1. SOCIAL MEDIA DETOXIFICATION: TOWARDS A HEALTHY YOUTH POPULATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In addition to benefits such as expanding access to information and increasing the speed of communication, among other possibilities, many in search of entertainment, information, and social interaction, among other options, heavily rely on social media. Consequently, social media is fast becoming the new form of addiction. Notwithstanding, scholars have observed the need to mitigate the negative impact of over-reliance on social media or its toxicity. This study focuses on approaches to mitigating the negative consequences of over-exposure to social media, otherwise identified as detoxification. The theoretical basis of this study includes the social media dependence and reverse domestication theories. The dependence theory explains how individuals could get addicted in their attempts to make the most of the benefits of social media. On the other hand, reverse domestication describes how individuals can mitigate the challenges of overexposure to social media. The population of this survey study is the students in the Department of Mass Communication, Bingham University, Nigeria. Questionnaires were administered to one hundred and forty-two (142) students to obtain the primary data using the non-probabilistic survey method. Study findings validate the emerging trend and inherent dangers of overreliance on social media and approaches to detoxification, such as media fasting, deliberate cutbacks on social media use and the associated emotions. Recommendations include the need for the government to formulate a policy framework and guidelines on the minimum age of exposure to social media and the need for individuals to take responsibility for understanding the value of information on social media before committing time and materials to its consumption.

Keywords: media detoxification, media effect, Nigeria, social media, youth

Introduction

Social media today has become a medium of first-choice communication for many people. Individuals share their thoughts, emotions, opinions, experiences, and many other things on social media, including business, relaxation, and the hunt for romantic partners. Media scholars like Sarman and Cifti (2023) observed the trend from the last two decades when significant innovations were made with information communication technology. Specifically, it is asserted that 4.62 billion people or 58.4 per cent of the world population, are hooked on social media technology as of 2022 and two-thirds or 66 per cent, as of 2023, according to Morah and Nwafor (2024). Arguments could be posited that information communication technology now controls us more than vice versa, as many are perpetually hooked on internet-based media. This phenomenon of social media addiction, specifically

the fear of being separated from gadgets such as mobile telephones, is called nomophobia by media scholars like Taprial and Kanwar (2012). They submit further on the consequences of nomophobia as the toxification of the media audience. Toxification entails the negative impacts of over-dependence on social media.

One approach to mitigating digital toxification is detoxification, an emerging aspect of communication research. For instance, Bhattacharya and Raghuvanshi (2019) contend that "digital detoxification" is a strategy to manage apparent internet overuse. The Oxford Learner Dictionary (2024) also explains digital detox or detoxification as when individuals avoid using electronic gadgets like cell phones or laptops. Such a period could be observed as an opportunity to alleviate stress, focus on physical and social connection, and stop or limit the use of social media sites only. Despite their apparent scope differences, digital and social media detoxification are used interchangeably. Several newspaper stories suggest where and how to do a digital and social media detox.

Media scholars and others from related disciplines have argued that there is a correlation between overexposure or reliance on social media and cognition. For instance, Rebecca and Bokoch (2021) and Sharman and Cifti (2023) contend that while there is a generally held belief that social media detoxification could improve cognitive functions, social connectivity, professional productivity, and mental health, there is a need for further studies to hold such position as infallible. Notwithstanding, the growing popularity of a cultural trend advocating social media abstention has fuelled the development of a specialised self-help and rehabilitation sector.

Similar positions have been canvassed by social health professionals who have expressed concerns about the correlation between over-exposure to social media and individual well-being. Expressly, El-Khoury et al. (2021) point out that excessive social media use is associated with negative behaviours, low self-esteem, and depression symptoms. Internet addiction, like other forms of addiction, is linked to several psychological and physiological conditions, such as bad mood, anxiety, impulse control, discomfort, and psychotic diseases. Medical and communication specialists have recommended adopting strategies like detoxification to address the overuse of social media sites, especially among undergraduates (Rajesh & Priyar, 2020). The need to see how individuals could manage their mental health and other challenges of over-exposure to social media justified the need for this study.

The general objective of this study could be considered as an attempt to maximise the benefits of social media, such as entertainment, liberalisation of access to information, and speed of exchange, among other possibilities, while mitigating the negative impact of over-exposure through detoxification. This investigation tends to unravel effective ways of managing the inherent challenges of heavy exposure to social media by individuals using the detoxification approach. These are further itemised as the study objectives as stated below:

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1.   Identify the advantages of using social media;

2.   Identify the potential consequences of heavy social media usage and

3.   Investigate strategies that can aid social media detoxification.

Conceptual Clarification

Social media

Social media can be argued as one of the most significant phenomena in mass communication in the twenty-first century with its ubiquitous tendencies as it rides on increasing internet penetration and usage across social strata worldwide. For instance, Valkenburg (2022) argued that most adults and adolescents use at least three hours daily across five social media platforms in a complementary manner. In Nigeria, just as in many countries, social media subscriptions have continued to grow. Specifically, the Nigerian Communication Commission says there are 160 million internet subscriptions as of 2023. This high subscription rate has also encouraged more scholastic investigation around social media. Specifically, Engelmann et al. (2022) consider social media as the platform for creating profiles and constructing explicit and traverse relationships. Advancements in information technology have continued to liberalise options available to the audience. Some prominent ones include Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Friendster, Wikipedia, dating websites, Craigslist, and recipe-sharing websites (like all-recipes.com). In his study on the nature of social media, Ngelale (2019) observed that the use of the internet as an enabler is a common trait of all social media platforms but that they also differ from one another in several ways, such as their aesthetics, structures, norms, and audience bases. Based on the distinguishing features of the various platforms, Elsheriff (2020) identified six categories of social media: blogs, social networking sites, collaboration projects, content communities, virtual social worlds, and virtual game worlds. These platforms have been identified as enablers of social interaction.

Nonetheless, Vemulakonda (2018) attributed the emergence of social media to two technological advancements. The first was the discovery of email technology, which was then an exchange of mail among online computers. The second was the advancement by a United States government agency, Advanced Research Projects Agency, which in 1969 came up with time sharing of information among computers. The open-source philosophy, in which people freely interact using accessible technologies and share their work and information, could be considered the foundation of Web 2.0. The growth of User Generated Content (UGC) was aided by technological developments in Web 2.0 and the open-ideology movement. UGC, or the capacity to create and distribute information without restrictions at a minimal cost, had a role in the growth of social media (Newman et al., 2016).

Social Media Detoxification

Digital technology is recognised to include smartphones, laptops, and computers, among other devices with capabilities for internet connections. The computational code used by those devices is binary (Hadlington and Scase, 2018). Advancements in mobile telephony and computer technology have made many devices very handy, and their easy access to internet facilities has made information flow easily accessible and ongoing. Arguments could be submitted that digital technologies facilitate information overload or bombardment, as a barrage of information is available on virtually every topic at a click. Additionally, the digital technologies facilitate social networking through the various social media platforms. The faceless nature of these platforms implies that people freely express themselves. According to scholars like Radtke et al. (2022), all these attributes make digital technologies addictive as individuals surf the internet, moving from one platform to the other, either feeding on a barrage of information, networking with friends and family or contracting business across distance away. An average adolescent or adult spends about three hours daily on social media, according to Radtke et al. (2022).

Notwithstanding, these advantages of digital technologies have been observed as addictive and constitute health challenges like depression, anxiety, and loss of interest in physical social interaction, among other challenges like technostress. According to Mirbabaie et al. (2022), technostress explains all behavioural disorders associated with over-exposure to information and communication technologies. Scholars in the media, communication, psychology, sociology, and the health sciences, among others, like Radtke et al. (2022) and Basu et al. (2021), have suggested that digital detoxification as a panacea to the observable negative effect of excessive use or addiction to digital technologies. These scholars submit that digital detoxification lessens the distractions from constantly being online.

The phrase "digital detoxification" has become frequently used in popular culture to manage apparent internet overuse—an opportunity to relieve stress or concentrate on social connection in the real world. According to the Oxford Dictionary, detoxification entails abstaining from using electronic devices like cell phones or computers. The same concepts apply to social media detoxification, which involves consciously stopping or limiting the use of social media sites only. Despite this apparent variation in focus, "digital detoxification" and "social media detoxification" are sometimes used synonymously. Numerous newspaper stories suggest where and how to do a digital detox. Bhattacharya and Raghuvanshi (2019) state that detoxification improves cognitive functions, social connectivity, professional productivity, and mental health.

Notwithstanding, Mirbabaie (2022) traced the origin of digital detoxification first as a random buzzword that emerged in about 2015 but has since gained conceptual status, especially with efforts at addressing technostress and other forms of toxicity around overexposure to digital technologies.

Literature Review

Benefits of social media

One of the primary objectives of this study is to explore the benefits of social media, which many studies have previously considered. Information communication technology could be argued as the defining technological advancement that separates the 21st century from the previous years. And rightfully so, the century is defined as the age of rapid information flow by many. Scholars like Yamin (2019) posited that the internet, discovered in the late 20th century, has revolutionised communication. Social media, as one of its offshoot technologies, has had an astounding impact as it brings about many possibilities, such as removing distance barriers in how we communicate through facilitating social interactions, networking, chatting, information dissemination and exchange of emails. Besides its ability to facilitate social interactions, scholars have emphasised the educational impact of social media. Social media is a repository of information on virtually any topic or study area. According to Purwanto (2023), Facebook, Blog space, and Google, among other platforms, facilitate studies and provide spaces for e-learning and library services. For instance, some of the secondary data for this investigation were sourced through online platforms. Arguments could be advanced that the future of education would largely depend on the evolution of internet technology, mainly social media. Klar et al. (2020) emphasised the usefulness of the Twitter platform for publishing academic research and studies. Relatedly, Tarigan et al. (2023) submit that social media has expanded possibilities in the entertainment and creative industries while expanding business possibilities for individuals in the creative industries. Okocha et al. (2023) similarly submit on the usefulness of social media in mobilising for positive action or mitigating disaster through risk communication.

Social media have also benefited health management, where people with similar challenges could share platforms to address their issues. Specifically, Nashund et al. (2019), in their study report, cited

instances of individuals with mental disorders and mental illness forming online relationships connecting online to address their challenges. In their study on social media marketing for brands, Chiang et al. (2019) note that social media facilitates customer targeting, plays a critical role in marketing operations, and creates brand benefits, increasing product sales. In addition to assisting consumers in developing brand communities, especially for luxury goods and services, customers are empowered and educated through social media to gather information about their brands and be informed about their purchase decisions. Zollo et al. (2020) hypothesise that through brand communities, consumers share experiences mediating the relationship between social media marketing (SMM) activities and consumer-based brand equity. Through social media, brand loyalty becomes more predictive, and better awareness can be created. Luxury brand managers may use such platforms for product improvements, increasing brand equity. An emerging school of thought in media psychology has also argued that its various platforms can increase social resilience, notwithstanding the observable negative trend in exposure to social media. According to Pouwels et al. (2022), social media can mobilise communities to achieve resilience against attacks or social ills. A further submission was made that benefits from the social media cut across social strata. This argument is a response to the postulation on whether the social rich make the most benefits of social media. However, studies have not identified any group with a more significant advantage. Benefits are across social strata, especially with the creation of social capital. Notwithstanding, personal analyses may significantly determine the benefits individuals or groups could get from social media usage.

Social Media and Mental Health

Drug abuse is the first thing that comes to mind when we hear the word addiction. Nonetheless, scholars like Chang et al. (2019) used the idea of physical dependence on drugs to explain the condition of excessive internet use. Smartphone addiction is a subset of behavioural addictions and could be characterised as technology addiction. Observations are made on the increasing rate of health challenges such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression, and other mental diseases that are alarmingly prevalent and can be crippling. For instance, James et al. (2018) asserted that a billion individuals worldwide experienced mental disorders in 2017, with depression and anxiety-related diseases being the most common diagnoses. Relatedly, The National Alliance on Mental Illness, in its 2020 report, indicate that one in 20 adults in the US experience mental illness each year, and at least one in five experience some type of mental disease.

Most participants, or 83 per cent, agreed that over-dependence on social media could be responsible for lack of sleep. In contrast, 63 per cent said it could cause cyberbullying and poor concentration. The APA supports additional research on smartphone addiction, which is not covered in the DSM-V. Contrarily, O'Reilly (2020) maintained a cautious conclusion in his study that most attribution among mental health practitioners of the correlation between social media exposure and mental health is mainly rhetorical and that, instead, there are some acknowledgements of potential benefits. Similarly, Coyne (2020) concluded that most studies submitted on the link between mental and social media exposure are deficient in cross-sectional research and analytical tools. The eight longitudinal investigations, therefore, conclude that there is no emphatic correlation between increased time spent on social media and mental health issues.

Aside from the continued arguments on the side effects of digital addiction, it is incontrovertible that social media has facilitated maximum interactions among people. Its invention could be argued to have eliminated the distance barrier in communication and changed the quality of service delivery in

the service industry. For instance, customer complaints are facilitated in most service industries or sectors of the economy. Scholars like Morah and Nwafor (2024) also submitted on how social media facilitated political participation among Nigerian youths, especially during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Despite caution exercised by older generations of medical practitioners other than mental health, studies by Bressler et al. (2021) and Bender et al. (2021) in two different areas of medicine, dermatology and cancer treatment, have confirmed that new generations of medical experts are finding the social media a reliable tool for diagnoses and beneficial even to their patients many who readily volunteer information during diagnoses than during physical examinations. Besides, patients were also found to associate freely using social media, encouraging each other, sharing experiences, and aiding their healing process.

Strategies for Managing Social Media Addiction

Despite its many benefits, the negative consequences of social media have attracted scholars' attention lately, with many studies confirming there are implications to much reliance on social media. There is the observable trend of 'low heads' when individuals bend their heads and concentrate on their handheld devices surfing, tweeting, and Facebooking, indifferent to their environments. According to Wu (2023), over-dependence on social media could cause mood swings, irritability, and anxiety, among other health-related challenges in individuals. While adducing the need to get acquainted with self, environment and satisfaction among the reasons individuals rely on society, Wu (2023) recommends that individuals need to take hold of themselves by setting targets and priorities, getting an understanding of the value of the items of attention, prioritise reality world over virtual world among other strategies and going beyond noise created by consumer culture. Relatedly, Brever and Trever (2019) recommend that individuals should set limits on their use of social media, seek professional advice, and engage in alternative activities to divert attention from addictive tendencies. The distinction was made between psychological initiatives and life monitoring approaches, considered reactive maladaptive impulses, which involve proactive engagement in activities that weaken undesirable impulses or consequences such as social media addiction. Aslan (2020) also recommends that individuals be deliberate in limiting their social media platforms of choice, schedule their time of visit, and explore alternative ways of socialising as addiction management strategies.

Contrary to the generally held belief that social media addiction is prevalent among younger generations, a study by Dogan et al. (2019) confirmed Facebook addiction among postgraduate students. The study identifies six types of addiction: relapse, conflict, salience, tolerance, withdrawal, and mood modification, as well as recommends five management approaches: notification, auto-control, reward, manual control, and self-monitoring. Relatedly, Hu et al. (2019) submit their study on how social media addiction prevents the cultural integration of expatriates among their host communities and recommend self-monitoring as a plausible strategy. The submission by Silomba et al. (2021) on the provision of guidance counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy, especially among youngsters, correlates with the submission by Quaglieri (2022) observations that an individual's personality traits such as being an introvert, extrovert or other categorisations may mediate the nature of addictive behaviour among individuals. It is believed that setting one's priorities right, spending more time with friends and family and responding to people are some of the panaceas for social media addictions. Most recommendations by scholars in managing the nature of social media-induced addictive behaviour depend on self-discipline, setting targets and being deliberate.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Social Media Dependence

The theory of social media dependence is one of the emerging schools of thought in explaining how individuals get absorbed with social media, graduating from habitual tendencies to addictive use of technology. Three media scholars – Wang et al. (2015), rested their postulation on the 1988 rational addiction theory, an economics theory postulated by Gary Becker and Kevin Murphy used in modelling addictive behaviour (Oleberrg, 2019). The theory presupposes that people will take actions that benefit them rather than neutral or harmful ones. The rational addiction theory belongs to the Adams-Smith school of thought on rational economic behaviour, which presupposes that every human being will be logical. There is also the unstated assumption that individuals would desist from harmful actions. That implies self-regulation. That underlying assumption formed the basis of the theory of social media dependence. Suffice it to explain that rationality, in its simplest form, that common sense would guide individuals in their choices, primarily as they reflect on their options and possible consequences from emotional, behavioural/cognitive and complication dimensions.

The social media dependence theory suggests that individuals rely on technology for rational and mindful gratifications. When these goals are pursued without restraint, it could constitute personal and social problems as addictive tendencies. Pervasive access to social media encouraged dependence on technology, which most often would appear harmless initially but could assume irrational and addictive tendencies. However, this theory developed from the rational behaviour school of thought that individuals would make beneficial or rational decisions instead.

The theory is relevant to this study to the extent of explaining how rational behaviour could grow to irrational behaviour or over-dependence. Instead, the theory postulates further that those already in addictive or toxic social media consumption may be euphoric and fail to realise their over-dependence. Additionally, the theory generalises on the ability of everyone to be rational in their decision, thereby downplaying other social factors that could influence our decision-making process. As such, the study shall explore other theories.

Reversed Domestication Theory

The early 1990s witnessed an observable trend among audiences to have some level of pushback against the invasiveness of the media and to take hold of their lives, especially with the ubiquitous nature of social media. Rogers Silverstone, Eric Hirsch, and David Morley were the earliest media scholars to take an interest in this phenomenon among the audience when they came up with the domestication framework. Relying on the metaphor of how wild animals are tamed and housetrained, domestication has four components or processes through which media technology from conception or introduction graduate from their acquisition to be part of our respective lives (Haddon, 2017; Karlsen & Syvertsen, 2016). Other scholars have since expanded the scope of domestication to include re-domestication, de-domestication, and reversed domestication, which is more relevant to this study.

According to Atad (2016), reversed domestication is not precisely the opposite of domestication but an expansion of the framework as it relies on the same four stages as earlier indicated. The first of the four phases is the appropriation or acquisition of media technology from the outside to the moral economy or the households, and the next is incorporation, whereby media technology is adopted as part of daily routine and time allocation. The third stage is objectification, which occurs when media

artefacts are placed within the household. The placement of the artefacts could determine the importance we attach to them, the regularity of usage, and how invasive they could be to our daily routine. For instance, handheld media devices accompany most people for most of the day, except when they are asleep, and it thus impinges on most of the owner's time as they Facebook, tweet, and feed on information from one media platform or another.

The last stage is the conversion stage, which is the stage at which individuals get used to the artefacts and take them for granted as they have been assimilated to the extent that they have become part of their identity. It is worth observing that most studies on domestication theory have focused on the emergence of regional and national media stations and their treatment of news reports. Other studies have also considered audience receptibility of media technology and artefacts. Domestication believes the subject of study from outside, while reversed domestication considers it the other way around.

The reversed domestication framework instead would consider reverse appropriation from the perspective of media fasting, whereby the household discusses the importance of media artefacts even before the acquisition. This aspect of the theory speaks to detoxification or media fasting as households determine the relevance of the media artefacts or technology even before it is acquired. In contrast, reversed incorporation would entail allocating less time within the daily routine to the media artefacts, while reversed objectification is about reducing the physical importance and placement of the artefacts within the household. Lastly, the reversed conversion will downgrade the identities, priorities and hierarchies assigned to the media artefacts or the technology.

This theory emphasises household consumption of the media rather than individuals, and it portrays the impression that family meetings are held before the acquisition of media technology. This assumption cannot be held constant in most instances. Nonetheless, the framework is relevant to this study as it emphasises the attempt by the media audience to self-regulate media and detoxify.

Research Methodology

This quantitative research method used a questionnaire containing 12 closed-ended questions to obtain primary data. The study population is the 400 undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Department of Mass Communication, Bingham University Karu Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Considering the study population size, a convenient non-probability sampling technique was considered the most appropriate option and was used to administer a questionnaire on 142 sample sizes for this study. The study respondents were randomly selected, and the data obtained were analysed below.

Data Analysis and Presentation
The primary data obtained for this study is presented and analysed subsequently.

Table 1: Respondents Data
*NoR = Number of Respondents, AGP = Age group percentage, MGP = Male gender percentage, FGP = Female gender percentage, PoR = Percentage of Respondents

Age Grade	NoR	AGP (%)	MGP (%)	FGP (%)	PoR 100 Level (%)	PoR 200 Level (%)	PoR 300 Level (%)	PoR 400 Level (%)
16-18	60	42.3	8.5	33.8	26.7	14.1	0	2.1
19-22	73	51.4	9.2	42.3	11.5	24.7	0	15.5
23-2	6	4.2	3.5	0.7	2.1	0.7	0	1.4
27-30	3	2.1	1.4	0.7	0	0.7	0	0.7
31-Above	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	142	100	22.5	77.5	40.1	40.1	0	19.7

Field Survey, 2024

The table presents data on the age groups and gender distribution of respondents. Among the respondents, the age group of 19-22 years had the highest representation, followed by the age group of 16-18 years, with the least represented being the age group of 27-30 years. Regarding gender, females outnumbered males, with 110 female respondents compared to 32 male respondents. Additionally, the distribution of respondents across academic levels indicates that 57 respondents were from the 100 and 200 levels, while 28 were from the 400 level. Notably, no respondents from the 300 level were engaged in Industrial Training during the data collection period. The preponderance of over eighty (80) per cent of the study respondents are either first- or second-year students who are barely imbibing the university environment culture.

Table 2- Social Medium Platforms Usage of Respondents

Platforms	Number	Percentage
WhatsApp	137	96.5
Facebook	81	57
Twitter	67	47.2
Instagram	119	83.8
Youtube	102	71.8
Tiktok	112	78.9

Telegram	79	55.6
Snapchat	117	82.4
Pinterest	51	35.9
LinkedIn	12	8.5
Skype	6	4.2
Myspace	3	2.1
Google Talk	9	6.3

Field Survey, 2024

According to the table, there are one hundred and thirty-seven respondents who use WhatsApp, eighty-one respondents with a Facebook account, approximately sixty-seven respondents on Twitter, around one hundred and nine respondents on Instagram, one hundred and twelve respondents on TikTok, seventy-nine respondents on Telegram, one hundred and seventeen respondents on Snapchat, fifty-one respondents on Pinterest, twelve respondents on LinkedIn, six respondents on Skype, three respondents on Myspace, and nine respondents on Google Talk. Impliedly, WhatsApp is considered everybody's choice of social media platform. At the same time, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube, in that order, enjoyed considerable patronage, perhaps due to their emphasis on pictorials and videos.

Table 3: Years of Being Online on Social Media Platforms

Years	Number	Percentage
One year	7	4.9
2 Years	3	2.1
3 Years	25	17.6
4 Years	18	12.7
5 Years	24	16.9
5 Years Plus	65	45.8
Total	142	100

Field Study, 2024

The table illustrates that sixty-five respondents have been online for more than five years, twenty-five respondents have been online for three years, twenty-four respondents have been online for five years, eighteen respondents have also been online for four years, while one and two years have seven and three, respectively. Considering that most respondents are either first- or second-year students, it could be safely concluded that most respondents acquired their social media consumption pattern before university admissions.

Table 4: Effect of Excessive Social Media Use

Effects	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Anxiety	35	51	47	0	8
Depression	47	55	30	0	9
Lack of Sleep	83	42	14	0	3
Stress	42	39	42	5	14
Cyberbullying	63	50	23	3	3
Low self-esteem	42	61	31	6	2
Unrealistic Expectation	48	57	29	0	8
Reduces Productivity	40	39	43	7	13
Poor Concentration	36	59	35	5	7
Sometimes Suicidal	31	57	42	6	6

Field study, 2024

Most study participants consent that over-dependence on social media has a positive correlation with certain health conditions such as depression, stress, and reduction in productivity. Most participants (83%) agreed that over-dependence on social media could be responsible for lack of sleep. In comparison, 63 per cent said it could cause cyberbullying and poor concentration. A few of the participants also believed that social media addiction could trigger suicidal thoughts among specific individuals. Though most respondents have at least one or more platforms of choice, they are equally conscious of the health implications of their overreliance on social media.

Table 5: The benefits of Social Media Usage

Benefits	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Build Relationship	58	69	11	2	2
Education	75	64	1	1	1
Entertainment	97	38	7	0	0
Connectivity	76	56	9	0	0
Advertising/Marketing	95	40	7	0	0
Multimedia (audio, video)	78	51	12	0	1
Employment	50	71	18	1	2
Mobility	53	61	25	1	2
Smartness	51	53	31	3	4

Field study, 2024

The table displays the results of a study or poll that looked at respondents' perceptions of the benefits of social media. One of the main conclusions is that respondents generally agreed on several advantages. First, social media makes establishing and sustaining relationships easier by connecting users with friends, family, coworkers, and strangers. The second point of emphasis raised by the respondents was the platform's ability to support education using online learning platforms such as Zoom and Google Class, educational content exchange, webinars, and the development of relationships between instructors and students. Furthermore, the participants recognised the efficacy of social media as a means for individuals and enterprises to endorse goods, services, and personal brands due to its extensive outreach and customised advertising choices.

Nonetheless, the investigation also disclosed disparate viewpoints and ambiguities among the participants. Although most people acknowledged the advantages of social media, some were unsure or disagreed, demonstrating the diversity of views regarding its usefulness. Nevertheless, this variance, the aggregate results highlight social media's many advantages, such as fostering relationships, promoting education, advertising, providing jobs for influencers and content creators, and offering a variety of marketing approaches. However, opinions on the advantages of social media might differ among people depending on their own goals and experiences, underscoring the difficulty of assessing its influence.

Table 5: Social Media Detoxification Aids

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Give your phone a bedtime	55	53	20	9	5
Get an accurate alarm clock	32	57	37	7	9
Set a time limit on your apps	43	67	20	6	6
Delete App Websites	22	42	49	10	19
Practice Mediation	42	50	43	1	6
Involve yourself in other activities	53	60	26	1	2
Avoid visiting fake websites	64	60	15	0	3
Avoid visiting pornographic sites	81	44	10	3	4

Field study, 2024

The table provides insights into strategies to manage technology usage or promote digital well-being. It outlines various techniques and the responses received from respondents regarding their agreement or disagreement with each method. Notably, most respondents strongly agreed with establishing a bedtime routine for phone usage before sleeping, while a smaller proportion merely agreed. Similarly, using a traditional alarm clock instead of relying on phones garnered substantial support, with a notable majority agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, there was less consensus on tactics like deleting time-wasting apps or websites, with a sizable portion of respondents expressing uncertainty.

Moreover, the data suggests a positive inclination towards setting app time limits and engaging in meditation or alternative activities to reduce screen time. Notably, approaches to avoiding harmful online content, including fake and pornographic websites, received strong endorsement from the respondents. The responses indicate a favourable attitude towards methods promoting responsible digital behaviour. However, specific strategies, like employing traditional alarm clocks or deleting apps/websites, received varied levels of approval and uncertainty among the respondents. It's crucial

to remember that the "Not Sure" response option denotes doubt or a lack of conviction, which signals that some respondents may not be familiar with these tactics or feel conflicted about them.

Most respondents agree on the need for one form of practice or the other to guide against social media toxification. Nonetheless, most respondents are unsure if deleting them could be an effective management strategy. The hesitation of this approach is understandable as some apps are permanent features of most smartphones.

Table 6: Have you voluntarily undergone a social media detoxification?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	**96**	67.6
No	**46**	32.4
Total	**142**	100

Field study, 2024

Ninety-six of those who responded chose "Yes" as their response. Forty-six of the respondents, a sizable minority, selected "No." This table efficiently displays the responses' distribution and gives a detailed breakdown of how each respondent answered the question. It's a transparent approach to communicate the survey findings and the number of participants selected for each choice.

Most of the study respondents practice one form of detoxification or the other. This data indicates the respondents' belief in the need for detoxification. There may, however, be a need to determine the effectiveness of these approaches.

Table 7: Social Media Detox Duration

No of Days	Number	Percentage
One day	51	35.9
Two days	24	16.9
One week	15	10.5
More than a week	52	36.6
Total	142	100

Field survey, 2024

The table concisely overviews responders' engagement in a specific activity across different time durations. It simplifies data analysis by presenting a precise distribution of respondents based on the duration of their participation in the activity. Notably, some respondents, comprising 36.6%, reported engaging in the activity for more than a week, indicating sustained involvement. Conversely, the second-largest group, representing 35.9% of respondents, participated for a single day, suggesting a significant portion of short-term engagement among participants. Additionally, smaller percentages of respondents reported engaging in the activity for two days (16.9%) or one week (10.5%), highlighting varying duration levels across the surveyed population.

Most respondents had earlier agreed on one form of detoxification or the other, yet most of them, or 52.8%, practised it for only one or two days. There may, however, be the need for a further study on the adequate number of days.

Discussion of Findings

One of the objectives of this study is to investigate how audiences could take the most advantage of social media while mitigating the inherent consequences of overexposure, especially using the detoxification approach. Most of the study respondents agreed on the many benefits of social media, especially in facilitating and sustaining relationships among friends, family, coworkers, and even strangers. This study respondents also believe social media has educational benefits as it supports online learning through Zoom and Google Class, Google Scholar, and webinars. For instance, Purwanto (2023) considers social media platforms like Facebook, Blog Space, and Google Scholars, among others, as repositories of knowledge or electronic libraries and that they facilitate learning.

Additionally, all the study respondents have social media platforms of choice and consumption patterns predating their university admission. These identifiable benefits agree with the social media dependency theory that people would take actions that would benefit them. Individuals must have found beneficial usage of these platforms before getting absorbed. Impliedly, the challenge of overexposure and dependency may not have arisen without social media's underlying benefits. Relatedly, the many benefits of social media are the basis for explaining the domestication theory. The policy implication of these findings is that educational institutions and governments could incorporate these many benefits of social media into educational policies to take maximum advantage.

Furthermore, most of the study respondents consented that there are other consequences for using social media, some of which border on social and health challenges. Eighty-three per cent of the study respondents agreed that over-dependence on social media could be responsible for lack of sleep. Some other respondents alluded to cyberbullying, depression, lack of sleep and reduced productivity, among others, as part of some of the consequences of social media use. The study findings agree with the submission by scholars like Wu (2023), who observe that over-dependence on social media could cause mood swings, anxiety, and irritability, among others. Similarly, study participants believed there is a correlation between social media dependency and health challenges such as suicidal thoughts, depression and anxiety among individuals. Observations on the 'low heads' whereby individuals bend their heads and concentrate on their handheld devices surfing, tweeting, and Facebooking, indifferent to their environments.

This study's findings, therefore, validate those of the previous ones, like Wu (2023), Chang et al. (2019), and the American Psychologists Association (2019), who consented that smartphone addiction constitutes a significant health concern with negative consequences for many people. This finding further validates the objectification and conversion stages of the domestication theory, where media artefacts, because of their usefulness, inadvertently become parts of our lives to the extent that we pay little attention to their negative consequences on our daily routines and lifestyles. It is worth observing that most of these consequences occur at the subconscious level. Consequently, the government and its relevant agencies, such as the health institutions and the National Orientation Agency, may consider assisting individuals by bringing some of these consequences to their awareness.

The study objective further investigates how individuals detoxify themselves of the consequences of social media exposure or dependence. Study findings indicate that most respondents engaged in social media detoxification. Many respondents agreed with various strategies, including setting phone bedtimes, using accurate alarm clocks, setting app time limits, deleting distracting apps or websites, and practising meditation. Other practices include avoiding fake websites and refraining from visiting pornographic sites. Most of the study respondents indicated they use social media fast at one time or another, among other strategies, to detoxify themselves.

In conclusion, the study results show how complicated people's relationships with social media are, with both benefits and drawbacks being acknowledged. The statistics also shed light on various emotional reactions to social media detoxification and the methods people use to achieve it. Understanding the effects of social media on people and encouraging digital well-being can benefit from this knowledge.

In contrast, reversed incorporation would entail allocating less time within the daily routine to the media artefacts, while reversed objectification is about reducing the physical importance and placement of the artefacts within the household. Lastly, the reversed conversion will downgrade the identities, priorities and hierarchies assigned to the media artefacts or the technology.

These findings tally with the recommendation of scholars like Wu (2023) that individuals must take hold of themselves in managing the consequences of over-exposure or reliance on social media. Others like Brever and Trever (2019) recommend that individuals should limit their use of social media. Other recommendations include seeking professional advice as well as engagement in alternative activities to divert attention from addictive tendencies. The government needs to begin to build the mitigation approaches into the educational curriculum while creating awareness of the need for individuals to be conscious of the negative tendencies of over-reliance on social media and the need to detoxify.

However, this study's findings correlate with some of the previous studies on detoxification and would require further studies to determine the effectiveness of the detoxification approaches. Additionally, the study findings could be further categorised as positive, negative or neutral, as discussed below:

Positive Experiences

Participants reported feeling refreshed and revitalised, experiencing heightened productivity and concentration in other aspects of their lives. They also noted improvements in mental well-being, decreased stress levels, strengthened connections with real-world interactions, a sense of achievement in unplugging from social media, and opportunities for self-reflection and meditation, ultimately leading to relief from the pressures of online presence maintenance and increased focus on personal goals and studies.

Mixed or Neutral Experiences

Participants initially encountered challenges and solid cravings for social media during the detox period, highlighting the difficulty of breaking away from this habit. They described boredom and a sense of disconnection from ongoing events and updates typically found on social media platforms, contributing to a perceived sense of being out of touch with their online social circles. Additionally, participants reflected on their realisation of the extent of their addiction to social media, acknowledging the dependency and impact it had on their daily lives.

During the detox phase, participants struggled with initial cravings and found themselves grappling with feelings of boredom. During this period, they also highlighted a sense of detachment from the constant stream of updates and events typically found on social media platforms. The development led to a realisation of the depth of their social media addiction.

Negative Experiences

Experiencing feelings of sadness, particularly heightened during significant events or exams, participants also encountered symptoms of depression, anxiety, and a pervasive fear of missing out. These emotions were compounded by solid urges to re-engage with social media platforms, indicating the depth of their attachment and the challenges associated with abstaining from these online interactions.

These responses highlight the diverse and complex emotional and psychological experiences associated with social media detoxification. Many individuals recognise the benefits of taking a break from social media, but it can also be challenging and uncomfortable initially. Ultimately, the experiences vary from person to person, but many find it a valuable opportunity to reassess their relationship with social media and its impact on their lives.

Conclusion

Despite the many advantages of social media, such as liberalising media access and facilitating educational and social bonding among the audience, scholars have also observed the negative tendencies of over-dependence. Suggestions have also been made on the management of these tendencies. Like the previous ones, the study findings have identified detoxification as a significant approach to managing the negative impact of over-exposure to social media. It is therefore suggested that individuals take hold of themselves and adopt one form of detoxification or the other, as already practised by some of the study respondents.

Recommendations

1.   Parents and educational institutions should impress their wards on the need to know the benefits and values of specific information on social media before time and resources are committed to its consumption.

2.   The government should develop policy guidelines that would assist individuals in setting their respective limits of exposure and mitigate the side effects of overexposure to social media.

3.   Researchers should commit more studies to determine the most effective form of detoxification and popularise such an approach to mitigate the side effects of over-exposure to social media.

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