

**PERSONALITY TRAITS, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
AND NEED FOR AFFILIATION AS PREDICTORS OF
SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation as predictors of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. The study adopted cross-sectional survey design while using purposive sampling technique to select three faculties: Education, Sciences and Social Sciences and convenience sampling technique to gather data from 340 undergraduate students. Four validated instruments: Personality Inventory Scale, Emotional Intelligence Scale, Need for Affiliation Scale, and Social Media Addiction Scale were used for data collection. Data collected were analysis using t-test of independent samples and multiple regression while the hypotheses were tested at a $p > .05$ level of significance. The result revealed that emotional intelligence [$t(338) = 2.59, p < .05$] and need for affiliation [$t(338) = 19.24, p < .05$] significantly influenced social media addiction. Also, personality trait jointly predicted social media addiction among the study population [$R^2 = .35, F(5, 334) = 35.19, p < .05$]. Finally, personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation jointly predicted social media addiction ($R^2 = .63, F(7, 332) = 79.05, p < .05$). It is concluded that personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation are excellent predictors of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. Therefore, it is recommended that the university authority should organise more orientation programmes to encourage students to engage more in formal one-on-one social interaction and less of informal social media interaction.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Emotional Intelligence, Need for Affiliation, Social Media Addiction, Undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Social media is an extension of traditional word of mouth networks. Word of mouth has always been the most effective and trustworthy means of disseminating information (Carton, 2009). However, with the advent of technology, anybody with an Internet access and has opinions on issues can be part of social media. This cultural shift is a force to reckon with for modern social interactions.

The concept of social network media dates back to 1792 when telegraph was used to transmit and receive messages over long distances (Ritholz, 2010), and in the late 1800s when radio and telephone were invented and used for social interaction, albeit one-way with the radio (Rimskii, 2011). Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist and Ferdinand Tonnies, a German sociologist were considered pioneers of social networks during the late 1800s (Rimskii, 2011).

Social media addiction is an unhealthy dependence on interactive platform such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Snapchat, as means of social interaction. Also, it is considered as a kind of Internet addiction (Banyai et al., 2017; Kuss & Griffiths, 2012; Sumaryanti et al., 2020). Individuals who spend too much time on social media have a desire to be notified of anything immediately, which can cause virtual tolerance, virtual communication and virtual problem. Therefore, behaviours that force the person into these actions can be explained as social media addiction.

Many psychological factors have been identified to predict social media addiction. One factor considered in this study as likely predictor of social media addiction is personality traits of the individual. Personality is a relatively permanent characteristic of an individual that distinguishes one person from another person (McAdams, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1997). Personality has been best organised into the 'Big Five Factors' of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Neuroticism/emotional stability is the tendency to be secured, emotionally adjusted and calmed. Tsitsika et al. (2011) found neuroticism to be a risk factor for the onset of social media addiction. Individual with high scores on neuroticism are more dependent on the social media for more social interaction thus making them susceptible to social media addiction (Yao et al., 2014).

Extraversion is an energetic approach to social and material world and includes traits such as sociability, activity, assertiveness, and positive emotionality (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Hamburger and Ben-Artizi (2000) found extraversion to be positively related to the use of Internet and thus social media. Also, extraverts tend to utilize the leisure services available on the social media and have many people added to their contact lists.

Agreeableness refers to individuals who are pro-social and have communal orientation toward other people. They have traits such as altruism, tender-mindedness, trust, and modesty (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Valkenburg et al. (2005) found that the higher the scores on agreeableness scale, the more inclined the individual is to use one-on-one method of interaction. Conscientiousness describes socially prescribed impulses that facilitates task- and goal-directed behaviours such as thinking before acting, delaying gratification, following norms and rules, planning, organizing, and prioritizing tasks (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Butt and Philips (2008) found that highly conscientious individuals refrain from utilizing social media. They believe that the social network service lead to procrastination and act as a distraction, taking time from more important tasks. Similarly, Wehrli (2008) and Wilson et al. (2010) found conscientiousness to be associated with spending limited time on social media platform.

Openness to experience (versus closed-mindedness) describes the breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of an individual's mental and experiential life (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

Guadagno et al. (2008) found that individuals who scored high on openness to new experience were more inclined to participate in blogging activities, a modern feature of social network service. Similarly, studies have found that the higher an individual scores on openness to new experience scale, the more likely the individual would consider alternative methods of communication such as choosing more contemporary forms of communication like features offered on social media service (Cao & Yu, 2019; Ross et al. (2009).

Apart from personality traits, another factor considered in this study as predictor of social media addiction is emotional intelligence (EI). Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognise one's emotions, understand what they are telling them, and realize how their emotions affect other people around them (Goleman, 2007). It involves how individuals perceived others: When we understand how other people feel will allow us to manage relationships more effectively. People with high emotional intelligence are usually successful in most things they do. Why? Because they are the ones that others want on their team. When people with high EI send an email, it gets answered. When they need help, they get it. Because they make others feel good, they go through life much more easily than people who are easily angered or upset (Goleman, 2007). Studies have shown that emotional intelligence is the good predictor of social media addiction such as online gaming and Internet use, regardless of age (Khoshakhlagh & Faramarzi, 2012; Silva, 2014). However, Nikmanesh et al. (2014) found a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and social media addiction.

Beside personality traits and emotional intelligence, the third factor considered in this study as likely predictor of social media addiction is need for affiliation. Need for affiliation refers to a person needs to feel a sense of involvement and belonging within a social group (Steinmann et al., 2016). Need for affiliation help to differentiate people who are generally friendly, outgoing, co-operative, and eager to join groups from those who are unfriendly, reserved and aloof (Jozefczyk, 2020). Individual with high need for affiliation are sociable, friendly, interested in social interactions, and they prefer being in other people's company rather than on their own (Jozefczyk, 2020). Wang et al. (2015) found that social media provides a medium for individuals to fulfil their need for affiliation and self-idealization.

Statement of Problem

About 5.16 billion people around the world use Internet at the start of 2023 which is equivalent to 64.4 percent of the world's total population (DataReportal.com, 2023). Since social media is a subcategory of Internet system, the two has become a pervading influence on the life and working of greater percentage of the world population. The availability of many social networks service such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Youtube, Whatsapp, has intensified to make social media platforms popular. The benefits derived from social media use have stimulated increase dependency and reliance on these platforms, which in turn has led to addiction (Turel & Serenko, 2012). Social media addiction has been linked to declining academic performance among college students (Tsitsika et al., 2011) and dissatisfaction with the quality of interpersonal relationships (Milani et al., 2009). Also, social media addiction has negatively impacted identity formation as individuals indulge frequently on negative comparisons between themselves and others (Nikmanesh et al. (2014). Understanding the variables that predict social media addiction has becomes undeniably germane to ongoing

conversations about combating social media addiction and thus promoting positive social media behaviour.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine whether personality traits, emotional intelligence, and need for affiliation would predict social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. The following specific objectives were stated: (i) to determine whether undergraduate students with high level of emotional intelligence will significantly report lower on social media addiction compared to those with low level of emotional intelligence; (ii) to examine whether undergraduate students with high level of need for affiliation will significantly report higher on social media addiction compared to those with low level of need for affiliation; (iii) to investigate whether personality traits of extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness will jointly and independently predict social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan; (iv) to establish whether personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation will jointly and independently predict social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan.

This study would provide an insight into the negative effects of social media addiction posed to students, and how addiction affects their individual functioning. Also, the findings of this study would serve as a tool for intervention on how to prepare and support adolescents and young adults on ways to control or reduce the effect of social media on their day to day living. Finally, the study would provide insights to the knowledge and awareness of the personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation as predictors of social media addiction.

Theoretical Concept

Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1997) developed this theory. It posits that people learn new behaviour by observing or imitating or copying what other people do. It explains that people learn new behaviours, acquire new values, and attitudes through observation of other people. Social learning requires attention to the person(s) observed, remembering the observed behaviour, the ability to replicate the behaviour, and a motivation to act the same way. For example, a teenager might see a sibling or friend get a lot of likes and positive comments on Instagram or Facebook for posting a picture of his/herself smoking. By this, the teenager might do the same in a bid to get the same positive likes and comments or obtain social approval. When apply this theory to this study, it posits that social media addiction is a learned behaviour. Individuals learned to engage and become addicted to social media by observing what other do and do the same and through repeated engagement in it become addicted to the that behaviour.

Hypotheses

1. Participants with high level of emotional intelligence will significantly report lower on social media addiction compared to those with low level of emotional intelligence.
2. Participants with high level of need for affiliation will significantly report higher on social media addiction compared to those with low level of need for affiliation.

3. Personality traits (extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) will jointly and independently predict social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan.
4. Personality traits (extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness), emotional intelligence and need for affiliation will jointly and independently predict social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan.

METHOD

Participants

Descriptive statistic revealed that 216 (66.7%) of the participants were males while 124 (33.3%) were females. Participants age ranged between 17 and 29 years old ($M = 21.23$, $SD = 8.32$). In term of the marital status, 295 (87%) of the participants were single, 29 (8%) were married, while 17 (5%) did not indicate their marital status. Finally, 212 (62%) participants indicated to be from monogamous family, while 128 (38%) indicated to be from polygamous family.

Instruments

Social Media Addiction This was measured using a 29-item Social Media Addiction Scale developed by Sahin (2018). The scale has a 5-point Likert response format ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Sample items include: I am eager to go on social media and A life without social media becomes meaningless to me. Scores above the mean implies high level of social media addiction, while scores below the mean connotes low level of social media addiction. The present study reported the scale Cronbach alpha of 0.79.

Need for Affiliation This was measured using a 26-item scale developed by Hill (1987). The scale measures the extent to which individuals need people around them for support. The scale is presented on a 5-point Likert format that ranges from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Sample items are: One of my greatest sources of comfort when things get rough is being with other people and I seem to get satisfaction from being with others more than a lot of other people do. Hill (1987) reported the scale's Cronbach alpha of 0.87 and for the present study it is reported as 0.85.

Personality Traits This was assessed using a 10-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) developed by Gosling et al. (2003) for the Big-Five Personality dimensions. It is a 5-point Likert scale with response categories ranging from disagree strongly (1) to agree strongly (5). Sample items include: I see myself as someone who is reserved and I see myself as someone who is outgoing, sociable. Umeaku et al. (2021) reported the following internal consistency for each of the subscales: extroversion (0.76), neuroticism (0.68), openness to experience (0.81), conscientiousness (0.77) and agreeableness (0.66). The present study reported the following internal consistency of the scale: extraversion (0.77), agreeableness (0.71), conscientiousness (0.76), emotional stability (0.70), and openness to experience (0.62).

Emotional Intelligence This was measured using a 29-item scale developed by Jonker and Vosloo (2008). The scale measures the global level of emotional intelligence. The scale is presented on a 5-point Likert format that ranges from 1- completely disagree to 5- completely agree. Sample items include: I expect that I will do well in most things; I try and I seek out the activities that make me happy. High score indicates high level of emotional intelligence. Jonker and Vosloo (2008) reported the scale Cronbach alpha of 0.87. The present study reported the scale internal consistency of 0.77.

Procedure

The researchers obtained an introduction letter from the Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan which introduced the researchers to the potential participants. The researchers visited the selected faculties. Because the participants in the study were undergraduate students, the researchers visited large lecture theatres before the commencement of lectures, addressed the students and sought for their consent to participate in the study. Also, those who agreed to participate in the study were informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that they can stop filling the questionnaires if they feel uneasy at any point in time. A total of 355 questionnaires were distributed out of which 349 (i.e., 98% response rate) were retrieved, however, nine questionnaires were incompletely filled and were discarded, the 340 completely filled questionnaires were used for the analysis.

Design and Statistics

This study adopted cross-sectional survey research design. The independent variables are personality traits (extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness), emotional intelligence and need for affiliation, while the dependent variable is social media addiction. Data collected were analysed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. T-test of independent samples was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2 while multiple regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 3 and 4. All hypotheses were accepted at a $p .05$ level of significance.

RESULTS

H1 Participants with high level of emotional intelligence will significantly report lower on social media addiction compared to those with low level of emotional intelligence. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *T-test of Independent Samples Showing Results of the Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Social Media Addiction*

DV	IV	N	M	SD	t	df	p
SMA	High	180	53.25	18.78	2.59	338	<.05
	Low	160	57.48	9.01			

SMA = Social Media addiction, EI = Emotional Intelligence, DV = Dependent Variable, IV = Independent Variable

Table 1 presents results of the influence of emotional intelligence on social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. It is shown that emotional intelligence had significant influence on social media addiction [$t(338) = 2.59, p < .05$]. Further, participants with low level of emotional intelligence reported higher on social media addiction ($M = 57.48, SD = 9.01$) compared to those with high level of emotional intelligence ($M = 53.25, SD = 18.78$). This confirmed the hypothesis.

H2 Participants with high level of need for affiliation will significantly report higher on social media addiction compared to those with low level of need for affiliation. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: *T-test for Independent Samples Showing Results of the Influence of Need for Affiliation on Social Media Addiction*

DV	IV	N	M	SD	t	df	p
	NfA						
SMA	High	179	43.59	8.01	19.24	338	<.05
	Low	161	65.73	12.65			

SMA = Social Media addiction, DV = Dependent Variable, IV = Independent Variable, NfA = Need for Affiliation

Table 2 presents results on the influence of need for affiliation on social media addiction among University of Ibadan undergraduate students. It is shown that need for affiliation had significant influence on social media addiction [$t(338) = 19.24, p < .05$]. Further, respondents with low level of need for affiliation reported higher on social media addiction ($M = 65.73, SD = 12.65$) compared to those with low high level of need for affiliation ($M = 43.59, SD = 8.01$). This confirmed the hypothesis.

H3 Personality traits (extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) will jointly and independently predict social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. This was tested using multiple regression analysis and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: *Multiple Regression Analysis Summary Table Showing the Joint and Independent Influence of Personality Traits on Social Media*

Criterion	Predictors	B	t	p	R	R ²	F	p
SMA	Extraversion	-.24	-5.15	<.05	.59	.35	35.19	<.05
	Agreeableness	.05	.92	>.05				
	Conscientiousness	.32	5.99	<.05				
	Neuroticism	.19	3.18	<.05				
	Openess	-.11	-2.11	<.05				

SMA= Social Media Addiction

Table 3 presents results on the joint and independent influence of personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience) on social media addiction among University of Ibadan undergraduate students. It is shown that personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience) jointly predicted social media addiction [$R^2 = .35$, $F(5, 334) = 35.19$, $p < .05$]. Collectively, personality traits accounted for about 35% variance in social media addiction. However, only extraversion ($\beta = .24$, $p < .05$), conscientiousness ($\beta = .32$, $p < .05$), neuroticism ($\beta = .19$, $p < .05$) and openness to experience ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$) independently predicted social media addiction among University of Ibadan undergraduate students. This confirmed the hypothesis.

H4 Four Personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation will jointly and independently predict social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. This was tested using multiple regression analysis and the result is presented in Table 4

Table 4: *Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Results of the Joint and Independent predictors of Personality Traits, Emotional Intelligence and Need for Affiliation on Social Media Addiction*

Criterion	Predictors	β	t	p	R	R^2	F	p
SMA	Extraversion	-.28	-7.67	<.05	.79	.63	79.05	<.05
	Agreeableness	.11	2.64	<.05				
	Conscientiousness	.23	5.71	<.05				
	Neuroticism	-.13	-2.97	<.05				
	Openness	-.06	-1.48	>.05				
	EI.	-.09	-2.32	<.05				
	NfA.	.54	15.67	<.05				

SMA = Social Media Addiction, EI = Emotional Intelligence, NfA= Need for Affiliation

Table 4 presents results of joint and independent predictors of personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation on social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. It is shown that personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience), emotional intelligence and need for affiliation jointly predicted social media addiction [$R^2 = .63$, $F(7, 332) = 79.05$, $p < .05$]. Collectively, personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience), emotional intelligence and need for affiliation accounted for about 63% variance in social media addiction among the study samples. However, only extraversion ($\beta = -.28$, $p < .05$), agreeableness ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$), conscientiousness ($\beta = .23$, $p < .05$), neuroticism ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$), emotional intelligence ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$) and need for affiliation ($\beta = .54$, $p < .05$) independently predicted social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. This confirmed the stated hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation as predictors of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. The result confirms the hypothesis that undergraduate students with low level of emotional intelligence reported higher on social media addiction compared to those with high level of emotional intelligence. This finding supported the result obtained by Silva (2014) who found that many Portuguese teenagers and young adults spent too much time using computers, mobile devices, and the Internet. Also, the result supported previous findings by Khoshakhlagh & Faramarzi (2012) and Pontes et al. (2013) that the presence of social media addiction among adolescents and young adults between the ages of 15 and 39 years attending secondary school and university correlated with depressive symptoms and socio-demographic factors, including gender, marital status, age, and level of education.

Also, the result revealed that undergraduate students with high level of need for affiliation reported higher on social media addiction compared to those with low level of need for affiliation. This finding corroborated Nitzburg and Farber' s (2013) finding that individuals with high needs for affiliation reported higher social media addiction. Also, individuals with attachment lifestyle were more inclined to use social media service to avoid face-to-face interactions with other people (Nitzburg & Farber, 2013), therefore, become more addicted to social media.

The hypothesis that personality traits of extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness will jointly and independently predict social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan was confirmed. Collectively, personality traits accounted for about 35% variance in social media addiction. However, only extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience independently predicted social media addiction among students. This finding lent credence to results of previous studies that several dimensions of personality traits increased social media usage and potential addiction that includes extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience personality traits (Cao & Yu, 2019; Rabaai et al., 2015; Sumaryanti et al., 2020).

Finally, the result confirmed that personality traits, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation jointly and independently predicted social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. Collectively, personality traits, emotional intelligence, and need for affiliation accounted for 63% variance of social media addiction in the study sample. However, the keys independent predictors of social media addiction were extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation. These results supported previous findings that showed the effects of social media addiction on a broad range of personality traits and behavioural aspects of life among individuals using social media (Banyai et al., 2017; Cao & Yu, 2019, Sumaryanti et al., 2020).

Recommendations of the Study

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Because personality traits such as extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience and conscientiousness were significant predictors of social media addiction among undergraduate students, it is recommended that university management should try as much as possible to profile the personality traits of their students. This will help flag students prone to high level of social media addiction.
2. When students show high level of emotional intelligence, they report low level of social media addiction, therefore, it is recommended that students should be trained on the best way they can develop and maintain high level of emotional intelligence. This will help them to experience reduced level of social media addiction.
3. Because need for affiliation was a significant predictor of social media addiction, therefore, it is recommended that students' social needs should be gathered and analysed in order to ensure that students are not just imparted with educational knowledge, but also with knowledge that fills their needs.

Limitations of Study

The following limitations were identified in this study. First, this study suffered from financial constraint. The researchers would have loved to cover more institutions, instead of just the University of Ibadan. Also, there was no enough time to carry out the study. In addition, the researchers observed social desirability among the participants though been conscious of the responses that were supplied.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the findings of the present study, the following suggestions are put forward.

1. A comparative study on social media addiction between students in secondary school and the university students should be carried out. This will help to monitor secondary school students going to the university on the uses of social media.
2. To allow for generalizability of the findings, further studies should increase the sample size of the population studied.
3. Further studies should add a moderating/mediating variable such as self-esteem, social support, etc to determine their effects on the relationship between personality traits/emotional intelligence and social media addiction.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of this study:

1. Emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. Students with low level of emotional intelligence reported higher on social media addiction than those with high level of emotional intelligence.
2. Need for affiliation was a significant predictor of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. Students with low level of need for

affiliation reported higher on social media addiction than those with high level of need for affiliation.

3. Personality traits (extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) were significant joint predictors of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan.
4. Personality traits of extroversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness, emotional intelligence and need for affiliation were joint predictors of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan.

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