

**THE CORRELATE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL
HEALTH OF STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY (2010 – 2022)**

BY

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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

JANUARY, 2025.

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN
CITY, NIGERIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF
SCIENCE DEGREE (B.Sc.) IN SOCIAL WORK**

JANUARY, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this research work was carried out by **Michael Chibuike ANADI** with Matriculation Number **SSC2008726** of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Social Work.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for His Grace that sustained the researcher in the course of the programme.

I would also like to dedicate this research work to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Anadi (both of blessed memory) who helped ignite the zeal for academic excellence in me.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the correlation between social media and the mental health of students in the University of Benin. A total of 353 undergraduate students participated in the research. The investigation focused on the influence of social media on emotional well-being, social well-being, cognitive functioning, and resilience. A detailed literature review provided the foundation for exploring these areas. Data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires and analyzed using mean and standard deviation tables. The stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure a representative selection of participants for the study.

The findings revealed that social media significantly influences students' emotional well-being by shaping their self-perception, daily outlook, and emotional experiences based on their online interactions and the content they consume. It positively impacts social well-being by fostering connections and creating a sense of belonging through meaningful engagements. Social media usage also affects cognitive functioning, influencing learning habits, concentration, and critical thinking. However, excessive use disrupts essential cognitive processes necessary for academic success. Additionally, social media enhances resilience by offering support, shared experiences, and a platform to cope with challenges, though mindful engagement is required to avoid adverse effects.

The research concludes that social media profoundly impacts various aspects of students' mental health, serving as both a tool for learning and a source of emotional and social support. To address these findings, schools are encouraged to implement workshops on managing social media use, promote community-focused online activities, and introduce programs that foster critical evaluation of online content.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

With the rapid advancement of technology, life has become more convenient and efficient, yet it has also introduced new challenges. Social media, fueled by the widespread use of smartphones, has become an integral part of daily life, making it difficult to disconnect. By 2018, global reports from 'We Are Social' and 'Hootsuite', a global conversation agency and a social media and analytics platform respectively, revealed that there were 3.196 billion active social media users and 5.135 billion mobile phone users. Fast forward to 2024, the number of active social media users worldwide has now surpassed 5 billion, reflecting an impressive increase of 266 million users in just one year, which is a 5.4% rise. On average, users now spend 2 hours and 23 minutes daily on social media, engaging in activities such as shopping, connecting, and entertainment, underscoring the deepening integration of these platforms into everyday life (We Are Social and Hootsuite, 2024). This surge in technology usage is transforming societal norms, particularly in communication, idea sharing, and access to products and services.

Social media is a digital ecosystem where individuals and communities interact, share, and consume information across various online platforms (Matyek, Kaze, Ohaji and Etumnu, 2022). It has evolved from basic networking sites to sophisticated channels

that influence communication, culture, and commerce globally. Through social media, users engage in diverse activities like connecting with others, expressing opinions, discovering trends, and even driving social change (Kareem, 2019). The ubiquity of smartphones and internet access has made social media an integral part of daily life, shaping how people perceive the world, interact with it, and participate in the digital age. It is no wonder social media is now widely used in the academic world, as its integration has significantly influenced overall development, particularly in education and mental activities. The accessibility and immediacy of information have transformed learning processes, enabling students to engage with diverse resources and collaborate in ways that were previously unimaginable (Anekwe, 2017). Social media applications such as Facebook, X, and LinkedIn have created platforms for students and educators to engage in collaborative learning, share resources, and foster discussions beyond the traditional classroom (Olelewe, Orji, Osinem and Rose-Keziah, 2020). This integration has enhanced educational development by making learning more interactive and accessible.

Mental health is a vital aspect of overall well-being that involves our emotional, psychological, and social functioning (Kansky, 2017). It affects how we handle stress, relate to others, and make decisions. Gueldner, Feuerborn and Merrell, (2020) emphasizes that good mental health allows individuals to maintain a balanced and productive life, manage emotions effectively, and engage in meaningful activities. It is not merely the absence of mental illness but includes the ability to thrive in daily

activities and relationships. For instance, a person who can manage work-related stress and maintain a positive outlook is likely to experience better productivity and satisfaction in their job. On the other hand, significant damages such as chronic stress, trauma, or mental illness can disrupt these functions (Aluh, Okoro and Zimboh, 2020).

Issues like depression or anxiety can impair one's ability to perform well in various areas of life, leading to difficulties in maintaining relationships and achieving personal goals. Maintaining stable mental health is crucial as it supports an individual's ability to effectively handle life's challenges and opportunities. A strong mental state enhances focus, facilitates the development of meaningful relationships, and aids in bouncing back from difficulties. For instance, when a person has stable mental health, they are better equipped to concentrate on tasks, manage stress from work or study, and engage in social activities without feeling overburdened. This stability is fundamental for personal and professional growth, as it enables people to cope with pressures and enjoy a well-rounded life. Addressing and supporting mental health proactively is essential for ensuring overall success and well-being (Abdulmalik, Olayiwola, Docrat, Lund, Chisholm and Gureje, 2019).

A person who maintains mental stability can better navigate various aspects of life, such as achieving career goals, building supportive social networks, and enjoying leisure activities. For example, an individual with a strong mental health foundation is more likely to pursue personal interests, recover from failures, and remain resilient in the face

of adversity. Thus, promoting mental health helps individuals lead balanced, fulfilling lives and contributes to their long-term happiness and effectiveness.

Mental health includes several key components that are crucial for students such as emotional well-being, social well-being, cognitive functioning, and resilience (Obasoro, Adeniji, Akingbulu and Adepoju, 2024). Emotional well-being is crucial for overall mental health and involves the ability to recognize, express, and manage emotions effectively. For instance, a student who remains calm and maintains a positive outlook despite the pressures of upcoming exams demonstrates strong emotional health. This means they can understand their feelings, articulate them appropriately, and use healthy coping mechanisms to deal with stress. Such emotional resilience allows students to handle challenges without becoming overwhelmed, leading to better overall well-being and a more balanced approach to life's ups and downs. Social well-being, on the other hand, focuses on the quality of interactions and relationships with others. Having supportive friendships and feeling a sense of belonging within a community contribute significantly to a person's social well-being. When students have strong social support networks and engage in positive social interactions, they are more likely to feel valued and connected (Ogbeide, Ugwu and Okojie, 2020). This sense of belonging can enhance their emotional stability and contribute to a healthier, more supportive environment. Additionally, cognitive functioning plays a vital role in academic performance, as it encompasses concentration, problem-solving abilities, and information processing skills. Effective cognitive functioning helps students tackle academic tasks efficiently, while

resilience enables them to bounce back from setbacks, such as receiving a poor grade or dealing with personal challenges, fostering growth and adaptability in their academic and personal lives.

The connection between social media usage and the mental health of students is complex and multifaceted (Cataldo, Lepri, Neoh and Esposito, 2021). On one hand, social media can offer positive effects, such as fostering social connections, providing emotional support, and enhancing cognitive skills through exposure to diverse perspectives and information. However, excessive or negative use can lead to issues like anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem, particularly when students engage in unhealthy comparisons or experience cyberbullying.

Wordu, Dan-Jumbo, and Mina (2021) conducted a study on the impact of social media addiction on the academic performance of students in public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and four hypotheses. The researchers focused on a population of 2,786 final-year students from ten secondary schools in Port Harcourt urban and used a multi-stage sampling technique to select 349 participants. Data were collected using a questionnaire based on a modified four-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (4 points) to Strongly Disagree (1 point). The questionnaire was validated by experts in Information Technology and Psychology, and its reliability was confirmed through a test-retest method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.73 using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The research questions were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation,

while z-test was applied to test the hypotheses at a 5% alpha level. The findings revealed that students who spent more time on social media were more likely to develop higher levels of Internet addiction. The study also suggested that social media addiction might stem from other underlying disorders, such as depression, stress, or anxiety. It concluded that the students involved were at risk of experiencing Facebook depression, cyberbullying, and online sexual harassment.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

With the rapid rise in social media usage, driven by widespread smartphone access, there is growing concern about its impact on mental health, particularly among students. By 2024, the number of global social media users had exceeded 5 billion, reflecting a significant increase in daily engagement with these platforms. This surge raises questions about how social media affects various aspects of mental health, including emotional well-being, social interactions, cognitive functioning, and resilience. Although social media offers benefits such as connectivity and information access, it also poses risks, such as cyberbullying, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem.

Current research highlights a dual-edged effect of social media on mental health. On the positive side, social media can enhance social connections, provide emotional support, and stimulate cognitive engagement through diverse information and perspectives. However, excessive or negative social media use can lead to adverse outcomes, including increased anxiety, depression, and diminished self-esteem, especially when

students experience cyberbullying or unhealthy comparisons. Studies such as those conducted by Wordu, Dan-Jumbo and Mina (2021) indicate that higher social media use is associated with greater internet addiction and may exacerbate underlying issues like depression and stress. These findings emphasize the need for further investigation into how social media usage correlates with mental health, particularly in identifying risk factors and developing strategies to mitigate negative impacts.

Understanding the correlation between social media and mental health involves examining how digital interactions influence students' emotional stability, social relationships, cognitive abilities, and resilience. By identifying patterns and potential risks associated with social media use, educators and mental health professionals can develop targeted strategies to mitigate negative effects and enhance positive outcomes. Effective interventions and support systems are essential to help students navigate their social media use in a way that promotes mental well-being and academic success.

1.3 Research Questions

Four research questions has been raised for the purpose of this study, which are:

1. What is the influence of social media on students' emotional wellbeing in the University of Benin?
2. What is the influence of social media on students' social wellbeing in the University of Benin?

3. What is the influence of social media on students' cognitive functioning in the University of Benin?
4. What is the influence of social media on students' resilience in the University of Benin?

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to examine the influence of social media on the mental health of students in the University of Benin, Benin City.

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. examine the influence of social media on students' emotional wellbeing in the University of Benin;
2. examine the influence of social media on students' social wellbeing in the University of Benin;
3. examine the influence of social media on students' cognitive functioning in the University of Benin, and
4. examine the influence of social media on students' resilience in the University of Benin.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will be of immense benefit to students, institutions, policy makers, curriculum planners, society, and researchers. By understanding the correlation,

students can make more informed decisions about their social media habits, leading to healthier lifestyles and improved academic performance. This knowledge can empower them to balance their online and offline activities, reducing the risk of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues associated with excessive social media use.

For educational institutions, the findings of this study will offer valuable data that can be used to develop support systems and resources tailored to students' mental health needs. Schools and universities can implement programs and workshops that address the challenges posed by social media, fostering a more supportive learning environment. Moreover, institutions can use the study's outcomes to train educators and counselors in recognizing and addressing the mental health concerns linked to social media use among students.

Policymakers will find this study beneficial as it provides a robust evidence base to inform policy decisions regarding social media regulations and mental health initiatives. The study can help shape policies that promote responsible social media usage and ensure that mental health services are accessible and responsive to the needs of students. By understanding the specific impacts of social media on mental health, policymakers can craft strategies that address the root causes of these issues, ultimately contributing to the well-being of the student population. Curriculum planners can utilize the study's findings to design educational content that raises awareness about the impact of social media on mental health. Integrating this knowledge into the curriculum can help students develop critical thinking skills and emotional resilience, equipping them to

navigate the digital world responsibly. Additionally, curriculum planners can create modules that focus on digital literacy and mental health, ensuring that students are better prepared to manage the challenges of social media use.

The broader society will benefit from this study as it contributes to a more informed public dialogue about the role of social media in mental health. As awareness grows, communities can work together to create environments that support mental well-being, both online and offline. The study can also encourage social responsibility among tech companies, urging them to consider the mental health implications of their platforms and take steps to mitigate negative effects. Researchers will gain a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between social media and mental health from this study. The findings can serve as a foundation for future research, exploring new dimensions of this topic and identifying effective interventions. Additionally, the study can fill gaps in existing literature, providing fresh perspectives and contributing to the ongoing discourse on mental health and technology. Researchers can also use this study to inform multidisciplinary approaches that combine insights from psychology, education, and technology to address the complex challenges students face in the digital age.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focuses on examining the influence of social media on the mental health of students. This study is delimited to undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The following words are operationally defined.

Social media: Online platforms and applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and TikTok that enable users to create, share, and interact with content

Mental Health: The psychological well-being of students, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social aspects.

Students: Individuals currently enrolled in educational institutions, including high schools, colleges, and universities, typically ranging in age from 16 to 25 years.

Correlate: The statistical relationship between social media usage and mental health indicators among students.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of related literature pertinent to this study is discussed under the following sub-headings:

- 2.1 Conceptual Clarification.
 - 2.1.1 Concept of Social Media.
 - 2.1.2 Concept of Mental Health.
 - 2.1.3 Social Media and Students' Emotional Wellbeing.
 - 2.1.4 Social Media and Students' Social Wellbeing.
 - 2.1.5 Social Media and Students' Cognitive Functioning.
 - 2.1.6 Social Media and Students' Resilience.
- 2.2 Theoretical Framework.
- 2.3 Empirical Studies.
- 2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature.

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

2.1.1 Concept of Social Media

Social media has revolutionized how people communicate and interact by providing a dynamic space for users to create, share, and engage with content across the globe (Ukomadu, 2018). Platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and LinkedIn have become integral to modern life, allowing individuals to connect instantly with friends, family, and professional networks. These digital spaces offer more than just communication; they enable users to express themselves through status updates, photos, videos, and other multimedia, making personal interactions more vibrant and diverse. The impact of social media extends beyond personal connections, influencing various aspects of society, including business, education, and culture. Companies utilize these platforms for marketing and customer engagement, while educational institutions harness social media to facilitate learning and collaboration among students and educators. Social media also plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and trends, as it allows for the rapid dissemination of information and ideas.

The rise of social media has revolutionized the landscape of information dissemination and consumption, shifting power from traditional media outlets like newspapers and television, which once dominated the flow of information (Hisham, 2019). Social media platforms now offer a dynamic and immediate way to share news and updates, allowing users to post real-time content, share personal experiences, and engage in discussions on

a wide range of topics. This transition has reshaped how people access information, making it more accessible and interactive. This democratization of information has also opened new avenues for public discourse, enabling a broader range of voices to participate in conversations that were once controlled by a select few (Jimada, 2019). The ability to instantly share and discuss events as they unfold has not only accelerated the speed at which information spreads but has also fostered a more participatory culture.

Social media has revolutionized education by offering innovative tools that enhance both teaching and learning experiences (Wickramanayake and Muhammad, 2018). Platforms like LinkedIn Learning and YouTube have become invaluable resources, providing a wealth of educational content, from tutorials to professional development courses. For instance, students can easily access video lessons on complex topics, such as coding or graphic design, making it easier to grasp difficult concepts at their own pace. Educators also benefit by incorporating these resources into their curricula, thereby enriching traditional classroom instruction with diverse multimedia content. In addition to offering vast educational resources, social media fosters collaborative learning, transforming the way students and educators interact. Through platforms like Facebook groups or X, students can engage in discussions, share resources, and collaborate on projects, regardless of their geographical location. For example, a group of students working on a research project can use Google Docs to collectively edit their work while simultaneously discussing their progress in a WhatsApp group. This

integration of social media into educational settings not only supports interactive learning but also provides a flexible environment where students can learn from each other and adapt to various learning styles.

Social media, while offering numerous benefits, also introduces significant challenges that can impact individuals and society. One of the primary concerns is misinformation, which can quickly spread across platforms, leading to widespread confusion and eroding public trust (Wasserman and Madrid-Morales, 2019). For example, during health crises, false information about treatments or preventive measures can circulate rapidly, causing panic or misguided actions. Cyberbullying is another critical issue, where individuals, particularly young people, may experience severe emotional distress due to harmful or threatening messages (Nwufo and Nwoke, 2018). This can lead to anxiety, depression, and in extreme cases, even suicidal thoughts. These negative experiences highlight the darker side of social media's influence on mental health. In addition to misinformation and cyberbullying, privacy concerns have become increasingly significant as more personal data is shared online. The vast amount of information that users disclose, often unknowingly, raises serious questions about data security and user consent. For instance, social media platforms often collect and store personal details, which can be exploited by third parties or become vulnerable to breaches. This lack of control over one's data can lead to identity theft, financial loss, or unauthorized surveillance, creating an environment where users feel exposed and insecure.

2.1.2 Concept of Mental Health

Mental health plays a pivotal role in shaping how individuals navigate their daily lives, influencing their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Lamblin, Murawski, Whittle and Fornito, 2017). A person with good mental health can effectively manage stress, form healthy relationships, and make sound decisions. For example, someone facing work-related stress may utilize coping mechanisms like mindfulness or exercise to maintain emotional balance, which demonstrates their mental resilience. This resilience is key to adapting to life's challenges and maintaining a sense of well-being, even in difficult circumstances. Additionally, mental health impacts social interactions and overall life satisfaction. When an individual is in a healthy mental state, they are more likely to engage positively with others, build strong social connections, and contribute meaningfully to their community. For instance, a person with good mental health might actively participate in social activities or volunteer work, enhancing both their well-being and that of others around them.

Emotional well-being, a critical aspect of mental health, requires individuals to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions in a healthy way (Barry, Clarke and Dowling, 2017). This involves cultivating a positive mindset, developing resilience to life's challenges, and maintaining a strong sense of purpose. For example, someone with good emotional well-being can bounce back from setbacks, like losing a job or facing a difficult personal situation, by finding constructive ways to cope and move forward. This resilience allows them to maintain balance and avoid being overwhelmed by

negative emotions, contributing to overall mental stability. In addition to personal resilience, emotional well-being plays a vital role in fostering healthy relationships and achieving personal goals. When individuals effectively manage their emotions, they communicate better, resolve conflicts more easily, and build stronger connections with others. For instance, a person who can express their feelings clearly and calmly during a disagreement is more likely to reach a positive resolution, strengthening the relationship. Similarly, having a stable emotional foundation enables individuals to set and pursue goals with confidence, as they can stay focused and motivated, even when faced with obstacles. This emotional strength is essential for personal growth and success in various areas of life.

Psychological well-being plays a pivotal role in shaping mental health, encompassing elements like positive self-image, self-esteem, and confidence (Bandyopadhyay, 2018). These factors are essential in fostering a sense of inner stability and self-worth, which directly impacts how individuals navigate their daily lives. For example, someone with a strong sense of self-esteem is likely to approach challenges with resilience and a proactive mindset, rather than succumbing to feelings of inadequacy or doubt. This positive self-perception enhances one's ability to manage stress, form healthy relationships, and maintain a balanced outlook on life, which are all critical components of mental health. In addition to its impact on emotional stability, psychological well-being significantly supports cognitive functions. Memory, concentration, and decision-making are all influenced by an individual's mental state. For instance, a person with

high psychological well-being is better equipped to focus on tasks, remember important details, and make informed decisions. This, in turn, affects their ability to perform effectively in both personal and professional settings. When psychological well-being is nurtured, individuals are more likely to experience improved cognitive functioning, leading to better problem-solving abilities and a more fulfilling life experience overall.

Social well-being is integral to mental health, as it involves the capacity to build and sustain meaningful relationships. Effective communication and empathy are essential components, allowing individuals to connect with others on a deeper level. For instance, in a workplace setting, employees who can communicate openly and empathize with their colleagues are more likely to form supportive professional relationships. These connections not only enhance team collaboration but also create a sense of belonging, which can reduce stress and improve overall job satisfaction. Healthy social connections also play a critical role in emotional stability and resilience. When individuals have a network of supportive relationships, they are better equipped to handle life's challenges. For example, during difficult times, such as the loss of a loved one, having friends and family who offer emotional support can help someone navigate their grief more effectively. These relationships act as a buffer against the negative effects of stress and loneliness, contributing to a person's overall well-being and ability to bounce back from adversity.

Maintaining good mental health involves a holistic approach that emphasizes the importance of self-care, stress management, and timely support (Komolafe and Okafor,

2024). Engaging in regular physical activity is a key strategy, as exercise not only improves physical health but also reduces anxiety and depression, offering a natural boost to mental well-being. For example, activities like jogging, yoga, or even daily walks can help regulate mood and improve overall mental resilience. Adequate sleep is another critical factor, as it allows the brain to process emotions and recover from daily stressors. Healthy eating also plays a crucial role, as a balanced diet rich in nutrients supports brain function and emotional stability. Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon and walnuts, have been shown to reduce symptoms of depression, highlighting the connection between nutrition and mental health. In addition to these lifestyle practices, seeking professional help is vital when facing more significant mental health challenges. Therapists and counselors can provide tailored strategies to manage stress, anxiety, and other mental health concerns. For instance, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a widely used technique that helps individuals reframe negative thoughts and behaviors, leading to improved mental health outcomes (Onyemaechi, Ifedi Okeke, Igbo and Aye, 2023).

Practicing mindfulness, such as through meditation or breathing exercises, helps in managing stress by keeping individuals grounded in the present moment (Adigun, Mustapha, Adisa and Tukur, 2023). Building strong social networks is equally important, as connections with family and friends offer emotional support, reduce feelings of isolation, and enhance coping mechanisms. For example, joining a

community group or participating in social activities can foster a sense of belonging, which is essential for maintaining a positive mental state.

2.1.3 Social Media and Students' Emotional Wellbeing

Social media has woven itself into the fabric of students' daily lives, providing new avenues for emotional expression and connection (Mackey, 2018). Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and TikTok allow students to share their successes, connect with peers, and engage with communities that reflect their interests and passions. For instance, students might post about personal milestones, seek encouragement from their social circles, or join groups centered around hobbies or causes they care about. This access to a supportive network and diverse experiences can foster a sense of belonging and validation, enriching their social lives. However, the pervasive nature of social media also brings potential emotional pitfalls (Oyinlola, 2022). The pressure to maintain a certain image or gain approval through likes and comments can contribute to feelings of anxiety and inadequacy. Students may experience stress from negative interactions or become distressed by comparing themselves to the idealized lives portrayed by others. For example, seeing curated images of peers' achievements or lifestyles can create unrealistic expectations and exacerbate feelings of self-doubt. As such, while social media offers valuable opportunities for connection, it also necessitates careful management to mitigate its potential emotional drawbacks.

One major concern is the impact of social comparison, which can significantly affect students' emotional well-being. When students compare themselves to their peers or celebrities on social media, they may experience feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. For example, exposure to idealized images of success or beauty can lead to unrealistic expectations about their own achievements or appearance. This constant comparison can make students feel like they fall short, further intensifying their self-doubt and dissatisfaction. The effects of social comparison can manifest in various ways, such as heightened anxiety and depression. For instance, a student who frequently views posts showcasing others' glamorous lifestyles might feel inadequate about their own circumstances. This discrepancy between perceived and actual success can lead to chronic stress and emotional distress.

Cyberbullying poses a significant challenge due to its pervasive nature and the severe emotional impact it can have on students (Oyigebbe and Achile, 2024). Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying operates continuously, allowing harassment to occur at any time and in any place, which makes it difficult for victims to find respite. For example, a student receiving threatening messages through social media platforms might find it impossible to escape the harassment, even in the safety of their own home. This constant exposure can lead to increased stress levels, depression, and a tendency to withdraw from social interactions. Additionally, the anonymity provided by social media can encourage bullies to act with more aggression and cruelty than they might in face-to-face situations. This anonymity not only shields the perpetrators from

immediate consequences but also intensifies the victim's feelings of isolation and helplessness. For instance, a student might face ongoing, anonymous attacks in the form of degrading comments or false rumors, contributing to a worsening of their emotional well-being.

Social media has the potential to positively influence students' emotional well-being by offering access to valuable support and resources (Olorunsogo, Balogun, Ayo-Farai, Ogundairo, Maduka, Okongwu and Onwumere, 2024). Online support groups and mental health communities can provide a platform for students to connect with others who understand their experiences. For instance, Facebook groups dedicated to mental health topics allow students to share their struggles and receive encouragement from peers who have faced similar issues. Such interactions create a sense of community and belonging, which can alleviate feelings of isolation and enhance emotional support. Additionally, platforms like Reddit host various subreddits focused on mental health, where users can seek advice and find solace in shared experiences. These digital spaces offer students a means to engage in supportive conversations and gain insights into managing their emotional challenges. By participating in these online forums, students benefit from the collective wisdom and empathy of others, contributing to a more connected and resilient emotional state.

2.1.4 Social Media and Students' Social Wellbeing

Social media has significantly impacted students' social well-being by providing new avenues for connection and interaction (Nwambam, Alegu and Maku, 2022). For instance, platforms like Instagram and Snapchat allow students to stay in touch with friends and peers, regardless of physical distance. This constant connectivity helps maintain relationships, which is crucial for building a supportive social network. Students often share their daily experiences and milestones, such as academic achievements or personal celebrations, creating a sense of involvement and community among their peers. Additionally, social media platforms offer a space for emotional support and shared experiences, further strengthening social bonds. Students can turn to these platforms to discuss challenges, seek advice, and offer encouragement, which can be particularly beneficial during stressful periods. This interaction not only helps in navigating social dynamics but also contributes to a greater feeling of support and solidarity among students.

Social media can significantly affect students' social well-being, particularly by creating pressure to showcase an idealized version of oneself. This pressure often stems from the constant need to present curated, polished versions of their lives on platforms like Instagram or Facebook. For example, students may feel obligated to regularly post updates that highlight their achievements, appearance, or social activities. Such compulsive sharing can lead to a distorted self-image and increased stress as they compare their lives to the seemingly perfect lives of others. This constant comparison

can have detrimental effects on students' self-esteem and mental health. When students measure their worth against the filtered and often unrealistic portrayals they encounter online, it can foster feelings of inadequacy and anxiety. For instance, a student might see peers showcasing their successes and experiences, which can create a sense of failure if they perceive their own life as less impressive.

The rise of social media has brought convenience to communication, yet it can also result in fewer face-to-face interactions (Adelakun, 2018). While platforms like Instagram and X allow for quick exchanges, they often lack the depth and nuance of personal conversations. For instance, students who frequently engage on these platforms might find themselves less adept at handling real-life social situations, missing opportunities to develop critical interpersonal skills. Face-to-face interactions are vital for cultivating strong, meaningful relationships and for practicing effective communication skills that are essential in personal and professional settings. Excessive reliance on social media can also impact the quality of relationships by creating a superficial connection. For example, a student who primarily communicates through text messages or online comments might struggle to convey emotions and intentions as clearly as they would in a direct conversation. This can lead to misunderstandings and weakened bonds with peers. Engaging in face-to-face interactions helps individuals build trust and empathy, which are fundamental for maintaining genuine relationships and for personal growth in various aspects of life.

Social media has proven to be a potent force for social activism and engagement (Dambo, Ersoy, Auwal, Olorunsola, Olonode, Arikewuyo and Joseph, 2022). Students frequently harness these platforms to spotlight critical issues and mobilize support. For instance, the #EndSARS movement emerged as a powerful force for addressing sexual harassment, largely due to the extensive reach and rapid dissemination capabilities of social media. This movement enabled students and individuals worldwide to share their stories, garner support, and advocate for change on a global scale. Similarly, social media has played a pivotal role in climate change activism, with campaigns like Fridays for Future gaining momentum through digital channels. Students have used these platforms to organize events, share information, and build networks with others who are passionate about environmental issues. This digital engagement not only amplifies their voices but also fosters a sense of solidarity and collective action among young activists, allowing them to drive significant social and environmental change.

2.1.5 Social Media and Students' Cognitive Functioning

Cognitive functioning involves mental processes such as memory, attention, problem-solving, and decision-making (Akanni, 2021). Social media has become a central part of students' lives, affecting these cognitive processes in both positive and negative ways. The frequent use of platforms like Instagram, X and TikTok often demands rapid processing of information and immediate responses. This can enhance students' ability to multitask and quickly shift their focus, which may be beneficial in fast-paced environments. For example, students might become adept at handling multiple tasks

simultaneously, such as responding to messages while browsing content. Conversely, the constant need to switch between various types of content on social media can lead to diminished attention spans, particularly for tasks that require extended periods of concentration. Research suggests that students who frequently engage with these platforms may find it challenging to focus on academic assignments or complex problem-solving activities, which require sustained mental effort.

The impact of social media on memory is significant and multifaceted. Engaging with social media platforms often requires students to recall and utilize information regularly, whether for crafting posts, participating in online discussions, or sharing insights (Akinbor and Olayinka, 2023). This frequent retrieval and application can enhance short-term memory by reinforcing and practicing recall. For example, a student who regularly posts updates or engages in academic forums may develop sharper skills in quickly retrieving recent information or responding to discussions effectively. On the other hand, reliance on social media for storing and accessing information, such as using bookmarks or saving posts, might limit the need to memorize and internalize details. This convenience can lead to a decline in long-term memory retention, as the effort to remember and process information is reduced. For instance, if a student frequently refers to saved articles or notes rather than committing key concepts to memory, it might hinder their ability to deeply understand and retain this information over time.

Social media significantly influences problem-solving skills in various ways. Platforms such as Reddit and Quora offer students access to a wide range of perspectives and collective problem-solving resources (Calude, 2023). For example, on Reddit, students might join a community focused on a specific academic subject, where they can engage in discussions, ask questions, and receive diverse insights from others. This exposure to multiple viewpoints can sharpen their critical thinking and analytical abilities, helping them to approach problems from different angles and develop more effective solutions. On the other hand, the vast amount of information available on social media can sometimes lead to cognitive overload. When students are bombarded with excessive content, it can become difficult to sift through and critically assess the relevance and accuracy of the information. For instance, a student researching a complex topic might struggle to distinguish between credible sources and misleading ones amidst the abundance of data. This overload can hinder their ability to effectively process information and apply it to problem-solving tasks.

Social media plays a notable role in shaping students' decision-making processes by presenting numerous choices and influences (Adeyanju, Mogaji, Olusola and Oyinlola, 2020). For instance, on platforms such as YouTube, the recommendation algorithms suggest content based on past viewing habits, which can impact students' decisions about what to watch or engage with. This exposure to a wide array of information can be beneficial, as it introduces students to diverse perspectives and ideas, potentially broadening their understanding of various subjects. By encountering different

viewpoints and content, students have the opportunity to make more informed decisions about their interests and preferences. On the other hand, social media can also lead to conformity, where students may make choices based on prevailing trends rather than their own critical thinking. For example, if a popular trend or challenge gains traction on platforms like Instagram, students might feel compelled to participate or endorse it, even if it does not align with their personal values or interests. This influence can pressure students to follow the crowd, potentially undermining their ability to make independent and thoughtful decisions.

Social media's impact on cognitive functioning is noticeable in how it shapes communication and language skills (Ikachoi, 2017). Platforms like TikTok and Instagram promote brevity and creativity through the use of memes, hashtags and emojis (Calude, 2023). For instance, a student might use a meme to convey a complex emotion quickly, which can enhance their ability to communicate ideas succinctly and develop digital literacy. This quick and creative expression can help users adapt to the fast-paced nature of online interactions, boosting their ability to convey messages effectively in a digital context. On the other hand, the focus on short, engaging messages can also influence language development in a more restrictive way. Students may become accustomed to surface-level communication and prioritize speed over depth, which can impede their ability to engage in more nuanced and thoughtful discussions. For example, frequent use of abbreviated language or informal expressions in social media may lead to a reduced focus on developing more elaborate writing and

speaking skills, potentially limiting their ability to articulate complex ideas in a more formal setting.

2.1.6 Social Media and Students' Resilience

Resilience is defined as the ability to adapt to challenging situations and recover from adversity (Hornor, 2017). Social media plays a notable role in shaping students' resilience by influencing their coping mechanisms in the face of stress. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram and X offer students' avenues to connect with others, seek support, and share experiences, which can strengthen their resilience. For instance, a student struggling with exam anxiety might benefit from joining an online study group. Such groups provide a space for exchanging study strategies and receiving emotional support from peers, thereby enhancing the student's ability to manage academic pressures. Additionally, social media can serve as a tool for emotional support and community building. Students who are dealing with personal issues can find comfort in online communities or forums where they share similar experiences. For example, a student dealing with family issues might join a support group on Instagram that focuses on family dynamics and emotional well-being. This sense of community and shared understanding can improve their coping skills and overall resilience, making it easier to navigate both academic and personal challenges.

The impact of social media on resilience can be complex, as it presents both opportunities and challenges (Irons, Paton and Johnston, 2017). On one hand, social

media provides platforms where students can find support from peers, share experiences, and access resources. For example, online support groups can offer encouragement and advice, helping students navigate academic and personal challenges. These interactions can build a sense of community and reinforce positive coping strategies. On the other hand, social media also introduces risks that can weaken resilience. Students are often exposed to cyberbullying, which can lead to emotional distress and reduced self-worth. Additionally, the constant comparison to idealized images and lifestyles on social media can create unrealistic expectations, contributing to feelings of inadequacy. For instance, seeing curated posts of success and perfection may intensify stress and lower self-esteem, making it harder for students to handle everyday challenges and maintain a healthy mental state.

Social media offers numerous benefits for students, especially in terms of building resilience (Jurgens and Helsloot, 2018). It serves as a valuable resource for accessing information and connecting with supportive communities. For instance, platforms like Reddit or specialized Facebook groups allow students to engage with others who have similar experiences. These online spaces often feature practical advice, motivational content, and coping strategies tailored to various challenges, including mental health issues. By participating in these communities, students can gain insights and support that help them manage their difficulties more effectively. In addition to direct support, social media can enhance resilience by providing a sense of belonging and shared experiences. When students join online groups related to their struggles, they often find

comfort in knowing that others face similar challenges. This shared experience can reduce feelings of isolation and offer reassurance. For example, students dealing with anxiety may join forums where they can exchange strategies for managing symptoms or receive encouragement from peers.

Social media provides students with a platform to build and sustain meaningful social networks, which are essential for fostering resilience. Positive interactions with peers and family through social media can strengthen their emotional support systems. For example, when students share personal achievements and milestones with an encouraging online community, it can enhance their confidence and motivation. This virtual support network helps them navigate challenges more effectively and maintain a positive outlook during tough times. The role of social media in fostering a sense of community is particularly evident in academic and personal achievements. Engaging with supportive groups or friends online allows students to receive encouragement and advice, which can be instrumental in overcoming difficulties. For instance, students who post about their academic progress or personal struggles often receive feedback that boosts their morale and aids them in persisting through obstacles.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Abdulkareem (2020) conducted a study on the impact of social networking site usage on the psychological well-being of undergraduates in Nigerian universities. The research employed a descriptive survey design, using stratified sampling to select six

universities and simple random sampling to choose 736 participants. Data was collected through an adapted questionnaire, which was validated for face and content validity, and reliability was tested with a coefficient of 0.68. The results indicated a significant effect of social networking site usage on various aspects of undergraduates' psychological well-being, including moral, social, intellectual, and emotional well-being ($X^2 = 442.736, p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 344.965, p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 91.269, p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 212.288, p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 125.603, p < 0.05$). Based on these findings, the study recommended that undergraduates use social networking sites thoughtfully to enhance their psychological well-being.

Asibong, Okafor, Asibong, Ayi, Omoronyia and Owoidoho (2020), conducted a study to assess the psychological effects of Internet/social media usage among undergraduates in Calabar. A descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in the University of Calabar, Nigeria. Multi-staged sampling technique was used to recruit equal proportions of the undergraduate students from five selected Faculties in the University. Internet Addiction Test and General Health Questionnaire-28 were used to measure addiction to Internet and psychological health status of the respondents, respectively. Socio-demographic questionnaire was used to obtain information on demographic and social media characteristics of the respondents. Chi-square and independent t-test were used as inferential statistics, with P value set at 0.05. Four hundred and eighteen (418) respondents completed the questionnaires. The mean age was 21.5 ± 3.6 years. Male: Female ratio was 1:0.99. WhatsApp (59.8%) was the most commonly visited social

media platform, whereas entertainment (52.2%) was the most common reason for social media use. About one-fifth (20.1%) had moderate-to-severe forms of Internet addiction, whereas one-third (33.1%) were psychologically distressed. Psychological distress was found to be significantly more common among respondents with mild/none, compared with those with moderate-to-severe forms of Internet addiction ($P = 0.00$). Respondents with moderate-to-severe forms of Internet addiction had significantly lower mean depression and anxiety scores compared with those with mild or no form of addiction ($P = 0.00$).

Anierobi, Etodike, Okeke and Ezennaka (2021), conducted a study examining the impact of compulsive social media use on academic procrastination and its effects on academic achievement among undergraduates at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Employing a correlation design with a 0.05 significance level, the study surveyed 965 students selected through cluster sampling during their exams. Using the Social Media Scale (SSMAS) and the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) for data collection, and measuring academic achievement through students' cumulative grade points, the data were analyzed via regression analysis. The results showed that 33.47% of students exhibited high levels of academic procrastination, 42.70% moderate levels, and 23.83% low levels. The study found that social media addiction significantly predicted both academic procrastination and academic achievement. The researchers recommended guiding students in the effective use of social media for academic purposes and providing counseling services to address chronic or addictive use, regardless of gender.

Apuke and Iyendo (2017) investigated the influence of social networking on students, finding a generally positive impact. Their study focused on the access, utilization, and negative effects of social networking sites among students in higher education. Using a questionnaire, they collected valid responses from 250 students across Nigerian higher institutions. The research revealed that all students in the sampled institutions use social networking sites, with Facebook being the most popular. However, few students use these platforms for academic purposes; most prefer chatting with friends and family. The study also found that excessive use of social networking sites negatively affects students' spoken and written grammar. As a result, the study recommends that higher institutions integrate social media into their course delivery systems. Lecturers should engage students through social media for communication and assignment submissions, encouraging its use for educational purposes rather than just social interaction.

Nwambam, Alegu, and Maku (2022) conducted a study on the impact of extensive social media usage on the mental health of undergraduates at Ebonyi State University during the COVID-19 pandemic. Anchored on the Health Belief Model and utilizing a survey design with a purposive sample size of 385, the study revealed that students spent excessive time on social media for activities such as business transactions, relationships, gaming, and sports. This prolonged usage led to negative mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, headaches, and insomnia. The study recommended that parents monitor their children's social media use to prevent distractions caused by the platform's allure.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is hinge on the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Social Cognitive Theory, introduced by Albert Bandura in 1986, focuses on how people learn and develop behaviors through observing others (Ilmiani, Wahdah and Mubarak, 2021). This learning process shapes not only how individuals act but also how they think and feel. When someone watches another person's actions, they often imitate or model that behavior, especially if it seems successful or rewarding. This process shows how our environment and the people around us play a significant role in shaping our behavior. The theory also explains that behavior is influenced by a continuous interaction between personal factors, such as beliefs and attitudes, and environmental factors, like social settings and cultural norms. This theory provides a framework for understanding how behavior is not solely determined by internal factors like motivation or external factors like rewards. Instead, behavior results from the dynamic interplay of personal thoughts, emotions, and environmental influences. This perspective is important in understanding how individuals adapt and change over time based on what they see and experience in their surroundings.

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) significantly influences the study by providing a framework to understand how students' interactions with social media shape their mental health. According to SCT, individuals learn behaviors and form attitudes through the observation of others within their environment, including social media platforms. For example, students who frequently see their peers sharing positive or

negative experiences online may imitate these behaviors or adopt similar attitudes, which can impact their emotional well-being. This exposure can lead to increased anxiety, depression, or enhanced self-esteem, depending on the nature of the content they engage with. Furthermore, SCT emphasizes the role of self-efficacy, which is the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations. In the context of social media, students may develop a sense of self-efficacy by comparing their lives to others, influencing their self-perception and mental health. For instance, students who perceive themselves as successful on social media may experience increased confidence, while those who feel inadequate compared to others may suffer from low self-esteem and negative mental health outcomes. Thus, SCT provides a valuable lens through which the complex relationship between social media use and students' mental health can be explored and understood.

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) offers valuable insights into understanding human behavior through its comprehensive approach (Manjarres-Posada, Onofre-Rodríguez and Benavides-Torres, 2020). It highlights the interaction between personal factors, behavior, and the environment, which helps create a well-rounded view of how individuals learn and evolve. For example, in educational settings, SCT can explain how students model their behavior after teachers or peers, showing how their actions and attitudes are influenced by their observations. This approach also applies to therapy, where clients might adopt new coping strategies by observing and mimicking the behaviors of others in similar situations. Another notable strength of SCT is its focus on

observational learning, which provides practical insights into behavior acquisition. This aspect of the theory demonstrates how people can develop new skills and attitudes by watching others, which is useful in various fields. For instance, in media studies, SCT can be used to understand how characters in television shows or movies influence viewers' attitudes and behaviors. Its adaptability allows SCT to be relevant in diverse contexts, from health promotion to organizational behavior, making it a versatile framework for analyzing and addressing different behavioral patterns.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) has faced various criticisms, particularly regarding its emphasis on observational learning. Critics argue that SCT may overlook the influence of biological and genetic factors on behavior, focusing heavily on external influences while neglecting internal processes such as motivation, emotion, and cognitive development. For example, a person's ability to change habits might be influenced not only by observing others but also by their own emotional state and intrinsic motivation, which SCT might not fully address. Additionally, some argue that SCT is somewhat simplistic because it may not capture the full complexity of human behavior. In situations where behavior stems from unconscious processes or deep-seated emotional responses, these elements might not be easily observed or modeled, thus limiting the theory's applicability. For instance, an individual's reaction to trauma might involve complex emotional and psychological factors that SCT does not fully explain. These limitations suggest that while SCT provides valuable insights, integrating it with other theories could offer a more comprehensive understanding of human behavior.

2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature

The reviewed literature highlights the profound influence of social media on various aspects of students' lives, including their emotional, social, and cognitive well-being, as well as their resilience. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X have become integral to students' daily routines, offering opportunities for connection, self-expression, and support. While these platforms can enhance students' sense of belonging and provide avenues for emotional and social support, they also pose challenges, such as anxiety, diminished attention spans, and the pressure to maintain an idealized image. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) framework, particularly its emphasis on observational learning and self-efficacy, is crucial in understanding how students' interactions with social media influence their mental health. Empirical studies further reinforce these findings, revealing that social media usage significantly impacts students' psychological well-being, with both positive and negative outcomes. For instance, while social media can foster resilience by providing emotional support, it can also lead to academic procrastination and psychological distress.

Despite the extensive research on social media's impact, gaps remain in understanding the nuanced relationship between social media use and students' mental health. Most studies have focused on specific aspects, such as emotional or social well-being, without providing a comprehensive view that includes cognitive functioning and resilience. Additionally, there is limited exploration of how different types of social media interactions uniquely affect students' mental health. The current study, "The

Correlate of Social Media and Mental Health of Students," aims to address these gaps by offering a holistic examination of how social media influences students' emotional, social, and cognitive well-being, as well as their resilience. By integrating the Social Cognitive Theory, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how students' behaviors and attitudes, shaped by social media, impact their overall mental health.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the research procedures to be taken in carrying out the study. It is organized under the following subheadings:

3.1 Study Area

The study will focus on the undergraduate students from the Faculties of Social Sciences and Art at the University of Benin, which together have a population of 8,746 students. The overall student population at the university is 39,243, with a distribution across various faculties such as Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Environmental Science, Law, Life Sciences, Management Science, and others. To determine the sample size for this study, Taro Yamane's formula will be applied, considering a 95% confidence level and a 5% error tolerance.

3.2 Research Design

Descriptive survey design will be adopted for this study because it seeks to examine the statistical relationships between variables without manipulating them. This design is suitable for this study because it will enable the researcher to involve a group of residents from which data will be obtained, only from a few residents considered to be representative of the entire group needed.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all three thousand and thirty-six (3,036) undergraduate students in faculty of social sciences in the University of Benin.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Students across all Faculties

S/N	Faculty	Number of students
1	Physical sciences	3552
2	Social sciences	3036
3	Environmental sciences	596
4	Law	989
5	Life sciences	5088
6	Management sciences	3131
7	Agricultural sciences	2056
8	Basic medical sciences	1948
9	Medicine	795
10	Arts	5710
11	Dentistry	168
12	Engineering	3811
13	Education	7369
14	Pharmacy	994
	Total	39243

Source: University of Benin Data Management and Analytics, 2023

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

Based on the total number of students from the selected faculty, the sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's method since the population is known. Based on this, the formula was applied with the application of normal approximation with 95% confidence level and 5% error tolerance. The formula according to Guilford and Fruchter (1973) is provided as follows:

$$\text{Taro Yamane's formula} = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \frac{8,746}{1 + 8,746(0.05^2)} = \frac{3,036}{8.59} = 353.4 \approx 353$$

Where N = population = 8,746; n = sample size, e = level of significance = 0.05. therefore, the study population will be three hundred and fifty-three (353)

Based on the population, the sample from the two faculties was computed to be 353 undergraduate students. Three hundred and fifty-three (353) copies of questionnaire were proportionally administered to the students across both faculties. A stratified sampling technique was utilized in the administration of the questionnaire for the study

$$\text{Sample Representation} = \frac{\text{Total Sample size} \times \text{Population of each faculty}}{\text{Total Population}}$$

The distribution of the sample size is shown in the table below:

Table 2: Sample size of the selected Faculty

S/N	Faculty	Population	Sampled population
1	Social Sciences	3,036	123
2	Arts	5,710	230
	Total	8,746	353

3.5 Research Instrument

The research instrument adopted for this study is the questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire is titled “The Correlate of Social Media and Mental Health of Students Questionnaire (CSMSQ)” in the University of Benin. The questionnaire is made up of two sections; Section A and B. Section A will consist of the necessary demographic data of the respondents while Section B consists of items which will be drawn from the research questions. The instrument is a modified Likert-type scale with 4 point rating scale with response options Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4 points, Agreed (A) = 3 points, Disagreed (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1 point. A benchmark of 2.5 will be set as the decision rule. When the mean is greater than 2.5 the statement will be noted as agreed else disagreed.

3.6 Validity of the Instrument

In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire will be given to the supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Social Work, University of

Benin to read in order to make necessary corrections to ensure content as well as face validity. Corrections made on the draft will be incorporated in the final draft.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were generated through primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary source was based on the distribution of questionnaires to the randomly selected respondents, while the secondary source of data collection includes material consulted such as; journals, books, periodicals, newspapers, conference papers and seminar, unpublished thesis and internet materials..

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used to analyze the data that will be collected from the field. Mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (SD) will be used to answer all the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This chapter contains the findings of the Study. The responses to the various items on the study, the correlate of social media on the mental health of students in the University of Benin, Benin City were also organized and presented. The data analysis involves the examination of responses from 353 respondents, selected through stratified sampling technique.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analytical Techniques

The research questions were tested using mean and standard deviation. Tables and percentages were also employed in analyzing the demographic characteristics of respondents; the uses of tables were the most appropriate means of interpreting information for easy understanding.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Males	226	64.0
Females	127	36.0
Total	353	100.0

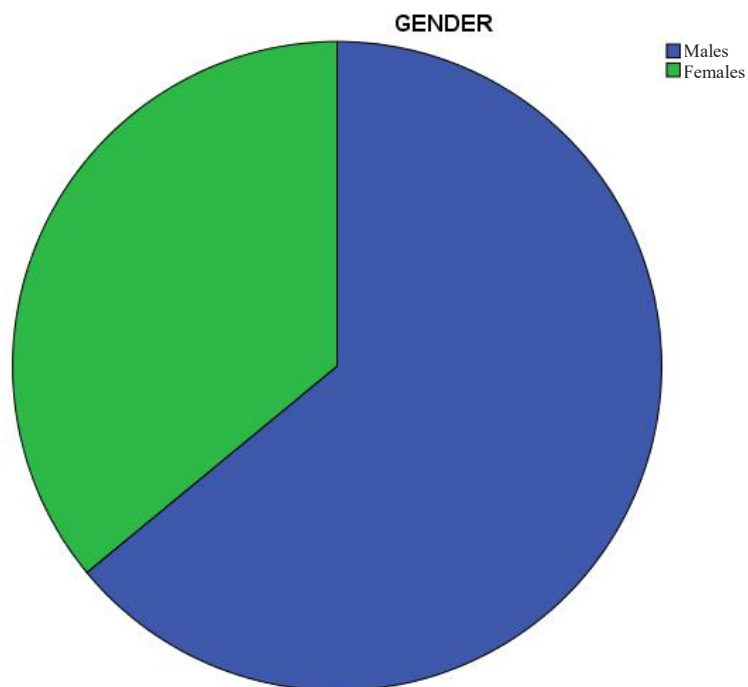


Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Level

Level	Frequency	Percent
400L	141	39.9
300L	59	16.7
200L	65	18.4
100L	88	24.9
Total	353	100.0

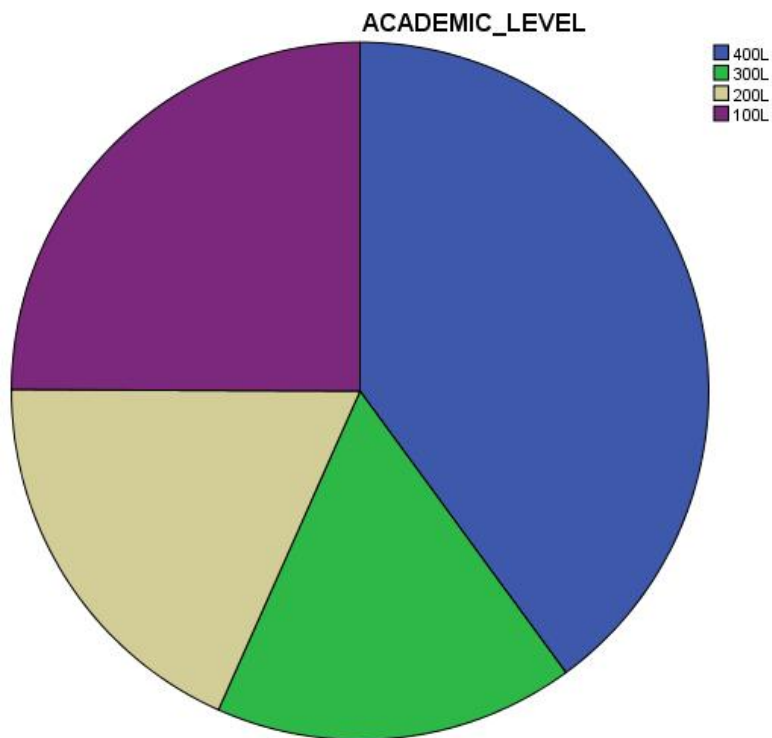


Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Faculty

Faculty	Frequency	Percent
Arts	173	49.0
Social Sciences	180	51.0
Total	353	100.0

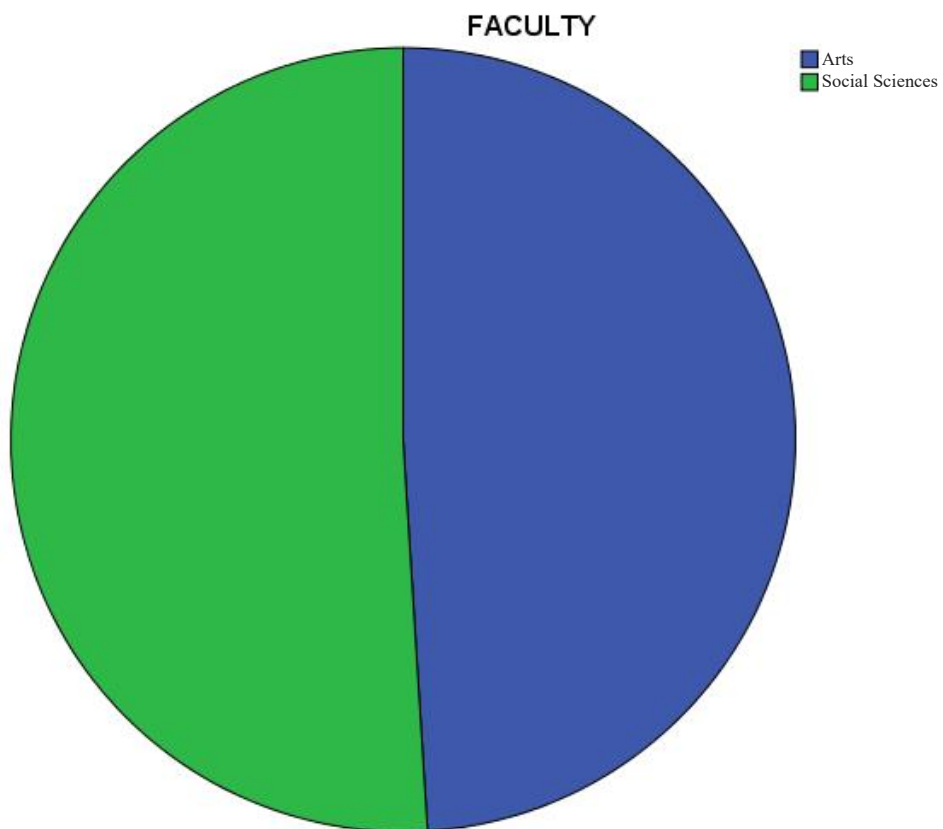
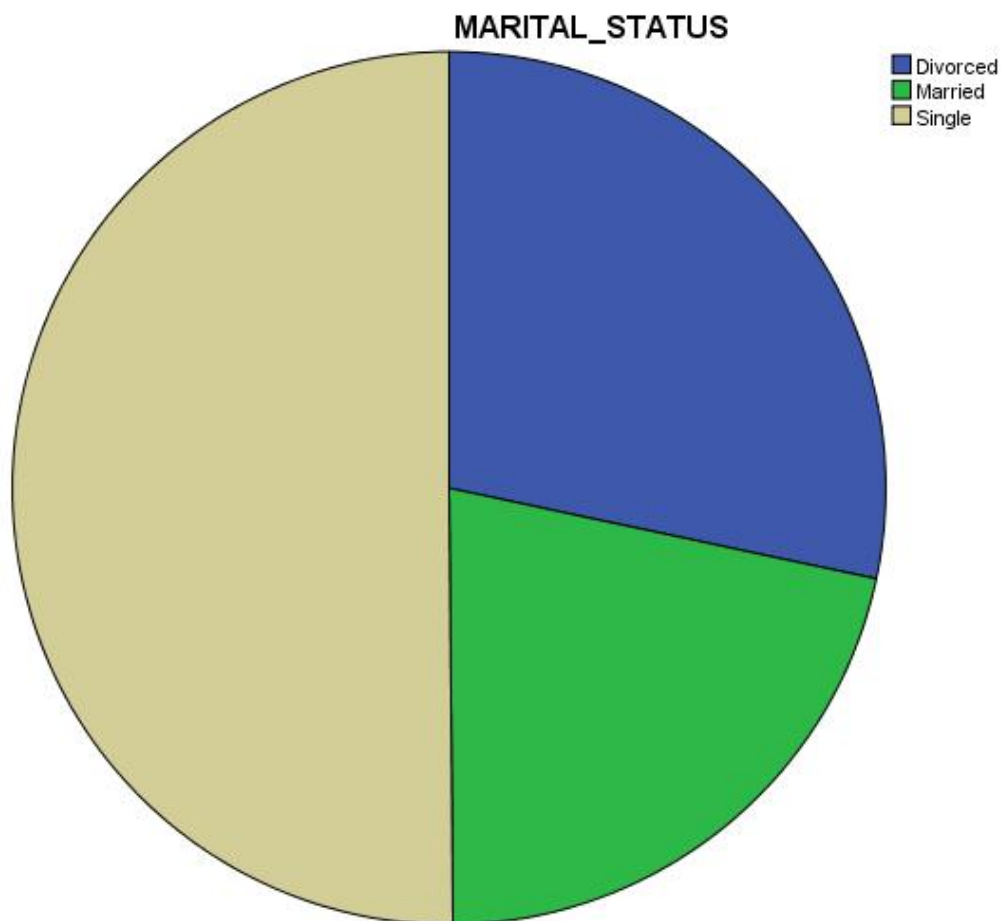


Table 6: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Faculty

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Divorced	100	28.3
Married	76	21.5
Single	177	50.1
Total	353	100.0



Research Question One: What is the influence of social media on students' emotional wellbeing in the University of Benin?

Table 7: Mean and S.D on the influence of social media on students' emotional wellbeing

S/N	Proposition	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	The use of social media affects how I feel about myself.	353	3.01	.598	Agree
2.	The amount of time I spend on social media impacts my overall well-being.	353	3.43	.496	Agree
3.	The way others portray their lives on social media influences my thoughts.	353	3.51	.501	Agree
4.	The interactions I have on social media affect my daily outlook.	353	2.89	.669	Agree

Benchmark: 2.50

Research question one sought to examine the influence of social media on students' emotional well-being in the University of Benin. The findings, as presented in Table 1, indicate that students agreed that social media impacts their emotional well-being across several dimensions. Specifically, the use of social media was reported to affect how they feel about themselves (Mean = 3.01, S.D = .598). Similarly, the amount of time spent on social media was found to influence their overall well-being (Mean = 3.43, S.D = .496), and the way others portray their lives on social media shaped their thoughts (Mean = 3.51, S.D = .501). Furthermore, social media interactions were noted to affect their daily outlook (Mean = 2.89, S.D = .669). These results collectively suggest a significant influence of social media on various aspects of students' emotional well-being.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of social media on students' social wellbeing in the University of Benin?

Table 8: Mean and S.D on the influence of social media on students' social wellbeing

S/N	Proposition	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	The use of social media helps in building my connections with others.	353	3.02	.680	Agree
2.	The time I spend on social media positively impacts how I interact with people around me.	353	2.98	.744	Agree
3.	The engagement with others on social media enhances my sense of belonging.	353	3.43	.495	Agree
4.	The relationships I have online make me feel more connected to others.	353	2.99	.701	Agree

Benchmark: 2.50

Research question two sought to examine the influence of social media on students' social well-being in the University of Benin. The analysis, as presented in Table 2, reveals that students generally agree that social media positively impacts their social connections and interactions. Specifically, the use of social media was found to help build connections with others (Mean = 3.02, SD = .680) and positively impacts how students interact with people around them (Mean = 2.98, SD = .744). Additionally, engagement with others on social media enhances their sense of belonging (Mean = 3.43, SD = .495), and online relationships contribute to feeling more connected (Mean = 2.99, SD = .701). These findings indicate that social media serves as a significant tool in fostering social interaction and enhancing a sense of community among students.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of social media on students’ cognitive functioning in the University of Benin?

Table 9: Mean and S.D on the influence of social media on students’ cognitive functioning

S/N	Proposition	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	The time spent on social media impacts my learning habits.	353	2.63	.765	Agree
2.	The frequent use of social media influences my ability to concentrate during studies.	353	2.51	.711	Agree
3.	The use of social media affects my ability to retain information from lectures.	353	2.54	.738	Agree
4.	The use of social media affects my ability to think critically during academic work.	353	3.11	.558	Agree

Benchmark: 2.50

Research question three sought to examine the influence of social media on students’ cognitive functioning in the University of Benin. The analysis in Table 3 revealed that students agreed that the time spent on social media impacts their learning habits ($M = 2.63$, $SD = .765$) and that frequent use of social media influences their ability to concentrate during studies ($M = 2.51$, $SD = .711$). Similarly, they agreed that social media use affects their ability to retain information from lectures ($M = 2.54$, $SD = .738$) and to think critically during academic work ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .558$). These findings indicate that social media usage has a notable influence on various aspects of students’ cognitive functioning.

Research Question Four: What is the influence of social media on students' resilience in the University of Benin?

Table 10: Mean and S.D on the influence of social media on students' resilience

S/N	Proposition	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	The experiences shared on social media encourage me to keep going when things are tough.	353	2.94	.657	Agree
2.	The information I get from social media supports my personal growth during difficult times.	353	3.05	.764	Agree
3.	The connections I make on social media help me stay strong when facing setbacks.	353	3.07	.668	Agree
4.	The support from social media communities strengthens my ability to handle stress.	353	3.06	.682	Agree

Research question four sought to examine the influence of social media on students' resilience in the University of Benin. The analysis presented in Table 4 indicates that students generally agree on the positive role of social media in enhancing their resilience. Specifically, they agree that experiences shared on social media encourage perseverance during tough times ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .657$). Additionally, students affirm that information from social media supports personal growth during difficult periods ($M = 3.05$, $SD = .764$). They also agree that social media connections help them remain strong when facing setbacks ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .668$) and that support from social media communities strengthens their ability to handle stress ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .682$).

4.2 Discussions of Findings

The findings of this study shed light on the correlates of social media and mental health of students. On research question one, the findings showed that social media significantly influences students' emotional well-being in various ways. Students expressed that their emotional states were affected by their time on social media, as well as by how others portray their lives online. These interactions shaped their self-perception, daily outlook, and overall emotional experiences. The results suggest that social media serves as a powerful tool in shaping emotional responses, whether positive or negative, depending on the context of usage and content consumed. The study aligns with research work by Volkova and Corley (2016), which reveals that social media usage generally affects students' overall emotional wellbeing.

On research question two, the findings indicated that social media positively impacts students' social well-being by fostering connections and interactions. Students reported that social media helps them build relationships and enhances their sense of belonging. The ability to interact with others online provided a platform for creating meaningful connections and feeling part of a community. These findings emphasize the value of social media as a tool for social engagement, enabling students to maintain and strengthen their social ties. Aligning with study by Ndubuaku, Inim, Ndudi, Samuel and Prince, (2020), revealing a significant relationship between social networking addiction, academic performance, health and social well-being of students ($p=0.001$). For research question three, the analysis demonstrated that social media usage influences students'

cognitive functioning. Students acknowledged that frequent use of social media affects their learning habits, concentration, and critical thinking during academic activities. They also noted its impact on their ability to retain information from lectures. These findings suggest that while social media can be a source of information and learning, its excessive use may disrupt cognitive processes essential for academic success, indicating a need for balance in usage.

On research question four, the findings showed that social media plays a positive role in enhancing students' resilience. Students agreed that shared experiences and information on social media encouraged perseverance and personal growth during difficult times. Additionally, support from social media communities helped them remain strong in the face of setbacks and stress. These findings highlight the supportive nature of social media platforms, which can foster resilience and promote coping strategies during challenging periods.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The purpose of this research was designed to investigate the correlate of social media and mental health of students in the University of Benin. Three hundred and fifty-three (353) undergraduate students were explored. The researcher made efforts in investigating the influence of social media on students' emotional wellbeing; influence of social media on students' social wellbeing; impact of social media on students' cognitive functioning, and; the influence of social media on students' resilience in the University of Benin, all of which have been discussed in details under the review of literature.

The collection of data was carried out through the administration of questionnaire to three hundred and fifty-three (353) undergraduate students in the University of Benin. The data were interpreted and discussed using mean and standard deviation table. The sampling technique used for the research was the stratified random sampling technique.

The findings based on the research questions revealed the following:

- Social media significantly influences students' emotional well-being, as it shapes their self-perception, daily outlook, and emotional experiences based on the content they consume and interactions they engage in online.

- Social media positively impacts students' social well-being by fostering connections and providing a sense of belonging through meaningful online interactions and strengthened social ties.
- Social media usage affects students' cognitive functioning, influencing their learning habits, concentration, and critical thinking, with excessive use disrupting essential cognitive processes for academic success.
- While social media offers emotional, social, and resilience-building benefits, its unbalanced use may hinder cognitive functioning, indicating a need for moderation and mindful engagement.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reveals that modern technologies, particularly social media, have a profound influence on students' motivation and various aspects of their well-being in the learning of Integrated Science. The findings demonstrate that social media significantly shapes students' emotional well-being by influencing their self-perception and emotional states based on interactions and content consumed. It also positively impacts their social well-being, enabling connections, fostering relationships, and creating a sense of belonging. Furthermore, the study highlights the dual role of social media in cognitive functioning, where it serves as a tool for learning but can also disrupt focus and critical thinking if used excessively. Lastly, social media enhances students' resilience by providing support and shared experiences that encourage perseverance and coping during challenging times.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools should consider implementing workshops that teach students how to manage their social media time effectively and use it in a way that fosters positive emotions and self-awareness.
2. Schools and educators should leverage social media's ability to foster connections by encouraging students to participate in positive community-focused online activities.
3. Educational institutions should introduce programs that teach students to critically evaluate online content, manage distractions, and integrate social media use constructively into their learning processes.
4. Schools should provide opportunities for students to share experiences and stories of overcoming challenges, both in-person and online.
5. Counselors and educators should be available to guide students in using social media as a support tool for emotional well-being.

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APPENDIX

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am an undergraduate student of the above-named Department, Faculty and University conducting a research titled “**The Correlate of Social Media and Mental Health of Students in the University of Benin, Benin City (2010- 2022)**” and need your responses in conducting a thorough research. Do understand that your participation as a respondent to this particular research is completely voluntary and that you are free to decline to participate without consequence at any point during the activity.

Please respond sincerely to the questions. Your responses will be treated with a high level of confidentiality. When the results of the study are reported, you will not be identified by the name or any other information that can be used to infer your identity.

Thank you.

Michael Chibuike ANADI
Researcher

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick (√) and write where applicable.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Please respond sincerely to the questions by ticking [√] where applicable. Your responses will be treated with a high level of confidentiality. Thank you

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- (1) Gender: Female (): Male ()
- (2) Academic Level: 100 (); 200 (); 300 (); 400 ()
- (3) Faculty: Social Sciences (); Arts ()
- (4) Marital Status: Single (); Married (); Divorced ()

SECTION B: MAIN QUESTIONS ON ITEMS PERTINENT TO THE STUDY

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

KEY: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD).

	Social media and students' emotional wellbeing	SA	A	D	SD
1.	The use of social media affects how I feel about myself.				
2.	The amount of time I spend on social media impacts my overall well-being.				
3.	The way others portray their lives on social media influences my thoughts.				
4.	The interactions I have on social media affect my daily outlook.				
	Social media and students' social wellbeing	SA	A	D	SD
5.	The use of social media helps in building my connections with others.				
6.	The time I spend on social media positively impacts how I interact with people around me.				
7.	The engagement with others on social media enhances my sense of belonging.				
8.	The relationships I have online make me feel more connected to others.				
	Social media and students' cognitive functioning	SA	A	D	SD
9.	The time spent on social media impacts my learning habits.				
10.	The frequent use of social media influences my ability to concentrate during studies.				
11.	The use of social media affects my ability to retain information from lectures.				
12.	The use of social media affects my ability to think critically during academic work.				
	Social media on students' resilience	SA	A	D	SD
13.	The experiences shared on social media encourage me to keep going when things are tough.				
14.	The information I get from social media supports my personal growth during difficult times.				
15.	The connections I make on social media help me stay strong when facing setbacks.				
16.	The support from social media communities strengthens my ability to handle stress.				

SECTION C: FREQUENCY TABLE

Gender:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Males	226	64.0	64.0	64.0
	Females	127	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	353	100.0	100.0	

Academic Level:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	400L	141	39.9	39.9	39.9
	300L	59	16.7	16.7	56.7
	200L	65	18.4	18.4	75.1
	100L	88	24.9	24.9	100.0
	Total	353	100.0	100.0	

Faculty:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Arts	173	49.0	49.0	49.0
	Social Sciences	180	51.0	51.0	100.0
	Total	353	100.0	100.0	

Marital Status:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Divorced	100	28.3	28.3	28.3
	Married	76	21.5	21.5	49.9
	Single	177	50.1	50.1	100.0
	Total	353	100.0	100.0	

Descriptive Statistics:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The use of social media affects how I feel about myself.	353	3.01	.598
The amount of time I spend on social media impacts my overall well-being.	353	3.43	.496
The way others portray their lives on social media influences my thoughts.	353	3.51	.501
The interactions I have on social media affect my daily outlook.	353	2.89	.669
The use of social media helps in building my connections with others.	353	3.02	.680
The time I spend on social media positively impacts how I interact with people around me.	353	2.98	.744
The engagement with others on social media enhances my sense of belonging.	353	3.43	.495
The relationships I have online make me feel more connected to others.	353	2.99	.701
The time spent on social media impacts my learning habits.	353	2.63	.765
The frequent use of social media influences my ability to concentrate during studies.	353	2.51	.711
The use of social media affects my ability to retain information from lectures.	353	2.54	.738
The use of social media affects my ability to think critically during academic work.	353	3.11	.558
The experiences shared on social media encourage me to keep going when things are tough.	353	2.94	.657
The information I get from social media supports my personal growth during difficult times.	353	3.05	.764
The connections I make on social media help me stay strong when facing setbacks.	353	3.07	.668
The support from social media communities strengthens my ability to handle stress.	353	3.06	.682
Valid N (listwise)	353		