sampling techniques.

Results and Discussion.

The findings showed that many students spend several hours daily on TikTok, often during study periods and classroom activities. Students reported experiencing distraction from academic activities due to constant notifications and prolonged scrolling behavior.

The study also found a significant relationship between TikTok dependency and reduced academic concentration. Excessive TikTok usage negatively influenced reading habits, classroom attention, and study discipline.

These findings support previous studies which revealed that social media distractions affect students' academic activities and concentration. The findings also align with studies indicating that internet addiction negatively affects academic performance among secondary school students.

Furthermore, the findings correspond with emerging evidence that short-video applications may reduce attention span and study motivation among adolescents.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for educational stakeholders:

Teachers need to integrate digital literacy education into classroom activities.

Parents should regulate students' screen time and internet usage.

Schools should establish counseling programs addressing social media addiction.

Government and educational agencies should promote responsible digital behavior among adolescents.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of TikTok dependency on academic concentration among secondary school students in South-South Nigeria. Findings revealed that excessive TikTok dependency negatively affects classroom concentration, reading habits, study discipline, and academic focus among students.

The study concludes that while TikTok may provide entertainment and educational opportunities, excessive dependency on the platform poses significant challenges to students' academic concentration. Effective monitoring, digital literacy education, and responsible technology usage are essential for improving students' academic engagement.

Suggestions

- Parents should monitor students' TikTok usage and regulate screen time.

- Schools should organize seminars on responsible social media usage.
- Guidance counselors should educate students on the dangers of social media addiction.
- Teachers should encourage improved reading culture and study habits.
- Government should promote digital literacy and internet safety programs for adolescents.

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