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EFFECT OF SELF-INSTRUCTION TECHNIQUE ON SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NNEWI NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect self-instruction technique on social media addiction among secondary school students in Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Quasi-experimental research was adopted in carrying out the study. A sample size of 107 male and female SS2 students drawn from three coeducational schools was chosen from a population of 259 that were identified with high social media addiction. The sample was derived from three secondary schools selected using multi-stage sampling procedure based on the number of students that scored high on Social Media Addiction Scale. The Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) was used for data collection. The instrument was reliable at 0.83 coefficients. Data relating to research questions were analyzed using statistical mean while data relating to hypotheses were analyzed using Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA). Findings from the study revealed that self-instruction technique was significantly effective in reducing social media addiction among secondary school students. The findings also showed that self-instruction technique was more effective on male secondary school students' social media addiction than the females. The researcher therefore recommended among others, that Counsellors in secondary schools should use self-instruction technique for their male students, and that the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should collaborate with government to ensure that enough qualified counsellors are employed in secondary schools to take adequate care of the students' psychological needs.

Keywords: Self-instruction, Technique, Social Media, Addiction, Anambra State

INTRODUCTION

Social media addiction has assumed a serious global challenge that could have pervasive negative consequences on the psychological, academic and social functioning of youths and students in the present society. In the time past, students in Anambra State were known for their spirit of dexterity, prudence and diligence. Those days, students were always seen busy in their classrooms, laboratories and libraries studying with maximum concentration. However, the trend seems to have changed towards the opposite direction in recent times, as the increasing rate of social media addiction among students in our schools has posed serious worries to parents, teachers, researchers and the society in general.

Social media is a recent technological boom in the world of information. The rapid rise of social media has led to various definitions of the concept. For example, Zahrai, Veer, Ballantine, Vries and Prayag (2022) defined social media as an online platform that allows people to communicate with one another electronically. It is a digital technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts and information through virtual networks and communities (Dollarhide and Drury, 2023). Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration (Lutkevich and Wigmore, 2023). Social media may also be referred to as a variety of technologies that facilitate the sharing of ideas and information among their users. According to Obar and Wildman (2015), social media are interactive technologies that facilitate the creation, sharing and aggregation of content, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks. For the purpose of this study, social media is defined as websites and applications that enable users to create and share ideas, information and participate in social networking activities.

Currently, social media is one of the fastest growing media platforms, with more than 4.7 billion users globally (Dollarhide and Drury, 2023). Perhaps, this is because it provides users immediate and easy access to information at all times. Social media makes it easier for people to communicate with one another online. Hence, social media has been embraced by individuals in all areas of human endeavour as a veritable instrument for communication worldwide. As a result of this, many individuals including students make use of the social media in their day to day activities. Students may use social media for various reasons. For example, some students use it to

communicate ideas, feelings, personal information, and to send pictures, while others use social media for the purpose of communicating with families and friends, keeping up with happenings and events of the daily life, and also for academic purposes. Social media can offer academic assistance and support to students as it provides quick access to virtual space which students can explore with friends having similar academic needs (Ikwuka, Egwu, Onimisi and Okeke, 2018).

In practical terms, students may access social media services through web-based apps on desktops or download services that offer social media functionality to their mobile devices. Examples of social media applications or platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, LinkedIn and Quora. These platforms allow users to share contents, communicate online and create communities (Fadeyi and Dare, 2023). As a consequence, social media usage has become endemic and indispensably significant in students' lives because it creates easy interactive platforms in which individuals, groups, and organizations can share, discuss and participate in various activities online. With the various functions that social media offers, such as allowing users to present themselves to others, building new relationships and maintaining existing ones, some students tend to be tempted to spend excessive amount of time to social media platforms, and eventually become addicted to it.

Conceptually, the term social media addiction has been defined in various ways. For example, Bhatt (2023) defined social media addiction as a behavioural addiction characterized by being overly concerned about social media, driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on to or use social media, and devoting so much time and effort to social media that it impairs other important life areas. It is a compulsive and excessive use of social media to the extent that such users become so accustomed to scrolling through posts, images, and videos that it interferes with other areas of their lives (Legg, 2022). By implication, social media addiction may ignite similar reaction in the brain as gambling and recreational drugs do.

In terms of character, Leong, Lee and Hew (2019) observed that individuals who are addicted to social media are always thinking about online activities, wishing to use the internet for an increasing amount of time to obtain satisfaction, unable to control, reduce, or discontinue using social media, feeling restless, depressed, or irritable when reducing social media activities, as well as coping with problems. Jelinek (2022) stated that when a person engages in a pleasurable activity such as the use of social media, the brain releases a hormone called dopamine, which is responsible

for feelings of pleasure. Therefore, when an individual receives certain social media notifications, such as a like, share, retweet or comment, the brain may increase their dopamine level (Chigbu, Oguzie, Nwosu & Ngwaka, 2022). This could cause the individual to experience a pleasurable feeling, positively reinforcing additional social media use. In the context of this study, social media addiction is defined as a problem which occurs when an individual feels extreme compulsion that leads to the inability to control their excessive use of social media.

In the present decade, social media addiction is a growing problem, particularly among young people of which secondary school students are included. Zahrai, Veer, Ballantine, Vries and Prayag (2022) adduced that social media use has altered the daily routines of almost half the world's population, with an average user spending more than four hours, twenty five minutes on social media daily. Similarly, Sahranc and Ducurhan (2021) observed that students spent an average of 6 hours a day on social media. In fact, psychologists estimated that up to 10% of students are addicted to social media (Legg, 2021). A study by (Lee, 2021) showed that 40 percent of online users aged 18 to 22 years reported feeling addicted to social media.

Empirically, existing researches have shown that there is an undeniable link between social media addiction and various academic, social and personal problems. For example, Zahrai, Veer, Ballantine, Vries and Prayag (2022) observed that addiction to social media undermines users' psychological well-being resulting in negative outcomes such as ruined relationships, feelings of loneliness and depression, low self-esteem, and other behavioural problems. Yazici and Kumcagiz (2021) in their study reported that students who are addicted to social media experience anxiety because of missing something online, maintaining relationships, instant social comparisons, and conflicts due to openness to everyone. Also, a study by Durak (2018) showed that social media addiction is related to academic procrastination, self-regulation, and social anxiety. Another study by Miller (2022) revealed that students who addicted to social media may be at heightened risk for mental health problems.

Moreso, social media addiction may lead to interpersonal problems, such as ignoring real life relationships, work or school responsibilities and physical health. Due to the amount of time students spend on social media, there may be a negative effect on their academic activities and personal relationships. Social media addicted students may feel an overwhelming concern about social media and devote a large amount of time to it, thereby overlooking their academic tasks. A

study by Demir and Kumcagız (2019) showed that students who are addicted to social media usually perform poor in their academics. Ndubuaku, Inim, Ndudi, Udo and Abner (2020) stated that social media addiction is linked to poor academic performance, health challenges, interpersonal relationship problems and responsibilities related issues. In addition, Andreassen and Pallesen (2014) suggested that individuals addicted to social media may have low ability to plan and organize their personal lives.

Generally, social media addition has become a serious social, academic and public health problem especially among students in the present time (Gwenn and Kathleen, 2021). Moreso, the researchers' personal observation shows that some secondary school students in Anambra state are always glued to their phones using social media even during lesion periods. Thus, Chigbu, Oguzie, Nwosu and Ngwaka, (2022) stressed that social media addiction if left unaddressed may negatively affect students' health and academic performance as well as their interpersonal relationships with their parents, siblings, teachers and fellow students. Hence, this problem requires immediate and effective treatment which may be possible through the use of therapeutic intervention approaches that will not only address the root cause of the problem, but also provide help to instil in students the necessary skills needed to prevent a relapse. In the light of the above, the current researchers used self-instruction technique on social media addicted students to see if the technique would help solve the problem of social media addiction among our students.

Self-instruction technique (SIT) is a cognitive-behavioural approach in which clients are taught to use covert speech to modify their own behaviour (Ofojebe and Anagbogu, 2020). It is a behaviour intervention technique that is aimed at changing dysfunctional thoughts using positive self-talks (Nawantara, 2018). According to Reid (2023), self-instruction technique is also referred to as self-talk or self-statements, in which students learn how to talk themselves through a task or activity. Self-instruction technique involves the use of self-induced statements to direct or control behaviour. It is a strategy by which students self-tutor their intense feelings. Self-instruction is an antecedent statement people make to themselves which describes, directs or guides the behaviour they exhibit. It is one's ability to cognitively plan, organize, direct, reinforce and evaluate one's own independent learning without a teacher's prompting.

Self-instruction technique is therefore a cognitive learning strategy in which learning task is broken into steps and the clients are allowed to direct and appraise themselves as they go through the task step by step (Oguzie & Nwokolo, 2019). During self-instruction training, clients take charge of the counselling activity, while the counsellors' main role is to guide them. Explaining further, Nwokolo and Okocha (2022) pointed out that in using self-instruction technique to modify a student, the modifier instructs the student to adopt the concept of talking to himself or herself and the student should be helped to build up a repertoire of self-statements to be used on a variety of tasks by taking off from the area the student has not recorded failures or frustration, making use of tasks that have self-instruction approach and encourage the use of cognitive strategies. Self-instruction strategy takes place in stages such as; the cognitive modelling stage, overt external guidance, overt self-guidance, faded overt self-guidance and covert self-instruction. The ultimate goal of teaching self-instruction is for students to progress from the use of modeled overt self-statements to covert internalized speech. Nawantara (2018) stated that, for counsellors to use self-instruction technique successfully, they should ensure that clients understand why the self-statements are being used.

Available empirical evidences indicate that self-instruction technique is a powerful, flexible and effective technique in handling problem behaviours among students (Haddadian, Alipour, Majidi and Maleki, 2016). A study by (Frankton, 2014) shows that self-instruction technique was significantly effective in reducing problem behaviours among students. Obviously, there is need for counsellors and allied professionals to provide programmes that could assist students to overcome maladaptive behaviours. Such programmes would go a long way in modifying social media addicted students and creating a positive academic atmosphere (Oguzie, Obi & Nnadi, 2019). This could be achieved be achieved through proper use of self-instruction technique. In the context of this study, self-instruction technique is a behaviour intervention strategy which aims at helping clients to use positive verbal expressions or self-talks to reduce their negative thoughts and behaviours.

Considering the gender difference in the effect of self-instruction technique, Ofojebe and Anagbogu (2020) in their study found that female students benefited from the technique than the males. Similarly, Nwokolo and Okocha (2022) observed that that self-instruction technique was significantly more effective on female than the male students. However, a contrary result was

found by Saputra and Lidyawati (2019) who reported that self-instruction treatment was significantly more effective among male participants than the females. Since self-instruction technique has been experimentally proven effective in treating some other maladaptive behaviours, the current researchers applied the technique on students who exhibit social media addiction to know it effect on the problem.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of self-instruction techniques on social media addiction among secondary school students in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined the:

1. Effect of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among secondary school students when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their pretest and posttest mean scores.
2. Difference in the effects of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among male and female secondary school students using their pretest and posttest mean scores.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among secondary school students when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their pretest and posttest mean scores?
2. What is the difference in the effects of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among male and female secondary school students using their pretest and posttest mean scores?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

1. The effect of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among secondary school students is not significant when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their posttest scores.
2. There is no significant difference in the effects of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among male and female secondary school students using their posttest scores.

Methods

The study was carried out in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State. This study adopted a non-randomized pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental research design. Oguzie and Nwokolo (2019) stated that this design is called quasi experimental because it does not employ randomisation in the placement of participants into experimental and control groups. According to Nworgu (2015), a quasi-experimental study is a type of experimental study that determines the effect of a treatment paradigm on a non-randomised sample. In the quasi experiment, the samples are divided into two groups (experimental group and control group) without randomisation. Treatment is introduced only to the experimental group, after which the two groups are measured. The researchers then compared the two group scores on the post test. The population of the study comprised all 259 SS2 students identified with social media addiction. The sample for the study consisted of 107 senior secondary school students drawn through multistage sampling procedure.

The instrument used for measuring students' social media addiction in this study was the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) originally developed by Aylin and Levent in 2015 but revalidated in Nigeria by Chigbu, Oguzie, Nwosu and Ngwaka (2022). The instrument has a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.97 (Aylin & Levent, 2015). In Nigeria, Chigbu, Oguzie, Nwosu and Ngwaka (2022) used SMAS obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Data for this study was collected through direct delivery method with the help of three research assistants. Data collected for the study was analysed using Arithmetic mean and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Results

Table 1: Pretest and Posttest social media addiction mean scores of secondary school students treated with self-instruction technique when compared with those who received conventional counselling

N = 102.5

Source of Variation	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Lost Mean	Remark
SIT	40	114.40	75.90	38.50	Effective
Control	32	116.09	110.88	5.21	

Table 1 showed that the secondary school students treated with self-instruction have pretest social media addiction mean score of 114.40 and posttest mean score of 75.90 with lost mean score of 38.50, while those who received conventional counselling had pretest mean score of 116.09 and posttest mean score of 110.88 with lost mean 5.21. With posttest mean score of 75.90 for SIT which is below the norm of 102.5, self-instruction technique is effective on secondary school students' social media addiction.

Table 2: Pretest and Posttest social media addiction mean scores of male and female students treated with self-instruction technique

N = 102.5 Source of Variation	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Lost Mean	Remark
Male	15	110.40	71.67	38.73	More effective
Female	25	116.80	78.44	38.36	

Table 2 revealed that the male students treated with self-instruction technique had pretest social media addiction mean score of 110.40 and posttest mean score of 71.67 with lost mean 38.73, while the female students had pretest social media addiction mean score of 116.80 and posttest mean score of 78.44 with lost mean 38.36. With lost mean scores of 38.73 for the male students as against 38.36 for female students, SIT was more effective in reducing male students' social media addiction.

Table 3: ANCOVA on the effect of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among secondary school students when compared with those who received conventional counselling

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	Cal. F	Pvalue	P ≤ 0.05	Corrected
Model	6228.473	2	3114.236				Intercept
146.754	1	146.754				Pretest Scores	
6224.028	1	6224.028				Treatment Methods	
1.523	1	1.523	62.013	0.000	S		Error
8325.847	69	120.664					
Total	412535.000	72					
Corrected Total	14554.319	71					

Table 3 showed that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 71df denominator, the calculated F is 62.013 with Pvalue of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the second null hypothesis is rejected. So, the effect of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among secondary school students is significant when compared with those who received conventional counselling.

Table 4: ANCOVA on the effects of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among male and female secondary school students

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	Cal. F	Pvalue	P ≤ 0.05
Corrected Model	5547.993	2	2773.997			
Intercept	640.516	1	640.516			
Pretest Scores	5117.887	1	5117.887			
Gender	0.391	1	0.391	0.004	0. 948	NS
Error	3369.607	37	91.070			
Total	239350.000	40				
Corrected Total	8917.600	39				

Table 4 showed that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 39df denominator, the calculated F is 0.004 with Pvalue of 0. 948 which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the fifth null hypothesis is accepted. So, there is no significant difference in the effects of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among male and female secondary school students using their posttest scores.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that self-instruction technique was effective on social media addiction among secondary school students as compared to those in the conventional counselling group. Results relating to the second research question revealed that students in the self-instruction technique group were addicted to social media before the commencement of the treatment as evidenced by their scores in the pre-test. The findings also indicated significant posttest mean score difference between the self-instruction technique and conventional counselling groups. Again, students in the self-instruction technique group recorded a significant decrease in their social media addiction mean scores as compared to those in the conventional counselling group. This also indicated that the social media addiction behaviour of students in the self-

instruction technique group was modified as a result of receiving self-instruction treatment. This finding is consistent with the report of previous researchers who found that self-instruction technique was effective in modifying maladaptive behaviours such as social media addiction among students (Nwokolo and Okocha, 2022; Haddadian, Alipour, Majidi and Maleki, 2016; Frankton, 2014).

Furthermore, the findings of this study also supported by the findings of Saputra and Lidyawati (2019) who reported a significant reduction in maladaptive behaviour as a result of treatment using self-instruction technique. A possible reason for the significant decrease in social media addiction among students in the self-instruction technique treatment group as found in the present study may be that through the self-talk or self-statements involved in the technique, students gained the ability to cognitively plan, organize, direct, evaluate and change those thoughts that makes them susceptible to social media addiction. Previous researchers such as Oguzie, Obi and Nnadi (2019) averred that programmes like self-instruction training would go a long way in modifying social media addicted students and creating a positive academic atmosphere. The present researchers therefore believed so because self-instruction technique is a cognitive learning strategy in which learning task is broken into steps and the clients are allowed to direct and appraise themselves as they go through the task step by step.

Another finding of this study revealed that there was gender difference in the effects of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among the secondary school students. The result of research question five indicated that the decrease in social media addiction scores of the female students was greater than that of their male counterparts after they had been treated with self-instruction technique. This finding signified that the female students benefited more from self-instruction technique treatment than the male students. This finding aligned with the previous findings by (Nwokolo and Okocha, 2022; Ofojebe and Anagbogu, 2020) who reported that female participants benefited more from self-instruction than their male counterparts. The possible reason for this finding may be because the technique involves the use of self-talk or self-induced statements to direct or control behaviour (Reid, 2023). Convincingly, there is a general believe that females perform better in activities that involve verbal abilities than the males. This may have facilitated the female students to benefit more from the self-instruction technique treatment than the male students.

However, the gender difference in the effect of the self-instruction technique in this study was negligible. This is evidenced by the results of the test of null hypothesis five which showed that there was no significant difference in effects of self-instruction technique among male and female students based on gender. Perhaps, the reason for the insignificant difference in the effect of self-instruction technique on social media addiction among the students based on gender is because both the male and female students who participated in the self-instruction treatment exercise were given equal attention in the same condition.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that self-instruction technique was significantly effective in reducing social media addiction among secondary school students in Anambra State. Moreso, it was concluded that self-instruction technique was more effective in treating social media addiction among male students than the female students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Self-instruction technique among other techniques known to counsellors should be formally adopted by counsellors in secondary schools for treating social media addiction among students.
2. Counsellors should be constantly trained and retrained through organized conferences, seminars and workshops on the use of self-instruction techniques in treating social media addiction among secondary school students.
3. Counsellors in secondary schools should use self-instruction technique for their male students.
4. Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should collaborate with government to ensure that enough qualified counsellors are employed in secondary schools to take adequate care of the students' psychological needs.

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