

**ASSESSMENT OF THE FEAR OF MISSING OUT AS A PRECIPITATOR OF SOCIAL  
MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BENIN**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY.**

**DECEMBER 2025**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND CONTINUING  
EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (B.Ed) IN ADULT EDUCATION**

**DECEMBER 2025**

## **APPROVAL**

I hereby certify that this research was carried out by **Mercy Awayino-oluwa SAIKI** with the matriculation number **EDU2101982**, and that it is adequate in scope and quality, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award for Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) in Adult Education.

\_\_\_\_\_

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Project Supervisor

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that this research work was carried out by **Mercy Awayino-oluwa SAIKI** with matriculation number **EDU2101982** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) in Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin.

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## **DEDICATION**

This Project is dedicated to the Almighty God for being my source, my strength and my sustainer throughout the entire process. For His wisdom, grace and divine help every step of the way. Without Him this journey would not have been possible.

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## ABSTRACT

The study assessed the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as a precipitator of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin. To achieve the objectives of the study, five research questions were raised to guide the study, while three hypotheses were formulated.

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study includes all undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Ugbowo campus. A sample size of 120 students were selected for the study using a multi- staged sampling technique. A self-designed questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection and it was titled: Assessment of Fear of Missing Out Questionnaire (AFOMOQ). After the validity, the instrument was tested for reliability using the internal consistency reliability procedure; whereby the instrument was pilot tested in 20 participants, the data yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 as the reliability index. The data collected were analyzed using mean score analysis for providing answers for research questions 1 and 2. The hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using the Pearson's r while hypothesis 3 was tested using the independent simple t-test. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings of the study revealed that the social media platforms undergraduate students are addicted to include WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat; that there is a prevalence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among undergraduate students of the University of Benin; that there is a positive and significant relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and academic performance of undergraduate students of the University of Benin; that there is a significant relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin; that there is a significant difference in Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin and thus indicating that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) was higher among the female.

It was therefore concluded that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) plays a significant role in influencing social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin. The study also concludes that FOMO is prevalent among students and is associated with both their academic performance and level of engagement with various social media platforms. Furthermore, gender differences exist, with female students experiencing higher levels of FOMO than their male counterparts. Based on these findings, the study recommends the need for awareness programmes, counselling interventions, and digital literacy initiatives aimed at helping students develop healthier social media habits and reducing the negative impacts of FOMO on their academic and social well-being.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background To The Study.**

The proliferation of technology has enabled almost half of the world's population to access the internet (Statista.com, 2021). It has significantly reduced distance and isolation and made the world community resemble a global village. Individuals, especially students visit social media sites to engage in various entertainment and social activities, including playing games, socializing, passing time, communicating and posting pictures. In recent years, the use of social media has become an increasingly popular leisure activity in many. Social media has reshaped the way individuals interact. It has provided new means to develop relationships and remain socially related and has facilitated more reciprocal and continuous interactions among individuals, regardless of time and location. So simply put, social media is a form of mass media communication on the Internet where users share information, ideas and content.

The advent of social media in Nigeria has significantly impacted students and young adults transforming how they interact, learn and socialize. The journey began in the early 2000s with platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which quickly gained popularity among students. As internet access expanded and smartphones became more affordable, social media adoption surged. Platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat became integral to students' life, facilitating connections, information sharing and collaboration.

Today, social media plays a vital role in Nigerian undergraduate students' daily lives, offering opportunities for networking, learning and self expression. However, it also presents challenges

like distractions, cyberbullying, online harassment, negative impact on academic performance, mental health and productivity.

These vast benefits also have some costs such as overuse or excessive use by some people, which has led researchers to study this behavior. Novel social communication method has triggered a new range of negative consequences where virtual communities operate in different modalities in comparison to traditional communication and where a new set of interaction norms are perceived to exist by the individuals. One of such negative experience is the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). This proposed taxonomy seems fair to codify internet (over-) use. The last global estimated prevalence of excessive internet use (from 1996 to 2012) across seven world regions was approximately 6% of the surveyed population. Given the high prevalence, excessive internet use is a global concern that needs to be addressed given that it has been linked to health threats such as texting while driving, which can result in accidents as well as multiple psychopathologies, including anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation, increased procrastination, disrupted sleep, stress and loneliness, social anxiety, substance use disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and hostility.

Research consistently shows that young adults who use social media are at risk of experiencing psychological distress (Twenge, 2017). In a national survey of young adults using three or more social media platforms significantly increased the risk of anxiety and depression compared to people using fewer platforms. Spending more than two hours a day using social media is also associated with poorer mental health outcomes and psychological distress compared to those using social media less frequently. In addition to psychological distress, research indicates social media use interferes with academic performance and motivation, as undergraduate students who report using social media more often studied fewer hours, had lower grade point averages and reported

lower academic motivation compared to students using social media infrequently. Paradoxically, undergraduate students report using social media as a primary avenue of connecting with people and seeking social support in times of stress while simultaneously acknowledging that social media is a source of stress and anxiety.

Despite its numerous benefits, excessive internet use may result in multiple neuroanatomical and neurochemical changes such as cortical diminishing of different brain components and changed dopaminergic reward circuitry (Tripathi, 2017). The Compensatory Internet Use Theory (CIUT) conceptualizes internet use as a substitute for something that is needed but not available. As a result, stressful life events will increase the probability of internet browsing to alleviate negative emotions. From this perspective, internet use is a response to stressful life experiences. It emerges through the perseveration of engagement in technology as a coping strategy to regulate cognitive-affective states. For example, if a person needs social stimulation, using a social media app might help to compensate for real social connection needs. However, although it can initially mitigate negative feelings, the social media app can trigger more negative feelings concomitantly to the real world' issue remaining unaddressed. "Theoretically" it might also lead to more Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) related thoughts as others may be perceived to be having better moments than oneself.

The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on social media refers to the apprehension that online content and interactions from others are unseen and reacted to in a timely fashion. FOMO can become problematic leading to anxiety, interrupted sleep, lack of concentration and dependence on social media to generate gratification. FOMO is a main type of problematic attachment to social media and is associated with a range of negative life experiences and feelings such as lack of sleep,

reduced life competency, emotional tension, negative effects on physical well-being, anxiety and a lack of emotional control.

FOMO causes unpleasant feelings which arise due to realization that an individual might miss out on gratifying experiences of others. It is also a type of anxiety triggered by the feeling that one might miss out on other people's rewarding experiences (Franchina et al., 2018). Studies indicate that psychological deficits such as the need to connect with others is the root cause of FOMO. This fear can be reduced through accessing social media platforms. FOMO is also classified as an intra-personal trait, which motivates people to stay updated on other people's activities, such as accessing their social media platforms. As a consequence, the urge to stay connected with others result an increase in anxiety and irritation levels. This irritation and anxiety arises due to the individual's feeling of inadequacy. The prevalence of FOMO has also considerably increased with the increase of usage of social media platforms.

Social media has shaped how university students connect, communicate and express themselves in the digital age. While these platforms offer many opportunities, they also foster the Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO), a form of social anxiety marked by the persistent belief that others are experiencing rewarding events in one's absence. FOMO is intensified by the curated content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter or X, which constantly exposes students to peers' highlights and achievements, fueling feelings of exclusion and inadequacy. University students in particular are vulnerable to FOMO due to their developmental stage, which places a high value on peer relationships and social validation. Excessive social media use driven by FOMO has been consistently linked to lower life satisfaction, higher stress levels and impaired academic performance.

According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), FOMO may arise as a response to deficiencies in fundamental psychological needs, particularly the needs for relatedness, autonomy and competence. When these fundamental needs remain unmet, individuals may experience an increased sense of social exclusion, reduced feelings of control, and diminished self-efficacy. As a compensatory mechanism, they may increasingly engage with social networking sites (SNSs) to fulfill these unmet needs and restore a sense of social connectedness and autonomy. Furthermore, FOMO intensifies feelings of social or personal exclusion due to missed experiences. Research indicates that FOMO is more prevalent among younger individuals and is associated with lower overall life satisfaction, well-being and fulfillment. Consequently, young people experiencing higher levels of FOMO tend to spend more time on SNSs. This situation increases the risk of social media addiction (SMA) in young people.

### **Statement of the Problem**

While social media is viewed as an attractive and efficient means to gain social acceptance and a sense of belonging, it may also be predisposing people to experience negative psychological outcomes associated social rejection. Undergraduate students report feeling frantic, disconnected, miserable and anxious when they are unable to connect to their social media accounts. This is because social media has become their primary source of connection to people and without it, students feel lonely and disconnected from the social world; in other words, the need to belong is thwarted by this sense of disconnection (Begley, 2017; Twenge, 2017). Checking social media can also be a negative experience as individuals anxiously wait for people to like and comment on their postings; getting fewer likes and comments compared to one's social media contacts is also a source of stress. Moreover, people feel compelled to browse through endless streams of blog

postings, tweets, feeds, photos, videos and comments in the attempt to avoid missing out on potentially rewarding social experiences. This compulsive social media checking is what is being labeled as the Fear of Missing Out. Unfortunately, exposure to the overabundance of highly curated depictions of people's happy lives makes onlookers feel anxious and unhappy; this may also increase the likelihood of feeling rejected when individuals believe they have been left out or excluded from these social experiences. Therefore, this study is aimed at examining the influence of social media addiction in correlation to the Fear of Missing Out among undergraduate students of the University of Benin.

### **Research Questions.**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What are the social media platforms undergraduate students of the University of Benin are addicted to?
2. Is there a prevalence of FOMO among undergraduate students of University of Benin?
3. Is there a relationship between FOMO and academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Benin?
4. Is there a correlation between FOMO and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin?
5. Is there a difference in FOMO between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin?

## **Research Hypotheses.**

The research question 3-5 will be hypothesized and tested using 0.05 level of significance. The null Hypotheses were stated as follows;

1. Ho1: There is no significant relationship between FOMO and academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Benin.
2. Ho2: There is no significant correlation between FOMO and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin.
3. Ho3: There is no significant difference in FOMO between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin.

## **Purpose of the Study.**

The aim of this study is to assess the Fear of Missing Out As A Precipitator Of Social Media Addiction Among Undergraduate Students of the University of Benin. However, the specific objectives of the study include;

1. identify the social media platforms that undergraduate students of the University of Benin are addicted to.
2. assess the prevalence of FOMO among undergraduate students of the university of Benin.
3. evaluate the relationship between FOMO and academic performance of undergraduate students of the University of Benin.

4. assess the relationship between FOMO and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin.
5. find out the difference in FOMO between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings gotten from this study would be valuable to various stakeholders, including the undergraduate students of the University of Benin, parents, lecturers, counsellors, psychologists, mental health providers and future researchers. It will assist in identifying major factors that influence social media addiction and the Fear of Missing Out and provide strategies to mitigate this menace.

For undergraduate students, by recognizing the signs of Fear of Missing Out and social media addiction, students can develop strategies to manage their social media use, reducing distractions and improving academic productivity. This understanding can also help students mitigate the negative effects of excessive social media use on mental health, such as anxiety, stress and decreased self-esteem.

Parents can benefit by recognizing the signs of excessive social media use and its potential impact on their children's mental health. Parents can set healthy boundaries and guidelines for social media use. This understanding can also enable parents to have informed conversations with their children, model healthy behavior and provide guidance on responsible social media use.

Mental health professionals and psychologists by recognizing the signs and symptoms of these issues can develop targeted interventions plans, design effective awareness campaigns such as seminars and workshops to educate people about the negative effects of social media use on mental well-being. This understanding can also inform therapeutic approaches such as cognitive behavioral therapy to address underlying issues driving social media addiction.

Finally, future researchers can contribute to the development of effective strategies to promote healthy social media use and improve overall wellbeing.

### **Scope And Delimitation of the Study.**

This study focuses on examining how social media addiction can result to the Fear of Missing Out among undergraduate students in the University of Benin. However, it is specifically limited to analyzing the prevalence of social media addiction among undergraduate students, their perceptions of its impact on their mental health in relation to the Fear of Missing Out, the correlation between FOMO and social media addiction, its connection to their academic performance and the differences in addiction levels between male and female undergraduate students.

### **Operational Definition of Terms.**

The following terms were operationally defined:

1. Undergraduate Students: In this study, the undergraduate students refer to students still acquiring their first level degree in the University of Benin and are between the ages of 16 and 28 years old.

2. FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) on social media refers to the apprehension that online content and interactions from others are unseen and reacted to in a timely fashion. FOMO is a form of social anxiety marked by the persistent belief that others are experiencing rewarding events in one's absence (Przybylski, et al., 2013).
3. Social Media: Social media is a form of mass media communication on the Internet where users share information, ideas and content. It also refers to all the available digital technology that students use in sharing ideas and information. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter or X, etc.
4. Social Media Addiction: This is the behavioral impulse characterized by an overwhelming preoccupation with social media.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW.**

This chapter deals with the review of related literature to the assessment of the Fear of Missing Out as a precipitator of social media addiction on undergraduate students. It was organized under the following sub headings;

- Concept of social media
- Concept of addiction
- Concept of Fear of Missing Out
- Concept of Social media addiction
- Social media use and Fear of Missing Out
- Fear of Missing Out and psychological wellbeing
- Fear of Missing Out and students' academic performance
- Social media addiction and Fear of Missing Out
- Prevalence of social media addiction among undergraduate students in Nigeria
- Relationship between Fear of Missing Out and social media addiction
- Social media addiction between male and female users
- Summary of the reviewed literature

## **Concept of Social Media**

Social media refers to channels created electronically for real time interaction, communication and dissemination of information, both among individuals and among abstract.

Social media also refers to websites and computer applications that help end users create and share things which further enhance social networking. Social media has been a welcome development and has made life easier for man, since from the comfort of one's home, he or she can meet a wide range of people of different race, religion and belief system. It has affected every sphere of man's existence, from religion and politics, to entertainment and business. Social media is seen as "the new media that speed up conversations in a more interactive way and makes communication more effective and worthwhile.

Social media is an online media that takes communication beyond the limitations of the traditional media, which most often delivers content but does not allow the reader, or as the case may be, viewers or listeners, to participate in the development of the content. Some of the most widely used platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn and Snapchat each offering different ways to communicate and pass across information. Miller et al., (2016) defined social media as "the colonization of the space between traditional broadcast and private dyadic communication, providing people with a scale of group size and degrees of privacy that we have termed scalable sociality."

Smith and Gallicano (2015) defined social media usage as "the multiplicity of activities individuals may participate online". Verduyn et al. (2017) referred to active social media usage as "online behaviors that facilitate direct exchanges among users. Such behaviors include liking, commenting, sending messages, and otherwise engaging with other uses". In a study by Villanti et

al. (2016) social media use was reported highest among young adults aged 18 to 25 years as compared to other age groups. Social media use by young people act as a resource to navigate their everyday lives in changing social contexts as many young people rely on these platforms to stay connected, participate in online communities, or stay informed about various news and events and additionally, to also access various resources. Research studies have shown that social media usage and multitasking for non-academic purposes such as playing video games have a significant negative impact on academic performance (Lau, 2017). Even though students are aware of the negative impact and the use of social media in their reduced grades, they tend to continue to indulge in it. An investigation was done by Ndubuaka et al. (2020) to examine the impact of social networking technology addiction on academic performance. The study was done on Nigerian students in Nigeria. The findings revealed that the students were highly addicted to social media and a negative correlation was observed between social networking site addiction, academic performance and social and physical well-being.

The concept of social media has undergone significant evolution, transforming the way individuals and organizations interact, share information and present themselves online. Social media refers to online platforms that enable users to create, share and interact with content, facilitating communication, collaboration and community building. Social media platforms rely on user generated content which fosters engagement and interaction among users. These platforms enable users to connect with others, build relationships and join online communities, thereby enhancing social capital.

### **Concept of Addiction.**

The American Society of Addiction Medicine describes addiction as a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Conceptually, addiction can be defined as

“a primary, neurobiological disease with genetic, psychological and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations” characterized by impaired control or compulsive engagement in a specified behavior despite knowledge of harmful consequences.

Addiction is closely connected to the brain’s reward system. When people engage in pleasurable activities such as using social media, the brain becomes less sensitive to these rewards, leading individuals to seek increased engagement or stronger stimuli to experience the same level of satisfaction. This explains why those addicted to certain activities like social media often find themselves using these platforms more frequently (Volkow et al., 2019). Additionally, addiction affects the brain regions responsible for decision making and self-control, hereby making it difficult for individuals to reduce or quit addictive behaviors, even when they recognize the negative consequences (He et., 2019)

Addiction is typically characterized by compulsive behavior, loss of control, withdrawal symptoms and continued use despite negative consequences. When applied to social media, addiction manifests through constant checking, excessive scrolling and anxiety when unable to access platforms. This behavior mirrors characteristics of substance and gambling addictions, which has led researchers to classify social media addiction as a form of behavioral addiction.

Young people are particularly susceptible to addiction due to the ongoing development of their brains. The areas responsible for impulse control and decision making are still maturing, which can lead to more impulsive behaviors, including excessive social media usage. Also, the pressure to stay active online and maintain social connections increases the likelihood of social media addiction (Keles et., 2020)

To assess social media addiction, researchers have developed interventions like Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT). This therapeutic approach has demonstrated significant benefits for young people struggling with excessive social media use. CBT works by helping individuals identify and alter unhealthy thought patterns and behaviors associated with online activities. By fostering more adaptive thinking, CBT enables young people recognize triggers for their social media use and develop healthier coping strategies. Through this process, they can learn to manage their impulses and make more conscious choices regarding their digital interactions, ultimately reducing the negative impact on their lives.

### **Concept of FOMO.**

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is the apprehension that others are having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. It is a social anxiety often fueled by social media where people see curated highlights of others' life and feel compelled to participate or be included.

FOMO is a psychological condition characterized by anxiety that others are enjoying more rewarding experiences without oneself, leading to a strong desire to stay connected to social media trends (Morelli et al.,2025;Perez et al.,2024;Zhong,2023).

FOMO is a relatively new psychological phenomenon. It may exist as an episodic feeling that occurs in mid-conversations as a long-term disposition or a state of mind that leads the individual to feel a deeper sense of social inferiority, loneliness or internal rage. FOMO is characterized by the desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing (Gupta and Shama, 2021).

Today more than ever, people are exposed to a lot of details about what others are doing and people are faced with the continuous uncertainty about whether they are doing enough or if they are where they should be in terms of life.

FOMO includes two processes; firstly, the perception of missing out, followed up with a compulsive behavior to maintain these social connections. The social aspect of FOMO could be postulated as relatedness which refers to the need to belong and the formation of strong interpersonal relationships.

FOMO is considered as a type of problematic attachment to social media and is associated with a range of negative life experiences and feelings, such as lack of sleep, reduced life competency, emotional tension, negative effects on physical well-being, anxiety and lack of emotional control amongst many others. FOMO can also impair a person's ability to make choices, even simple ones. It can make people question every choice that they make and fear that they might make the wrong decision and pass over a better opportunity. FOMO might also cause people to agonize over past decisions and wonder what might have been the outcome if they had made a different choice.

FOMO leads individuals to have anxiety about missing out which can lead to stress, sadness and loneliness making them feel unimportant. The amygdala in the brain responds to feelings of stress. When individuals feel like they have been left out of plans, this activates the amygdala to produce the "fight or flight" response. This is why the body perceives missing out as a bad feeling. Some people develop unhealthy patterns to cope with or avoid having this response. FOMO may lead to obsessive behavior such as compulsively checking social media sites to ensure individuals know what is going on and do not miss out on anything.

## **Explanatory Theories of FOMO**

### **Self-Determination Theory**

Przybylski et al. (2013) adopted Edward Deci & Richard Ryan's Self-Determination Theory to explain FOMO. According to this theory, when a person experiences happiness and psychological

comfort, there is a need to satisfy efficiency, independence, and a sense of belonging for overall well-being. Failure to meet these needs can have a negative impact on an individual. Those with low satisfaction of basic needs might be inclined to use social media platforms as a means of communication, enhancing their social competence and providing an opportunity to deepen social bonds with others.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory.**

Can and Satici (2019) interpreted FOMO in light of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. According to this theory, FOMO is associated with social needs and appreciation needs in Maslow's hierarchy. Individuals with FOMO may have a strong desire to socialize, integrate, and seek recognition and appreciation from others. When experiences are missed, they may feel that these needs are not met, leading to feelings of anxiety and distress. They seek a sense of belonging by following the social activities of others and have a fear of missing events to avoid feeling undervalued by others.

### **Belonging Theory.**

Abel et al. (2016) interpreted FOMO on social media platforms within the framework of belonging theory (Roy F. Baumeister). They found that social exclusion induces a state of anxiety in individuals, as it results in an actual loss of the sense of belonging to those around them, including peers, family, and colleagues. Fearing social exclusion and ostracism, individuals strive to align with groups to avoid such exclusion. They make efforts to follow and keep up with these groups, aiming to avoid feeling inferior and disconnected. For example, an individual might choose to purchase a better or more expensive product to seize the opportunity for improvement or to maintain a sense of belonging to their circle of friends.

## **Concept Of Social Media Addiction.**

Social media addiction is a term used to describe a situation where a user spends too much time on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) such that it negatively affects other aspects of his or her daily life like school, work or relationship with others (Akua, 2015). Addiction as described by the American Psychological Association refers to a compulsive behaviour that leads to negative effects. In other forms of addictions such as drugs, gambling, video gaming, overeating etc., people feel bound to particular activities such that they become harmful habits, which then obstructs other important activities in their lives and this can be said of undergraduate students who use social media excessively.

Akua (2015), added that a social media addict can be considered as one with an urge to use social media excessively. For instance, engaging in activities like “frequently checking status updates and posts or "stalking" the profiles of other users for many hours” and this behavior or habit conflicts with his/her everyday responsibilities, such as family, school, work or other social obligations. Accordingly, the availability of Wi-Fi networks, coupled with the provision of fund by some parents, some undergraduate students have become addicted to the social media that they hardly go an hour without replying a message from a friend even in a class or some hardly pass a beautiful place without having a selfie or making a video on Instagram, YouTube, etc. Those aside, some even watch porn and do all sorts of things which take away their precious time and concentration from what brought them to school. Some students even go to the extent of blocking walkways and other related routes or losing focus while moving on the road (Interview and Focused Group Discussion, 2020). This addiction however, if not contained may go a long way to affecting their concentration as some do even go to classes with their phones, thus losing focus and concentration.

There are numerous causes of social media addiction. The availability or introduction anytime, anywhere WiFi network where hotspots are made available by some students to their colleagues who are out of data, the desire to communicate with old friends and make new friends as well as follow trending news or events online cum creating new events by the students themselves has made it possible for social media addiction to take place (Al-Menayes,2015). Desire to bet or play online games has also been seen by many as a cause of social media addiction as some of the students who are into betting are always checking the needed site for such purposes. It will also interest you to know that some undergraduate students become addicted to their phone or social media because it is easy to carry (portable) and can accommodate a lot of notes if snapped, downloaded and or recorded. The mobile phone can be used while walking, riding on public transportation and even while driving. These 'micro time slots' in which people can engage in a multitude of online activities were not previously available. This can lead to obsessive mobile phone usage, interfere with face-to-face interaction and harm academic performance if not contained.

Those who engage in excess usage of social media are said to be social media addicted and it seems to have become a social and public health problem especially among young people in schools. They suffer from emotional and social stress, in addition to lack of behavioral control which motivates them to engage in risk-related factors such as Internet addiction. Such excessive usage, if left unaddressed, has the tendency to affect students' academic performance negatively as well as their interpersonal relationships with their parents, siblings and fellow students.

### **Social Media Use and FOMO.**

Social media platforms have become indispensable for university students, serving as essential tools for communication, social interaction, and information exchange (Abbas et al., 2019; Ashraf

et al., 2021). However, this pervasive use has also led to the emergence of Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO), a phenomenon characterized by a compulsive need to remain connected to social media (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). This is particularly evident among university students at a developmental stage where forming and maintaining social connections is crucial, and peer comparisons are significant (Maunder, 2017). Research consistently indicates a strong relationship between FOMO and social media use. Individuals with high levels of FOMO are more likely to engage with social media frequently, driven by a desire to stay updated on social activities and avoid feeling excluded. The allure of social media lies in its ability to provide real-time updates and glimpses into the social lives of peers, which can foster a sense of missing out on rewarding experiences. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced among university students, as their stage of life emphasizes the importance of social connectivity and validation (Elhai et al., 2020).

However, the relationship between social media use and FOMO is complex, revealing research contradictions. On the one hand, social media can serve as a valuable tool for communication, social comparison and validation, potentially exacerbating FOMO as users continually compare their own experiences with the seemingly rewarding experiences of others (Jabeen et al., 2023). On the other hand, some studies suggest that social media can foster a sense of connection and reduce loneliness when used actively and positively, thereby mitigating some adverse effects (Mao & Zhang, 2023).

A notable area of interest concerns the differential effects of active versus passive social media use. Passive use, characterized by observing others without active participation, is mainly associated with heightened feelings of state FOMO. This consumption style amplifies social comparison and reinforces the perception that others lead more fulfilling lives (Mao & Zhang, 2023). In contrast, active engagement, which involves meaningful interactions, has the potential

to foster genuine connections and offset feelings of exclusion and inadequacy. These distinctions underscore the importance of the frequency of social media use and how it is utilized.

FOMO's role in shaping social media experiences extends beyond passive use. Even those who actively engage on social media platforms can experience adverse outcomes when their focus shifts to what they are missing out on rather than the benefits of their social interactions (Mao et al., 2023). This tendency to dwell on perceived deficits rather than actual gains highlights the complexity of social media's impact on well-being and the need for nuanced research to address this research. Such insights can guide the development of strategies to promote healthier social media habits among university students.

### **FOMO and Psychological Well Being.**

The relationship between FOMO and psychological well-being has been extensively studied, especially in the context of its impact on mental health among various demographics. FOMO, characterized by anxiety over missing out on rewarding experiences, drives individuals to stay continuously connected to social media (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Studies like those by Deniz (2020) and Rahmah and Qudsyi (2024) have established a negative correlation between FOMO and life satisfaction. Higher levels of FOMO are associated with lower life satisfaction, increased anxiety, and higher depression rates. The pressure to monitor social media and the perception of missing out on social events contribute to significant psychological distress as individuals engage in social comparison and struggle with feelings of inadequacy and exclusion.

Contrary to these findings, Hetz et al. (2015) found that while FOMO is prevalent among heavy social media users, its direct impact on psychological well-being—such as anxiety and depression—was less pronounced compared to its effects on academic performance. This suggests

that the influence of FOMO varies depending on the context and specific outcomes measured. While FoMO typically contributes to social media use that might harm mental health, it can also have positive effects by encouraging social interactions that foster a sense of connection and community. This nuanced perspective suggests that, under certain circumstances, FOMO-driven social media usage can enhance well-being by facilitating meaningful social connections and interactions.

A meta-analysis by Gupta and Sharma (2021) showed that FOMO is generally associated with higher anxiety and depression levels. However, the strength of this relationship varies significantly depending on the type and intensity of social media usage (Godard & Holtzman, 2024; ZHANG et al., 2021).

Specifically, passive usage, such as scrolling and browsing without interaction, tends to amplify adverse effects like increased anxiety and depression. In contrast, active usage, which involves direct interactions and meaningful engagements, has a less detrimental impact. This underscores that while FOMO can exacerbate mental health vulnerabilities, its effect is modulated by how individuals engage with social media platforms.

Milyavskaya et al. (2023) conducted a study revealing that the impact of FOMO on psychological well-being can intensify over time. Their findings suggest that students experiencing high FOMO at the beginning of their academic journey are likely to report increased stress and lower well-being in the long term. This underscores the cumulative effect of FOMO on mental health, where prolonged exposure to social comparison and perceived pressure to keep up with peers can have lasting adverse effects. Given the discrepancies in the findings, further research is necessary, mainly focusing on university students who are heavy social media users. This demographic is at a critical developmental stage where social validation and peer influence are particularly

significant, making them susceptible to FOMO's negative impacts, such as increased anxiety and decreased life satisfaction. Research in this area is crucial to understand FOMO's nuanced effects and to develop effective strategies to mitigate its adverse impacts on psychological well-being.

### **FOMO and Students' Academic Performance.**

The relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and academic performance is complex and multifaceted with various studies offering contradictory insights into how FOMO affects students' educational outcomes. Some findings suggest that the impact of FOMO may be neutral and can vary depending on individual and contextual factors. Several studies highlight a negative correlation between FOMO and academic performance Alt (2015), suggesting that the compulsive need to stay connected to social media detracts from academic responsibilities.

Qutishat and Abu Sharour (2019) found that students who experience higher levels of FOMO tend to have lower academic performance. This relationship is attributed to the significant amount of time and cognitive resources these students dedicate to monitoring social media, which diverts their attention from academic tasks.

Al-Furaih and Al-Awidi (2020) support this view, indicating that FOMO negatively influences attention and learning, impairing their ability to remember information, perform tasks, and obtain good grades. Manab et al. (2023) further corroborate these findings, noting that procrastination plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between FOMO and internet addiction. Students with higher FOMO tend to procrastinate more, which leads to increased internet use and addiction. Essentially, FOMO drives students to delay tasks by spending more time online, thereby heightening their risk of internet addiction and reducing academic focus.

Conversely, some studies present a more nuanced or even contradictory perspective. For instance, a recent study by Kong et al. (2024) highlights this complexity by demonstrating that FOMO has positive and negative effects on learning engagement. Their findings revealed that FOMO can directly enhance learning engagement ( $\beta = 0.293$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that some students become more academically active due to the fear of missing meaningful learning opportunities. However, at the same time, FOMO negatively impacts self-control ( $\beta = -0.643$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), leading to lower concentration, increased distraction, and ultimately reduced academic engagement.

Similarly, Ascenzi (2021) examined the relationship between FOMO and academic performance, finding that while FOMO is significantly associated with increased anxiety, it does not have a direct effect on academic performance. These findings suggest that although FOMO can heighten stress levels, its impact on academic achievement is complex. It may operate through indirect pathways, such as self-regulation and coping mechanisms, rather than a direct causal link. This highlights the importance of individual and contextual moderators in shaping the relationship between FOMO and academic outcomes.

These studies collectively indicate that while FOMO can influence academic behaviors, its direct impact on academic performance remains inconclusive. While most research underscores the detrimental effects of FOMO on academic performance, such as distraction, procrastination and reduced study time, these findings are not universally applicable. The relationship between FOMO and academic outcomes appears mediated by social media usage patterns, individual coping strategies, and contextual influences. This underscores the need for further research to disentangle these complex interactions and develop targeted interventions to mitigate FOMO's negative effects while leveraging its potential benefits for academic success.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the impact of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on university students' mental health and academic performance, particularly in the context of social media use. According to SDT, human motivation is driven by fulfilling three fundamental psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. In this context, FOMO can be interpreted as a consequence of unmet relatedness needs, where individuals experiencing FOMO feel socially excluded due to constant comparisons with others on social media. This perceived exclusion often compels individuals to engage in compulsive social media use to maintain social connections, which, in turn, undermines their sense of autonomy by creating a persistent psychological pressure to stay connected and monitor others' activities (Elhai et al., 2020).

Furthermore, FOMO can negatively impact individuals' sense of competence, as continuous exposure to curated online content that portrays others' seemingly "perfect lives" may lead to diminished self-confidence and increased frustration (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). This effect extends to academic performance, as research suggests that students with high FOMO levels tend to experience greater distraction and academic procrastination due to excessive time spent on social media. Compulsive social media use impairs students' ability to achieve autonomy as they struggle to regulate their digital behaviors, leading to heightened stress and anxiety (Milyavskaya et al., 2018).

However, some studies indicate that FOMO may have a limited positive effect, as it can motivate certain students to engage more actively in academic activities out of fear of missing educational opportunities. Nevertheless, this effect mainly depends on individual self-regulation strategies (Kong et al., 2024). Thus, the relationship between FOMO and academic performance is complex and highly influenced by how individuals interact with social media. While social media use can

fulfill relatedness needs when used constructively, it can also be detrimental if it compromises autonomy and competence (Mao & Huang, 2023; Mao & Zhang, 2023). Therefore, SDT offers valuable insights into how FOMO affects students, highlighting the need for strategies that promote a balanced approach to digital engagement, ensuring that students maintain both their psychological well-being and academic success.

### **Prevalence of Social Media Addiction Among Undergraduate Students in Nigeria.**

Modern technology in communication has no doubt helped to serve as a means of connecting people and as a medium of interaction in the social world and the educational arena. Consequently, higher education has been exploring exciting opportunities that technology has brought to institutions., educators and students. As a result, there has been a rapid growth in the availability and uptake of online teaching and learning by many colleges and universities. The use of social media platforms has impacted positively on individuals through creating diversification between different categories of people. Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) asserted that social media has influenced instructors, students and other academic stakeholders to unite with each other to promote knowledge construction in teaching and learning.

Social media usage among Nigerian university students has become ubiquitous. A large scale meta-analysis study revealed that 18.4% of university students suffer from social media addiction. Today, students are exposed to social media platforms on a daily basis. They use desktop computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones to actively engage in social media platforms for chatting, blogging, content sharing and online learning purposes. Despite the learning peculiarity of social media for learning interaction, not all students use social media for academic purposes. Thus, students spend much of their study time on social media rather than in their academic

undertakings which seems to have an adverse effect on their study time, diverting their attention from their studies.

The use of social media for academic purposes improves students' learning outcomes in terms of positive attitudes to their learning tasks, improved collaboration and cooperation in problem-solving and timely program completion rates. However, the use of social media by students has been criticized for having negative influences on students' academic productivity, retention of information, addiction to fiddling with ICT devices, poor writing skills, low mastery of the language of communication, inattentiveness in class, distractions, abuses, the Internet fraud, spending of too much time on pornography and entertainment programs (Badri et al., 2017). Students unwittingly waste excessive time browsing leisure programs to the neglect of their assigned tasks and academic work. Furthermore, studies have shown that social media is responsible for huge misinformation about the various issues in today's society, (Chen et al., 2022).

Students have been caught using social media to cheat in examinations, as well as blackmail one another without good reasons. Students can easily get addicted to using social media resulting to the neglect of their academic work on campus. The use of social media among students to socialize with friends or peer groups is prominent in Nigerian universities (Ajike & Nwakoby, 2016). This unregulated social media environment implies that abuses or malicious uses can be a serious issue among students, staff and the institution itself. These abuses are bound to create many problems for students in their learning and general well-being in school.

The most undesirable effects of the use of social media on students in universities include sharing of information that is not meant for the public domain, abuse of fellow students, waste of precious time meant for academic activities, causing disrepute to individuals and the university as a whole, watching of pornographic materials which leads to other immoral activities in the university's

campus among others. This result agrees with Tayo et al. (2019) that found distractions, writing and spelling skills deficiency as some negative influences of social media on undergraduate students.

Similarly, Loh et al. (2021) identified the undesirable effect of social media in learning institutions to include social media activities overload, information overload, life inversion, privacy issues, technostress, and exhaustion among others.

### **Social Media Addiction and FOMO.**

The phenomenon of the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has garnered significant attention in recent years, particularly due to its strong association with the rise of social media usage. FOMO is described as the anxiety or fear that one is missing out on rewarding experiences, important information or opportunities, leading individuals to remain constantly connected to their social networks. Rooted in the fear of remorse and social exclusion, FOMO drives people to compulsively engage with online platforms to avoid feelings of deprivation or social isolation. Psychologists have linked this behavior to a broader fear of ostracism, as individuals continually compare their lives to others, wondering whether they are missing out on better experiences or opportunities.

Based on the Self Determination Theory (SDT), FOMO can also be interpreted as a low level of basic psychological needs such as competence, autonomy and connectedness with other individuals. The relationship between FOMO and social media addiction can be seen from the role of the needs and urges that arises due to FOMO in maintaining communication and information and that need is fulfilled through social media. Social media addiction and FOMO have a strong reciprocal connection, where FOMO can trigger compulsive social media usage and the excessive

use can in turn intensify the feeling of missing out. Research shows that FOMO stems from a desire to avoid loneliness by forming interpersonal attachments. This desire is grounded in the need to belong. FOMO is a prime psychological antecedent of problematic social media engagement. FOMO drives compulsive checking and reactive notification responses behaviors that create reinforcement loops and mirrors addiction components (Pryzbylski et al., 2013; Elhai et al., 2018). Longitudinal and mediation studies increasingly show FOMO either mediates the link between negative effect and problematic use or moderates how stress translates to compulsive engagement.

### **Social Media Addiction Between Male and Female Users.**

The rapid advancement of social media technology has a significant impact on how people interact regularly. Research has shown that there are 4.48 billion social media users worldwide as of July 2021, accounting for about 57% of the global population (Data Reportal, 2021) These statistics explain that more than nine in ten internet users currently use social media monthly. 70.8% of undergraduate students admitted that their time spent on social media increased drastically during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (Parlak Sert and Baskale, 2023).

Gender findings are mixed and context dependent. Some large international studies report higher risk for problematic social media behaviors among females possibly because females often use social media more for interpersonal contact and social monitoring, whereas some country-specific work (including Nigerian university samples focused on broader internet addiction) has observed higher rates among males (Andreassen et al.,2017; Omoyemiju &Popoola, 2020). These apparent contradictions reflect heterogeneity in (a) the outcome measured (platform-speciific vs general social media addiction), (b) cultural norms about gendered online behavior and (c) sampling.

The prudent conclusion is: gender difference does exist but are not uniform. Platforms must be specified, measured and be culturally context before it can be reported.

### **Relationship Between FOMO and Social Media Addiction**

Cross-sectional and longitudinal research consistently demonstrates a strong positive relationship between fear of missing out (FOMO) and problematic social media use. Evidence shows that individuals with higher levels of FOMO are more likely to engage in problematic checking behaviors, display greater sensitivity and reactivity to notifications, and have higher odds of scoring within problematic ranges on social media addiction scales (Elhai et al., 2018; Rozgonjuk et al., 2019). These converging findings highlight that FOMO functions as a reliable predictor of problematic engagement across multiple study designs, strengthening the case that FOMO plays a central role in the development and maintenance of addictive patterns of use.

Mechanistically, FOMO intensifies the attentional salience of social feed cues and notifications. This heightened salience leads users to interrupt ongoing tasks to check for updates, even when such interruptions are disruptive or unnecessary. In addition, disconnection from social platforms in the presence of high FOMO is associated with negative affect, including frustration and anxiety. Both mechanisms—task interruption and distress upon disconnection—are characteristic drivers of addiction-like cycles. By continually reinforcing checking behavior through relief of negative affect, FOMO creates conditions that sustain compulsive engagement with social media.

Longitudinal panel research further indicates that the relationship between FOMO and problematic social media use is bi-directional. Not only does FOMO predict later problematic use, but problematic use itself can heighten FOMO over time. This creates a self-reinforcing loop in which

FOMO drives compulsive checking, and compulsive checking in turn amplifies fears of exclusion, sustaining a cycle of maladaptive engagement.

The recognition of this reinforcing loop has clear implications for intervention because either FOMO or problematic use can serve as entry points into the cycle, targeting either partner offers potential benefits. Interventions aimed at reducing FOMO for example, through approaches that strengthen social skills or enhance satisfaction of psychological needs can reduce the motivational force behind compulsive checking. Alternatively, interventions that diminish compulsive platform features, such as limiting notifications or cues that trigger checking can directly reduce problematic use. Both strategies disrupt the cycle, offering pathways to mitigate the link between FOMO and social media addiction.

### **Summary of Reviewed Literature**

The reviewed literature highlights the evolving role of social media as an interactive platform that has transformed communication, networking, and information sharing globally (Miller et al., 2016; Smith & Gallicano, 2015). While social media offers benefits such as enhanced connectivity, learning opportunities, and social capital, its excessive use has raised concerns about addiction and related psychological issues (Volkow et al., 2019; Ndubuaka et al., 2020).

Addiction, conceptualized as a chronic neurobiological disorder, manifests in compulsive behaviors, impaired control, and continued engagement despite negative consequences (He et al., 2019). Applied to social media, addiction often presents as excessive scrolling, compulsive checking, and anxiety when disconnected, which mirrors behavioral addictions like gambling. Young people are particularly vulnerable due to their developmental stage and social pressures (Keles et al., 2020).

The concept of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is closely linked to social media use. Defined as the anxiety that others are enjoying rewarding experiences in one's absence (Gupta & Sharma, 2021), FOMO has been associated with heightened social media engagement, stress, and reduced psychological well-being (Morelli et al., 2025; Deniz, 2020). Theoretical frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Belonging Theory explain FOMO as a result of unmet psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Empirical studies show mixed findings on the relationship between FOMO, social media use, and academic performance. While many studies report negative impacts, such as distraction, procrastination, and reduced grades others suggest FOMO can, in certain contexts, encourage active learning engagement (Kong et al., 2024). Thus, the effect of FOMO appears mediated by usage patterns (active vs. passive use) and individual coping mechanisms.

In the Nigerian context, research indicates high prevalence of social media addiction among undergraduates, with about 18.4% affected (Ajike & Nwakoby, 2016; Tayo et al., 2019). Excessive usage has been linked to poor academic performance, reduced concentration, exposure to misinformation, and even moral concerns such as pornography and cybercrime. Gender differences in addiction levels and patterns of use have also been observed, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when usage increased significantly.

Overall, the literature underscores the dual nature of social media use: while it fosters learning, collaboration, and connectivity, its excessive and compulsive use, often fueled by FOMO, poses risks to students' psychological well-being, academic performance, and social behavior.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter contains the procedure used in collecting and analyzing data for the study. It is represented under the following sub headings;

- Design of the Study
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

#### **Design of the Study**

The research design that was adopted for this study is a descriptive research design. This is most appropriate for this study because it afforded the researcher to have a firsthand information about the phenomenon and the variables of interest in the study (Nwangu, 2004).

#### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study included all the undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Ugbowo campus. According to the office of the students' affairs of the University of Benin, the

total number of undergraduate students as at 2024/2025 session is estimated to be 45,000 (Students Affairs).

### **Sampling and Sampling Technique**

The total sample size for the study was 120 undergraduate students. They were selected using the multi staged sampling technique.

At the first stage, the population was stratified according to the various faculties, colleges and institutes.

At the second stage, five faculties were randomly selected simultaneously using balloting.

At the third stage, 24 undergraduate students were randomly selected across penultimate and final year students (300 /400 level for a four- year program, 400/500 level for a five -year program and on like that depending on the number of years of the program selected). From each level considered, 12 students each were selected. The sample of the study as presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Sample Size of the Study

S/N	FACULTY	DEPARTMENT	PENULTIMATE YEAR	FINAL YEAR	TOTAL
1.	EDUCATION	Adult and Non-Formal Education	3	3	6
		Curriculum and Instructional Technology	3	3	6
		Human Kinetics and Sport Science	3	3	6
		Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology	3	3	6
2.	SOCIAL SCIENCES	Economics	3	3	6
		Political Science	3	3	6
		Social Work	3	3	6
		Public Administration	3	3	6
3.	BASIC MEDICAL SCIENCES	Physiotherapy	3	3	6
		Medical Laboratory Science	3	3	6
		Medical Biochemistry	3	3	6
		Anatomy	3	3	6
4.	ART	History	3	3	6
		English and Literature	3	3	6
		Philosophy	3	3	6
		Religions	3	3	6
5.	AGRICULTURE	Crop Science	3	3	6
		Animal Science	3	3	6
		Soil Science	3	3	6
		Food Science and Nutrition	3	3	6
	<b>TOTAL</b>			60	60

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2025).

## **Research Instrument**

The research instrument for this study was a self-designed questionnaire, titled: Assessment of Fear of Missing Out Questionnaire (AFOMOQ). This questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section contained the demographic data of the respondents while the second section contained twenty-one (21) items that helped to provide answers to the research questions that were raised to test the hypotheses formulated to guide the study.

Furthermore, the questionnaire will be designed using the modified Likert's scale format containing Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2), Strongly Disagree (SD=1) respectively.

## **Validity of the Instrument**

The instrument was validated using face and content validity whereby, the initial draft of the instrument was submitted to the project supervisor and one other lecturer in the department for scrutiny. Their corrections and observation was effected and the final draft of the instrument was produced for administration.

## **Reliability of the Instrument**

In carrying out the reliability of the study, 20 copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents who were not part of the final sample of the study. After computation, a Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient of 0.68, 0.73, 0.69, 0.71 respectively were produced for each of the domains that were designed in the instrument. Therefore, the reliability of the instrument was determined as  $\frac{0.68+0.73+0.69+0.71}{4}$ . Thus, it yielded a reliability index of 0.70 which showed that the instrument is consistent.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher personally administered the instrument to the respondents and retrieved immediately. The researcher purposively identified penultimate and final year students through their various course mates or class representatives.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics was used to provide answers to the research questions while the inferential statistics involved the testing of the hypotheses formulated for the study.

Specifically, the descriptive statistics involved the use of frequency charts, percentages and mean score analysis.

A criterium mean of 2.50 was adopted for decision making. Therefore, items with 2.50 and above were accepted and items below were rejected.

Furthermore, the hypotheses was tested using the Pearson's  $r$ . The hypotheses was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study investigated the influence of social media addiction on Fear of Missing Out among undergraduate students of the University of Benin. However, this chapter contained the presentation of the analysed data as well as the discussion of the findings.

#### Research Question 1

What are the social media platforms undergraduate students of the University of Benin are addicted to?

**Table 2: Data on the Social Media Platforms Undergraduate Students of the University of Benin are addicted to**

S/N	Items	Level of Responses	
		YES (%)	NO (%)
1	WhatsApp	120 (100)	Nil (0)
2	Facebook	105 (87.5)	15 (12.5)
3	Instagram	112 (93.1)	8 (6.9)
4	TikTok	95 (79.2)	25 (20.8)
5	X (Twitter)	20 (16.7)	100 (83.3)
6	Snapchat	64 (53.3)	56(46.7)
7	Others	21 (17.5)	99(82.5)

*Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025*

Table 1 revealed the social media platforms undergraduate students of the University of Benin are addicted to. It was found that five (5) out of the seven (7) variables that were measured as indicated in the check list were the social media platforms undergraduate students of the

University of Benin are addicted to as they recorded over 50% responses. Specifically, these include WhatsApp 120(100%), Facebook 105(87.5%), Instagram 112(93.1%), TikTok 95(79.2) and Snapchat 64(53.3) respectively. On the other hand, the check list revealed that undergraduate students of the University of Benin are not addicted to X (formerly Twitter) 20(16.7%) and Others 21(17.5) as they did not measure up to 50%. It was therefore concluded that the social media platforms undergraduate students of the University of Benin are addicted to include WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat as they were their most **frequently used social media** platforms.

## Research Question 2

Is there a prevalence of FOMO among undergraduate students of University of Benin?

**Table 3: Mean Rating on the Prevalence of FOMO among Undergraduate Students of University of Benin**

S/N	Items	N=120		
		Mean	SD	Remarks
1	I frequently compare my life with what others post on social media	3.38	0.85	Accepted
2	I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me	2.82	0.41	Accepted
3	I am worried that my friends are having more fun than I am when I am offline	3.83	0.96	Accepted
4	I feel pressured to stay online so that I don't miss out on important posts or trends	3.94	0.99	Accepted
5	I feel satisfied when others like or comment on my posts.	2.67	0.52	Accepted
6	I sometimes stay online longer than intended because I don't want to miss out.	3.11	0.61	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.29</b>		<b>Accepted</b>

*Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025*

Table 3 revealed the mean rating on the prevalence of FOMO among undergraduate students of University of Benin. It was found that undergraduate students of University of Benin

admitted that they frequently compare their lives with what others' post on social media with the mean score and standard deviation of 3.38 and 0.85 respectively. The respondents also agreed that they feared when others have more rewarding experiences than they do on social media with a mean score and standard deviation of 2.82 and 0.41 respectively. They also confirmed in the affirmative that they get worried when their friends are having more fun than I they do when offline with a mean score and standard deviation of 3.83 and 0.96 respectively. Furthermore, the respondents also agreed to the fact they feel pressured to stay online so that they do not miss out on important posts or trends with a corresponding mean score and standard deviation of 3.94 and 0.99 respectively. The participants also posited that they feel satisfied when others like or comment on their posts with a mean score and standard deviation of 2.67 and 0.52 respectively. Finally, the respondents agreed that they sometimes stay online longer than they intended because they do not want to miss out with a mean score and standard deviation of 3.11 and 0.61 respectively. Since the grand mean score of 3.29 was found to be higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, it was therefore concluded that there is a prevalence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among undergraduate students of University of Benin.

## Hypotheses Testing

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between FOMO and academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Benin.

**Table 4: Correlation between FOMO and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students in the University of Benin**

Variable	N	Mean	Std.	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
FOMO	120	3.600	1.008	0.729**	.000
Academic Performance	120	3.813	.4151		

*Source: Field Survey, (2025).*

The result of the Pearson's r as shown in Table 4 revealed a significant computed value of the  $r=0.729$  with p value ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ); therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result implies that there is a positive and significant relationship between FOMO and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students in the University of Benin.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between FOMO and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin.

**Table 5: Correlation between FOMO and Social Media Addiction among Undergraduate Students of the University of Benin**

Variable	N	Mean	Std.	R	Sig. (2-tailed)
FOMO	120	19.040	.8080	0.621**	.001
Social Media Addiction	120	18.359	.9711		

*Source: Field Survey, (2025).*

The result of the Pearson’s r as shown in Table 5 revealed a significant computed value of the  $r=0.621$  with  $p$ -value of 0.001 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 that was set for the study ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ). As a result of this, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This result therefore implies that there is a significant relationship between FOMO and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in FOMO between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin.

**Table 5: Independent Sample t-test Summary of Difference in FOMO between Male and Female Undergraduate Students of the University of Benin**

Gender	N	Mean	Std D.	Mean Diff.	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Female	67	12.22	1.215	5.09	118	6.745	.001	Significant
Male	53	7.13	1.160					

*Source: Survey Data, (2025).*

**alpha = 0.05**

Table 5 shows the independent sample t-test summary of difference in FOMO between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin. It was found that the t-test value was significant as  $t = 6.745$ ;  $df = 118$ ;  $p=0.0016<0.05$ . Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in FOMO between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin is hereby rejected. This result therefore implies that the male and female students of the University of Benin are not the same or equal with respect to FOMO as they use the various social media platforms.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study revealed that the undergraduate students of the University of Benin are addicted to quite a number of social media platforms, specifically WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat. This finding agrees with Smith and Gallicano (2015) that social media is the multiplicity of activities that individuals may participate online. Akua (2015) also established that these various social media platforms can negatively affect an individual in his/her daily life as well as other aspects.

It was also established in the study that there is a prevalence of the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among undergraduate students of the University of Benin. This finding corroborates with Ajike and Nwakoby (2016) who reported that due to the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), many issues have been created for students in their learning and general wellbeing in school. This result also agrees with (Badri et al. 2017) where it was stated that students unwittingly waste excessive time browsing leisure programmes, spending too much time on pornography and other things that pose as distractions increasing the prevalence of the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO).

The finding of the study also revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and academic performance of undergraduate students of the University of Benin. The finding is supported by Quitshat and Abu (2019) who found out that students who experience higher levels of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) tend to have lower academic performance. Al-Furaih and Al-Awidi (2020) also support this view, indicating that the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) negatively influences attention and learning thereby impairing their ability to remember information, perform tasks and obtain good grades. Manab et al. (2023) further corroborates these findings, noting that procrastination plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and academic performance.

Furthermore, it was found in the study that there is a significant relationship between the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin. This finding aligns with (Elhai et al., 2018) who stated that the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) drives compulsive checking and reactive notification responsive behaviours that create reinforcement loops and mirrors addiction components. These converging findings highlights that the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) functions as a reliable predictor of a problematic engagement across multiple study designs, strengthening the case that the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) plays a central role in the development and maintenance of addictive patterns of use.

Lastly, this study established that there is a significant difference in the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) between female and male undergraduate students in the University of Benin. The rapid advancement of social media has a significant impact on how people interact regularly. Research has shown that there are 4.8 billion social media users worldwide accounting for about 57% of the global population (Data Reportal,2021) This therefore showed that the female and male students of the University of Benin are not the same or equal with respect to the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as they use different social media platforms.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

#### **Summary**

This study assessed the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as a precipitator of social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin. Five research questions were raised to guide the study. However, two were answered directly while three were hypothesized. The research questions and hypotheses include the following:

#### **Research Questions**

1. What are the social media platforms undergraduate students of the University of Benin are addicted to?
2. Is there a prevalence of FOMO among undergraduate students of University of Benin?
3. Is there a relationship between FOMO and academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Benin?
4. Is there a correlation between FOMO and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin?
5. Is there a difference in FOMO between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin?

## Hypotheses

1. H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between FOMO and academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Benin.
2. H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant correlation between FOMO and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin.
3. H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference in FOMO between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin.

The research design used for the study was a descriptive research design. The population of the study included all undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Ugbowo campus. A sample size of 120 students were selected for the study using a multi- staged sampling technique. A self-designed questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection and it was titled: Assessment of Fear of Missing Out Questionnaire (AFOMOQ). After the validity, the instrument was tested for reliability using the internal consistency reliability procedure; whereby the instrument was pilot tested in 20 participants, the data yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 as the reliability index. The data collected were analyzed using mean score analysis for providing answers for research questions 1 and 2. The hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using the Pearson's r while hypothesis 3 was tested using the independent simple t-test. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

After analysis, the study gave the following findings:

1. That the social media platforms undergraduate students are addicted to include WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat.

2. That there is a prevalence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among undergraduate students of the University of Benin.
3. That there is a positive and significant relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and academic performance of undergraduate students of the University of Benin.
4. That there is a significant relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social media addiction among undergraduate students of the University of Benin.
5. That there is a significant difference in Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) between male and female undergraduate students of the University of Benin and thus indicating that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) was higher among the female students.

### **Conclusion.**

On the basis of the findings from the study, it was therefore concluded that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is prevalent among undergraduate students of the University of Benin and significantly contributes to social media addiction. While both male and female students experience Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) differently, the presence of the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) leads to a prolonged online engagement and distractions which negatively influences academic performances.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings and conclusion of the study, the researcher provided the following recommendations:

1. The University should educate students on healthy social media habits to reduce excessive use of WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat.
2. The Guidance and counselling units of the University of Benin should teach students practical ways to manage the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in order to reduce anxiety and emotional stress.
3. Students should be encouraged to limit social media use during study periods so they can stay focused and improve on their academic performance.
4. University counsellors, psychologists or student affairs administrators should introduce digital wellness to address both Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social media addiction together in a bid to help students control constant online checking.
5. Support programmes recommended by experts should consider gender differences, providing guidance that meets the unique needs of both male and female students regarding the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO).

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## APPENDIX 1

### DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION

### UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

#### *ASSESSMENT OF FEAR OF MISSING OUT QUESTIONNAIRE (AFOMOQ)*

Dear Respondent,

I am an undergraduate student in the abovenamed department. As part of the requirements for the award of a bachelor's degree in Adult Education, I am conducting a research study titled: "*Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Social Media Addiction among Undergraduate Students of the University of Benin*"

*You have been randomly selected to participate in this study. Your responses are critical to the success of this research. Please be assured that all responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and will be used strictly for academic purposes only.*

*Your cooperation is highly appreciated.*

*Thank you.*

*Mercy.*

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

*(Please tick [✓] or fill in the appropriate response)*

1. **Gender:**Female[ ]Male [ ]

2. **Indicate your average daily time spent on social media:**(a)Less than 1 hour[ ](b) 1–3 hours[ ](c) 4–6 hours[ ](d) More than 6 hours[ ]

3. **Which of these is/are your frequently used social media platform(s)?(Multiple options allowed):**

- WhatsApp[ ]
- Facebook[ ]
- Instagram[ ]
- TikTok[ ]
- X (Twitter)[ ]
- Snapchat[ ]
- Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION**

**B:**

*Please indicate how true each statement is for you using the scale:*

**Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly**

S/N	A. PREVALENCE OF FOMO	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I frequently compare my life with what others post on social media				
2.	I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me				
3.	I am worried that my friends are having more fun than I am when I am offline				
4.	I feel pressured to stay online so that I don't miss out on important posts or trends				
5.	I feel satisfied when others like or comment on my posts.				
6	I sometimes stay online longer than intended because I don't want to miss out.				

6.	I sometimes stay online longer than intended because I don't want to miss out.				
<b>S/N</b>	<b>B. SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
7.	I often use social media to escape from personal problems or negative feelings.				
8.	I have made unsuccessful attempts to reduce the amount of time I spend on social media.				
9.	I become restless, anxious, or upset when I am unable to use social media.				
10.	My social media use often interferes with my studies, work, or other important activities.				
11.	I prefer spending time on social media to interacting with people face-to-face.				
12.	I feel unhappy or incomplete when I cannot access my social media accounts.				
<b>S/N</b>	<b>C. SOCIAL MEDIA AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
13.	I often feel less motivated to study after spending a long time on social media.				
14.	My academic performance has dropped because I spend too much time on social media.				
15.	I sometimes choose to browse social media instead of completing schoolwork or assignments.				
16.	My study time has reduced because of my frequent use of social media.				
17.	I sometimes miss important academic deadlines because I am occupied with social media activities.				
18.	I often lose interest in class activities because my attention is focused on social media.				

Thank You.

**APPENDIX II**

**CRONBACH ALPHA RELIABILITY TEST RESULTS**

**Reliability**

		<b>Notes</b>
Output Created		22-NOV-2025 20:24:51
Comments		
Input	Active Dataset	DataSet2
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	20
	Matrix Input	
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on all cases with valid data for all variables in the procedure.
Syntax		RELIABILITY /VARIABLES=Item1 Item2 Item3 Item4 / Item5 Item6 SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL /MODEL=ALPHA.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.00
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

**Scale: ALL VARIABLES**

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.68	6

**Reliability**

**Notes**

Output Created		22-NOV-2025 20:34:11
Comments		
Input	Active Dataset	DataSet2
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	20
	Matrix Input	
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on all cases with valid data for all variables in the procedure.
Syntax		RELIABILITY /VARIABLES= Item7 Item8 Item9 Item10 Item11 Item12 /SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL /MODEL=ALPHA.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.00
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

**Scale: ALL VARIABLES**

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.73	5

**Reliability**

**Notes**

Output Created		22-NOV-2025 20:41:19
Comments		
Input	Active Dataset	DataSet2
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working	
	Data File	20
	Matrix Input	
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on all cases with valid data for all variables in the procedure.
Syntax		RELIABILITY /VARIABLES=Item13 Item14 Item15 Item16 Item17 Item18 /SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL /MODEL=ALPHA.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.00
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

**Scale: ALL VARIABLES**

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure..

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.69	6

**Reliability**

**Notes**

Output Created		22-NOV-2025 21:04:51
Comments		
Input	Active Dataset	DataSet2
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	20
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on all cases with valid data for all variables in the procedure.
Syntax		RELIABILITY /VARIABLES/SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL /MODEL=ALPHA.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.00
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.00

**Scale: ALL VARIABLES**

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.71	7

**APPENDIX III**

**SPSS OUTPUT OF PEARSON CORRELATIONS**

**Correlations**

**Notes**

Output Created		23-NOV-2025 19:14:16
Comments		
Input	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	120
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics for each pair of variables are based on all the cases with valid data for that pair.
Syntax		CORRELATIONS / DESCRIPTIVES /MISSING=PAIRWISE.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.00
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.13

[DataSet1]

**Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
FOMO	3.600	1.808	120
Academic Performance	3.813	.4151	120

## Correlations

		FOMO	Academic Performance
FOMO	Pearson Correlation	1	.729**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.729**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

## Correlations

### Notes

Output Created		23-NOV-2025 21:17:16
Comments		
Input	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	120
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics for each pair of variables are based on all the cases with valid data for that pair.
Syntax		CORRELATIONS / DESCRIPTIVES /MISSING=PAIRWISE.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.00
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.13

[DataSet1]

### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
FOMO	19.040	.8080	120
Social Media Addiction	18.359	.9711	120

### Correlations

		FOMO	Social Media Addiction
FOMO	Pearson Correlation	1	.621**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Social Media Addiction	Pearson Correlation	.621**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



**Group Statistics**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FOMO	Female	67	12.22	1.215	.286
	Male	53	7.13	1.160	.158

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means
		F	Sig.	t
FOMO	Equal variances assumed	59.1	.000	6.745
	Equal variances not assumed			6.786

**Independent Samples Test**

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
FOMO	Equal variances assumed	118	.001	5.09
	Equal variances not assumed	28.064	.100	5.09

### Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
FOMO	Equal variances assumed	.319	1.193	.001
	Equal variances not assumed	.327	11.225	.114