



## **THE ROLES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES AS PANACEA TO THE MENACE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION OF ADOLESCENTS IN NIGERIA**

By

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The paper examined roles of public libraries as panacea to the menace of social media addiction of adolescents in Nigeria, it discussed social media as a platform where communication takes place and relationship with friends established, also social media is a platform that create profile, which make explicit and transverse relationship, the paper preempt the concepts of social media, social networking, adolescent, social media addiction, public libraries and public libraries roles and considered some of social network site (SNS) commonly used in Nigeria such as Facebook, Twitter, Google plus, 2go, Whatsapp and Niraland among others were explicit, uncontrolled used of social media was illustrated by diagram to depicts the level of addictions by adolescents, the remedies to alleviate/reduce social media addiction by public libraries was lauded, the paper suggested remedies that public libraries can provide through performing the statutory responsibilities are: reading culture, Centre for culture, center for information, Centre for education and research roles of public library. The paper concluded that social media has helped interpersonal communication beyond measure, above all the adolescents, should not have unlimited access to their phones to the extent that it will lead to addiction.*

**Keywords:** Public libraries, Social media, Social network, Adolescent

### **Introduction**

Today, the problems occurring in the communities, societies, and nations at large is making it so obvious that emotional and physical needs of adolescents needs serious attention than ever before, several cases of crime such as pornography, cyberbullying, drugs addicts, sexual harassment, inappropriate dress and many more reportedly



happened through the use of social media, however, there is no gainsaying that, the advent and advance of information technology have brought a significant shift from analog to a digital system, the world is changing and advancing because of the influence of science and technology and of course it seems almost impossible to escape the presence of ICT. Most of the appliances are of great benefits in everyday activities to all and sundry. In recent decades, with the development of information technology, especially with the rapid proliferation of Internet-based social media (e.g., Facebook, WeChat, or Instagram), the ways of interpersonal communication have drastically changed (Smith & Anderson, 2018; Stone & Wang, 2018). The ubiquitous social media platforms and the easy access to the Internet bring about the potential for social media addiction, namely, the irrational and excessive use of social media to the extent that it interferes with other aspects of daily life particularly the adolescents (Griffiths, 2012). Social media addiction is associated with a host of emotional, relational, health, and performance problems which is currently pronounced among both old and young.

Therefore, the way at which the use of social media is rapidly growing, its harmful effects particularly to adolescents is amazing, despite the social media's remarkable potential development and the great extent of its benefits there are still unfortunate and unpleasant happening when it comes to application. In a clearer term, there was an error in the handling of social media. The case of Tope, a 13-years old adolescent has challenged me as reported by Abdulmalik (2019) in Nigerian Tribune October 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 2019. These acts expose the high rate of social media usage by adolescents becoming more increasingly and uncontrollably addicted. To this end, the paper aims to explore what public libraries can do differently to reduce or alleviate this menace of social media addiction especially on the adolescents, as well as their remedies to social media addiction.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### *Concept of Social Media*

Human beings have fundamental needs to belong and to relate, for which interpersonal communication is key (Wang, 2013). Social media is in vogue in this age of communication especially among adolescents, being the general name given to every form of social interaction wherein social networks is a subset of it. Burke (2013) noted that social media is the media (content) that one uploads whether that is a blog, video, slideshow, podcast, newsletter, or an e-book. Dewing (2012) indicates that social media refers to the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute, users-created content or join online communication, therefore social media is considered as a one-to-many communication method. Boyd and Ellison (2008) social media is a platform that creates a profile, which makes an explicit and transverse relationship.

According to Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2001) media is defined as "the main ways that large numbers of people received information entertainment that is television, radio, and newspapers. The kinds of internet services commonly associated with social media include blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, social networking sites, status updates, virtual world content, and media sharing site. It is slightly different between social



media and social networks, but most times; most people use them interchangeably which is not correct usage (Ajeigbe, 2016). The ability to interact meaningfully with others in a community may be described as being "sociable ", but communities may be physically present or an online (virtual) community (Abdulmalik, 2019).

According to Cohn (2011) indicated that social media and social networking have been instrumental in many major events around the world, it is fair to say that social networking is a sub-category of social media many people think that social media and social networking are the same and therefore it can be used interchangeably. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue and that social networking on the other hand, is a social structure with people who are joined by a common interest. However, there are some types of the social network site (SNS) that are commonly in use in Nigeria they are highlighted and briefly discussed below: *Facebook, Twitter, Google plus, 2go, WhatsApp, Niraland, BBM* and *Badoo*, a few among these discussed below:

### *Facebook*

*Facebook* was launched in 2004 as Harvard-only exercise and remained a campus oriented site for two full years before it finally opened to the general public in 2006, even by that time; *Facebook* was considered big business (Digital Trends Staff, 2004). *Facebook* is a social networking site where users interact through a constantly evolving set of networks based on a college or University, friendship, interest groups favorite movies, and other criteria. Facebook famous among these changes is that anyone can now join, users no longer need to be affiliated as a student alumnus, faculty, or staff within an institution of higher education. Facebook networks formerly centered on colleges and Universities, the site now offers networks based on locations (cities and towns) workplace, high schools, colleges, or University.

However, *Facebook* users have far more power to create and share online identities to use the site to locate and interact with users (Educause Learning Initiative, 2007). Today Facebook has become a favorite destination for people business and organization to connect and share information because of its easy-to-use interface and interactive features. It is the most multimedia friendly of the big three networks as members can post, texts, pictures, audio and video inclusive bring communities of people together, free popular with all ages, keep up with people one care about, it allows others to keep up with one through one's ports of text, photo and links, link to articles chart with other Facebook members, invites' peoples to events (Starks, 2011).

### *Twitter*

*Twitter* is a widely used free social networking tool that allows adolescents to share information, in a real-time news feed Mistry (2011), through posting brief comments about their experiences and thoughts. Bristol et al (2010) Public messages sent and received via Twitter - or 'tweets' - are limited to no more than 140 characters and can include links to blogs, web pages, images, videos, and all other materials online. Despite the brevity imposed by this media tool, Twitter use is extensively used in a wide variety of circumstances and, according to Mollett et al (2011) 'thousands of academics and researchers at all levels of experience across all disciplines already use *Twitter* daily'.



After setting up a twitter account ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)), users establish a profile and a Twitter 'name' - for instance, @OTprofile - and it can then send and receive tweets, accessed through any computer or mobile networked device. Once a tweet is sent, it appears in the user's Twitter 'feed' and in the feed of anyone who is following them. Kingston (2011) indicated that twitter is a unique conversation tool that allows you to send and received short messages (called tweets) within your twitter community. The twitter website says you tweet to answer the question is "what one is thinking about"? Twitter goals impact everything one does on a tweet they determine one's account settings and whom one decides to follow. After the user has twitter for a while one may develop a greater understanding of what is possible.

### *2go*

*2go* is another chat application that enables friends and loves ones to stay connected with each other, with *2go* chat messages one can share and meet different people from almost all countries. *2go* chat is the mobile version of Facebook, which makes everything much easier because everything is done with a mobile phone. *2go* chat mobile messenger is a mobile application that is used for chatting and connecting with friends and family. With the *2go* chat, one can get the feel of staying connected and meeting new friends online, one can even share one's thoughts, pictures files, and software with one friend through *2go* chat mobile messengers (Ofodu & Falasinun, 2014).

### *WhatsApp*

*WhatsApp* is a cross-platform instant messaging application for smartphones. It enables users to send and received location information, images, video, and text messages in real-time to individuals and groups of friends at no cost. At present *WhatsApp* handles over 10billion messages per-day (Oliveira, 2003). *WhatsApp* is a messaging application that anyone can download to his smartphones and use to easily send messages to other people's mobile phones. The beautiful thing with the application is that it is available for most types of modern smartphones including iPhones, blackberries, windows phones devices, android phones, and Microsoft Nokia. Unlike traditional text messages sent using *SMS*, *WhatsApp* uses phone data connection so one does not have to pay for the individual messages one sends (Hedlund, 2013).

### *Social Media Addiction*

Social media addiction is a new term that refers to the uncontrollable use of social media that results in excessive time consumption, as well as problems with social interactions and fulfillment or normal role expectations at school, family, or at work (Abdulmalik, 2019). Leslie (2019) examined social networking addiction as a phrase sometimes used to refer to someone spending too much time using *Facebook* *Twitter*, *Instagram*, and other forms of social media so much that it interferes with other aspects of daily life. There is no official medical recognition of social networking addiction as a disease or disorder. Still, the cluster of behaviors associated with heavy or excessive use of social media has become the subject of much discussion and research. Consequently, Addiction usually refers to compulsive behavior that leads to negative effects.

In most cases, people feel compelled to do certain activities so often that they become a harmful habit, which then interferes with other important activities such as work

or school trace to adolescents. Social networking addicts could be considered someone with a compulsion to use social media to excess constantly checking status on *Facebook* updates or "stalking" people's profiles on *Facebook*. But it's hard to tell when fondness for an activity becomes a dependency and crosses the line into a damaging habit or addiction. Does spending three hours a day on *Twitter* reading random tweets from strangers mean you're addicted to *Twitter*? How about five hours? You could argue you were just reading headline news or needed to stay current in your field for work.

To buttress this, researchers at Chicago University concluded that social media addiction can be stronger than addiction to cigarettes and booze following an experiment in which they recorded the cravings of several hundred people for several weeks. Media cravings ranked ahead of cravings for cigarettes and alcohol. Consider this picture below with five adolescents sitting together but their mind is far, it depicts the level of addiction to social media.



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In other words, social media addiction is a term that is often used to refer to someone who spends too much time on social media like *Facebook* and *Twitter* or other forms of social media, which incredibly affects their thinking, reactions, expressions behaviors, and even their psychomotor domain is in trouble through these devices of social media addiction that is the case of the picture illustrated above.

Some people claimed that they spend time on social media to read the news and to find entertainment; they are not addicted to it. So how can we tell if someone is an addict? At Harvard University, researchers have performed MRI Scan that is (Magnetic Resonance Imaging is a test that uses powerful magnets, radio waves, and a computer to make detailed pictures inside your body), essentially on people's brains to see what happened when they talk about themselves, which is an essential part of what most people do in social media. The result showed that self-disclosure communication creates pleasure in the brain; it makes people happy and high when they talk and think about themselves. Nevertheless, there is no direct conclusion to determining if someone is a social media addict, but significantly, many physicians have observed similar symptoms such as depression, anxiety, psychological disorders, and more are the proofs of social

media addiction particularly in adolescents.



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Here is a couple sitting together taken coffee thinking they are discussing with one another but two of them are busy with phones and social media and networks to communicate with friends who are far away.

Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song, and Wang (2019) stressed that social media addiction can be viewed as one form of Internet addiction, where individuals exhibit a compulsion to use social media to excess. Individuals with social media addiction are often overly concerned about social media and are driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on to and use social media (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). Studies have shown that the symptoms of social media addiction can be manifested in mood, cognition, physical and emotional reactions, and interpersonal and psychological problems (Balakrishnan & Shamim, 2013). It has been reported that social media addiction affects approximately 12% of users across social networking sites (Alabi, 2012). Many studies on social media usage and mental health have shown that the prolonged use of social media such as Facebook is positively associated with mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, and depression and negatively associated with long-term well-being (Eraslan-Capan, 2015). For example, the time spent on social media was positively related to depressive symptoms among high school students in Central Serbia Pantic et al., (2012) and among young adults in the United States (Lin et al, 2016).

Furthermore, certain categories of social media users are associated with reduced academic performance among adolescents. For example, Lau (2017) found whereas using social media for academic purposes did not predict academic performance indexed by the cumulative grade point average, using social media for non-academic purposes



(video gaming in particular) and social media multitasking negatively predicted academic performance. A large sample (N = 1893) survey conducted in the United States also found that the time students spent on Facebook were negatively associated with their total GPAs (Junco, 2012). Laboratory experiments have provided further evidence for the negative relationship between social media use and academic outcomes. For example, Wood & et al (2012) found that multi-tasking via texting, e-mail, MSN, and Facebook had negative effects on real-time learning performance.

Jiang, Hou, and Wang (2016) found that the use of Weibo, the Chinese equivalence of Twitter, had negative effects on information comprehension. Importantly, frequent social media usage does not necessarily indicate social media addiction (Griffiths, 2010) and therefore does not always have negative implications for individuals' mental health. A key distinction between normal over engagement in social media that may be occasionally experienced by many and social media addiction is that the latter is associated with unfavorable consequences when online social networking becomes uncontrollable and compulsive Andreassen, (2015). Studies investigating social media addiction have mainly focused on Facebook addiction. It has been shown that addiction to Facebook is positively associated with depression, anxiety, and insomnia.

### **Concept of Adolescent**

Conger (1977) defined adolescence as a period of rapid change-physical, physiological, psychological, and social. If we are to begin to understand the nature of these changes and their relations to each other and prior and subsequent development in the life of the individual, it is necessary to set forth briefly some basic principles and concepts of development that relate not only to adolescence but to the entire life span. According to Eni-Olorunda (2013), the word adolescence is of Latin origin, derived from the verb *adolescere*, meaning "to grow into adulthood". The adolescent stage, therefore, is a transition period biologically, psychologically, socially, and economically from childhood to adulthood (Steinberg, 1996). This is a period every child looks forward to in that he has a feeling of attainment of adulthood which grants him the privilege of being free to do everything an adult does in the society such as getting married, working to earn a living, and also a right to vote.

According to Moronkola and Aremu (2004), adolescence is a period of rapid physical and emotional change, characterized by stresses and tensions as the child strives to establish an individual identity on the journey from dependence to independence and adulthood. It is a period in which the growing child experiences considerable acceleration in growth. It is also a stage in human development in which children experience transformation in their physique, emotion, cognitive, and social interaction. Adolescence is a trying period associated with psychosocial stress and storms. A critical period of life in which an adolescent is not taken as an adult, neither does he/she take self as a child. This, therefore, creates a social-psychological gulf in the life of an adolescent.

Fayombo (2004) refers to this as being cut in between two worlds. This calls for the question of the actual age range of adolescence period. Psychologists and other scholars with bias in adolescence seem not to have had a consensus on the age range of adolescence period. These variations in the age range of adolescence could be as a result of the environment, cultural background, socio-economic status of the parents, and



the physiological components of the adolescent. While the onset of adolescence begins at age 12 and ends at age 17 in some adolescents, it could start as late as age 14 or 15 and end at age 18 or 19 in some. In some societies, adolescence as a life span starts as early as age 11. Feldman (2000) remarked that it is common for a girl to begin to menstruate from age 8 or 9 then to the last 16 pages.

According to Feldman (2000), the age at which puberty begins has important implications for the adolescents' feelings especially, about themselves as well as how others treat them. This is one of the challenges confronting adolescents, Leigh (2004) noted that from childhood to puberty, there is not much difference in the growth pattern of a boy and a girl; both develop physically and mentally but from teen-age i.e. from age thirteen to nineteen (13-19), both of them develop to adulthood.

### **Public Libraries Roles**

A library is an agency, which engages in the collection. Processing, preservation, and dissemination of recorded information in the various formats most convenient to its target users, the library is a hub where all kinds of information flow from point of purchase to the point of use by clientele, the library is organized collections that that process to meet the information needs of users. Olayinka (2010) opined that public libraries are generally accepted as public goods. They are universities of the people since it gives access to every intending member of the public. Librarians' Glossary Dictionary (1977) defined a public library as a library established by local, state, or central government for the use of the general public. There are, however, some individuals or organizations that establish a library that offers services to the public free of charge, and such libraries also provide educational, social, and political information to people in a particular community.

Sasi (2016) public library is a welfare center which provides useful services to the community by fostering education, promoting culture, providing scope for healthy recreation, and disseminates information to all section of the society. The public library is a conventional university of populace meaning that it meant for both learned and unlearned. Public Library is a learning center where people can take part in learning activities, discuss and share knowledge and information. The main function of the public Library in Nigeria is the provision of information contained in books, newspapers, magazines, journals, and audio-visual to users according to their needs. They also provide an avenue for recreation and relaxation. Public Libraries in developed countries perform the same functions but with some additional which include postal services for citizens living in remote farmhouses, establishment and provision of library and information services to potential users such as Prisoners, Hospital Patients, and the handicapped. Public Library "Must be accessible and its door open for free and equal use by all members of the community regardless of race, color, nationality, age, sex, religion, status, or education.

If these beautiful definitions of public library open to all generality of people, adolescents are not exempted either for a public library to care for. To realize the statutory roles of public libraries which mandatorily involve the acquisition, collection, organization, and dissemination of information available in the form of printed and non-printed materials for effective use? Patrons of public libraries are very many as they cut across all walks of life and also embrace illiterates, pensioners, children, adolescents, adults, farmers,



physically challenged people, etc. The public library is therefore the main arena through which the overall information resources in various areas of knowledge are made freely available to all members of the society irrespective of age, sex, religion, cultural background, and educational standard as well as political and social inclination.

### **Remedies to Alleviate Social Media Addiction of Adolescents by Public Libraries**

Since the basic objective of a public library is to provide useful information to the general public regardless of age, education, sex, culture, religion, and ethnicity to satisfy their information, education, and recreational needs. Since adolescents are part of that generality that public library is responsible to cater for, therefore the paper explores the roles as a remedy to reduced social media addiction, the paper noted and agreed with Sasi (2016) that public libraries through performing its statutory functions can reduce social media addiction in adolescents by taken proactive steps through the listed cautions: Reading culture, Center for cultures, Center for information, Center for education and Research role of the public library.

*Reading Culture:* One of the sole responsibilities of the public library is to promote reading culture /reading habit of the populace, therefore reading culture of adolescents should be encouraged how public library would do that, by ensuring that good books are available and accessible to the adolescents which can teach them lessons that are remarkable, essentially on side of harmful effect of social media addiction. Saliu (1993) indicated that public libraries have been designed to hold the reading interest of the readers. This is done through a special exhibition of materials that serve as reading resources both print and electronic. The public library also serves as an avenue for in-house storytelling hours and other extension services such as the establishment of book clubs, book services, organized debates, symposia, drama, and poetry. Public libraries are also established to improve literacy and enhance the effective utilization of leisure by children and adults in the community, society, and the nation at large.

*Centre for Cultures:* Culture is a way of life, Public library being a part of a center of education and information, is required to serve as a center to promote culture. The public library should acquire all kinds of information materials depicting this excellence and beautiful in prose, poetry, drama, music, painting, dance and sculpture, in doing this by a public library, the understanding of adolescents perhaps changes to use of social media before it will lead to addiction, the right way to live through drama, music and even storytelling can go a long way saving their addiction to social media addiction.

*Centre for Information:* All human being needs information, either individual or collective, and it is information transfer and information revolution through which culture enhance, Public Libraries are the local gateway to knowledge and it should provide information suiting needs of individual and groups. Lack of Information and lack of free flow of information from the knowing to the unknown are impending this effort public. Therefore, public libraries should provide information on social media addiction to adolescents that they need to know through valid information that can help to depicts the pros and cons of social media addiction in a language that can be understood easily.



**Centre for Education:** Education is a critical fact, its determining the pace and direction to development. It can play a vital role to educate citizens by providing access to their collection in different formats and various services and to supplements formal education and support the informal education and continuing self-education. In an emerging country like Nigeria, the public library is an education center which is a very important and essential commodity for all peoples, and adolescent's inclusive public library should take a holistic approach to educate adolescents on the appropriate use of social media.

**Research Role of Public Library:** Research is seen as a diligent and careful inquiry or investigation, systematic study of phenomena, and a scientific investigation (Cassel, 1994). The public library facilitates scientific studies, teaching, and the self-learning process. It also acts as a repository of knowledge and thereby stores and disseminates materials of research values in the modern society, through the research roles of public library can publicize on TVs/Radio to create awareness on inappropriate use of social media, the outcomes of research should be able to add knowledge to adolescents and proffer solution to repentance, giggles on radio, newspaper communicate well to the group concern i.e. adolescents. However, adolescents should not have unlimited access to their phones to the extent that their work and other duties will suffer.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The paper revealed negative part of social media addiction by adolescents, the fact remains that information communication cannot be overemphasized and its usefulness cannot be denied. It acknowledged and established that social media addiction by adolescent growing rapidly and cursing a lot of harms to adolescents such as pornography, cyberbullying, inappropriate dress, sexual harassment, even most times these harmful effects leads to death by using social media. The paper further emphasized that social media can be a great way to connect with people, adolescents and all other users should take cognizance that social media platforms should not take away precious time in their life. Adolescents should not be allowed to use the phone throughout the 24hours of the day, even if they do the activities and usage should be checkmate and of course they should be educated on appropriate used of social media.

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