

# Exploring the Relationship between Social Media Screen Time, Mental Health and Academic Well-Being of Undergraduate Students at Nasarawa State University, Keffi

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The pervasive use of social media among university students globally has raised significant public health concerns regarding its impact on mental health and academic well-being. In Nigeria, where digital media consumption is rapidly increasing, understanding this relationship is critical for developing targeted interventions. This study investigated the relationship between social media screen time, mental health, and academic well-being among undergraduate students at Nasarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK).

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study design was employed, utilizing a structured, self-administered questionnaire for data collection. A sample of 400 undergraduate students was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Firstly, stratified sampling technique was used to divide the students into their respective faculties. Proportional sampling technique was then applied to determine the number of students to be sampled from each faculty, calculated as a proportion of the total population. Cluster sampling by lottery method was used to select departments from each faculty. Finally, simple random sampling technique by balloting was used to select individual students within the selected departments. The questionnaire captured data on socio-demographics, social media screen time, device usage, academic well-being, mental health, sleep patterns, and coping strategies. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), presenting descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation).

**Results:** The study recorded a 100% response rate. The mean age of respondents was 29.85 years ( $\pm 7.73$ ), with a female predominance (61.0%). A significant proportion of students (20.0%) spent over 10 hours daily on social media, with 46.0% checking their accounts 15 or more times a day. Smartphones were the primary access device (50.0%). Key findings indicate that 62.3% of respondents experienced physical symptoms like eye strain, and a substantial 73.1% reported that social media use interfered with their sleep (42.3% 'always,' 30.8% 'sometimes'). Regarding mental health, 33.5% reported experiencing depression symptoms associated with social media use. Academically, while a majority (80.3%) reported no concentration difficulties, 40.3% engaged in social comparison of their academic progress with peers online.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:** The study concludes that while social media is deeply integrated into the lives of NSUK students, its use is associated with significant negative consequences, particularly sleep disruption and symptoms of poor mental health among a substantial minority. There is a pressing need for institutional action. Recommendations include integrating digital wellness and sleep hygiene education into university orientation programs, strengthening mental health support services to address social media-related issues, and promoting peer-led awareness campaigns on healthy screen time management.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Screen Time, Mental Health, Academic Performance, Sleep Patterns, Undergraduate Students, Nigeria, Public Health

