African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION, PEER PRESSURE, AND THEIR PREDICTIVE ROLES IN ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

Taofeek Tayo SEKONI
Taofeek.sekoni@lasu.edu.ng
Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Lagos State University, Ojo-Lagos
E-mail: Taofeek.sekoni@lasu.edu.ng
Phone No: +2349063899876
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4678-706X
and
Benjamin Adegboyega, OLABIMITAN
Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Lagos State University, Ojo-Lagos
E-mail: benjamin.olabimitan@lasu.edu.ng.
Phone No: +2348067621601
ORCID ID: https://orcidorg/0000-0001-5229-4814

ABSTRACT
Throughout their academic career, students often face psychological stress due to the demands of their studies. This stress can be caused by both episodic and chronic factors. A recent study investigated the effects of social media addiction and peer pressure on academic stress among undergraduates at Lagos State University. The study was guided by the Transactional Model of Stress Theory, Life-Span Theory, and Social Information Processing Theory, and employed a cross-sectional research design. A total of 454 undergraduates, consisting of 41.6% male and 58.4% female participants, were randomly selected based on voluntary participation. The study utilized three scales: the Academic Stress Scale, the Peer Pressure Scale, and the Social Networking Addiction Scale. Results showed that social media addiction has a significant impact on academic stress among undergraduates (t= -9.07; df (452); P<.01). Those with high levels of social media addiction are more likely to experience academic stress than their counterparts with low-level social media addiction. Additionally, the study found that there is a significant joint influence of social media addiction and peer pressure on academic stress among undergraduates (R2 = .274; F= 85.14; P<.01). The study also found that peer pressure has a significant influence on academic stress among undergraduates (t= -6.63; df (452); P<.01). Those experiencing high levels of peer pressure are more likely to experience academic stress than their counterparts experiencing low-level peer pressure.
Based on these findings, the study recommends that parents and school management provide adequate support to their children to reduce stressful academic activities.

Keywords: academic stress, social media addiction, peer pressure

INTRODUCTION

Academic stress refers to the psychological distress students experience due to educational expectations from various sources, including parents, teachers, peers, and societal pressures. In today's competitive educational environment, the pressure from parents for academic excellence, rigid educational systems, and heavy coursework continues to heighten students' academic stress (Pascoe et al., 2020). This form of stress is often tied to anticipatory anxiety related to academic failure or the fear of not meeting expected standards (Amanvermez et al., 2020).

Cultural values also play a significant role in exacerbating academic stress. In many societies, including Nigeria, students are often under intense pressure to graduate with top grades, which are perceived as gateways to successful careers (Ogunsemi & Ojo, 2022). Students who are unable to self-regulate their emotions or manage stress effectively are particularly vulnerable (Burtaverde et al., 2023). Nigerian undergraduate students, in particular, face multiple layers of pressure due to large class sizes, limited resources, and financial burdens, contributing to poor academic self-regulation and elevated stress levels (Oyeleye et al., 2021).

McKean's (2012) earlier assertion remains relevant, with contemporary evidence suggesting that predictable stress spikes occur during exams and assignment deadlines, further intensified by poor time management and financial constraints (Zhao et al., 2022). Chronic academic stress is

known to impair not only mental health but also cognitive functioning and academic performance. It can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout, especially when students perceive the stress as overwhelming (Pascoe et al., 2020; Deb et al., 2015).

Maladaptive academic stress has a detrimental effect on cognitive processes crucial to learning, such as executive functioning and working memory. The pressure to succeed academically may reduce cognitive flexibility and hinder academic performance (Liston et al., 2009; Shields et al., 2016). Consequently, academic stress can diminish students' ability to retain and process information, further reinforcing the cycle of academic underachievement.

Students manifest academic stress through various psychosomatic and psychological symptoms, including fatigue, anxiety, irritability, and depressive moods (Tang et al., 2021). Understanding and addressing academic stress among students is essential for promoting their mental well-being and academic success. Undergraduate students have a unique cluster of stressful experiences or stressors. According to (Ross et al., 2019), there are several explanations for increased stress levels in undergraduate students. First, students have to make significant adjustments to higher institution life. Second, because of the pressure of studies, there is strain placed on interpersonal relationships. Third, housing arrangements and lifestyle changes contribute to the stress experienced by undergraduate students. Furthermore, students in higher institutions experience stress related to academic requirements, support systems, and ineffective coping skills. Whereas these factors are responsible for stress, it is worth noting that in order to minimize the stress among students, University administrators must develop appropriate strategies like psycho-education for parents and students that will enable them to detect in advance the symptoms and causes of the stress.

When stress reaches an unhealthy level, students often experience decreased self-esteem and academic efficacy (Yusoff et al., 2010). Enduring stress for extended periods fosters a sense of burnout, reducing the students' motivation to learn and undermining their confidence in their abilities to perform. Moreover, excess stress also affects an individual's physical and emotional well-being. If a student is experiencing a high, all-static load and subsequently suffers from poor health, participation in the classroom may be limited (McEwen & Stellar, 1993). Similarly, high-stress levels have been associated with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety (Aronen et al., 2015). Emotional problems caused by chronic stress can shape a child's role as a student, as well as social experiences with peers. As stress results from academic-related demands that exceed the individual's coping resources, a student's increased awareness of the importance of personal academic success may lead to more frequent and intense experiences of academic stress. Some of the most prominent factors impacting academic stress include evaluation procedures, homework material and load, attitude towards school, relationships with teachers and parents, expectations of teachers, parents, self, and peer relationships (Kadapatti & Vijayalaxmi, 2012; Verma & Gupta, 1990; Zeidner, 1994). Other factors influencing perceptions of academic stress have been linked to school climate, relationships between teachers and schools, and community resources (Barnett & McCormick, 2004; Jacobs et al., 2013; 7 Kadapatti & Vijayalaxmi, 2012). Combining these internal and external factors contributes to students' experiences of excessive psychological strain related to educational demands. Excessive academic stress is also said to be often accompanied by physical and psychological impairment (Misra & McKean, 2000).

In this literature, psychological and demographic factors will be examined as possible influences of academic stress. Among the psychological factors responsible for academic stress in the literature include peer pressure and social media addiction.

According to Hartney (2011), peer pressure refers to the influences that peers can have on each other. It is an emotional or mental force from people belonging to the same social group (such as age, grade or status) to act or behave in a manner similar to themselves (Weinfied, 2010). However, peers can also have a negative influence on the behaviour of an individual. Peers can encourage each other to skip classes, steal, cheat, use drugs or alcohol, or become

involved in risky behaviours. The majority of adolescents with substance abuse problems began using drugs or alcohol as a result of peer pressure. Negative peer pressure may influence in various ways, like joining groups that drink alcohol smoking cigarettes and Indian hemp, among others. Peer pressure may also lead to the decision to have a boyfriend/girlfriend, loiter in the street, watch films and attend parties during school hours, and take things that do not belong to them, which may eventually result in armed robbery (Arief, 2019). *Peer pressure* is a force exerted by people who are influenced by ideas, values and behaviour either positively or negatively and is always associated with adolescents, primarily undergraduates. When a student begins to allow the (negative) opinion of others to get to them and begin to creep into their decisions, such student tends to lose focus on academic goals, which may serve as a stressor. Keeping bad friends may influence students' behaviour and could lead the student to miss classes and tests, incomplete assignments, and procrastinate in academic activities. When this occurs, the student finds it stressful to meet up with academic activities and demands. Thus, peer pressure serves as an obstacle to overcome in order to achieve optimal academic performance. It takes much more than studying to achieve a successful college career. Commitment, persistence and dedication also matter; if peer pressure takes that away, academic stress steps in.

Social media has revolutionized how people communicate, share information, and interact with one another. Its most prominent users are students, who integrate social media into their daily lives for various purposes, including socializing, networking, and academic engagement. Social media platforms can serve as valuable resources for students, offering opportunities for peer support, study groups, and access to educational content (Junco, 2015). Academic communities on platforms like Facebook and Reddit facilitate emic knowledge sharing and problem-solving (Chen et al., 2020). Some social media applications offer time management tools, enabling students to plan their study schedules effectively (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). Educational apps and platforms integrated with social media can enhance productivity (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). Just like it is interesting to see the positive side of social media, it also negatively influences students' academic performance. Social media can be a significant source of distraction, leading to procrastination and reduced study time (Junco et al., 2013). Chat notifications and constant connectivity may interrupt focused study sessions (Rosen et al., 2013). The curated and idealized representations of others' lives on social media platforms can lead to social comparison and increased stress (Tandoc et al., 2015). Peer pressure and the fear of missing out (FOMO) on social events or academic achievements shared on social media can contribute to stress (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Furthermore, Excessive use of social media, especially before bedtime, can disrupt sleep patterns and contribute to academic stress (Levenson et al., 2016). Social media platforms are designed to be engaging and addictive. As a result, students often find themselves drawn into a cycle of checking notifications, scrolling through feeds, and watching videos, which can lead to procrastination. Constantly switching between social media and academic tasks can reduce focus and productivity, wasting time and increasing academic stress (Junco et al., 2013). The allure of social media can be particularly challenging during study sessions when students need to concentrate and retain information. Cyberbullying and negative online interactions can adversely affect students' mental health and academic well-being (Kowalski et al., 2014).

Demographic factors refer to the characteristics of a person or population, such as race, age, gender, family type, educational level, income, marital status, job, and more. This study will specifically analyze the demographic factors of age, gender, educational level, and family background.

Purpose of the Study
  i.   To investigate the level at which social media addiction serve as a predicting factor of academic stress among undergraduate students

ii.   To examine the extent to which peer-pressure predicts academic stress among undergraduate students.
iii. .To examine relative influence of sex and level of study on academic stress among undergraduate students.

Statement of Hypotheses
The following hypotheses are put forward for testing;
i.   Undergraduates with high level social media addiction will score significantly higher on measure of academic stress than their counterparts with low level social media addiction.
ii.   Social media addiction and peer pressure will have significant independent and joint influence on academic stress.
iii. Undergraduates under high peer pressure will score significantly higher on measure of academic stress than their counterparts experiencing low level of peer pressure.
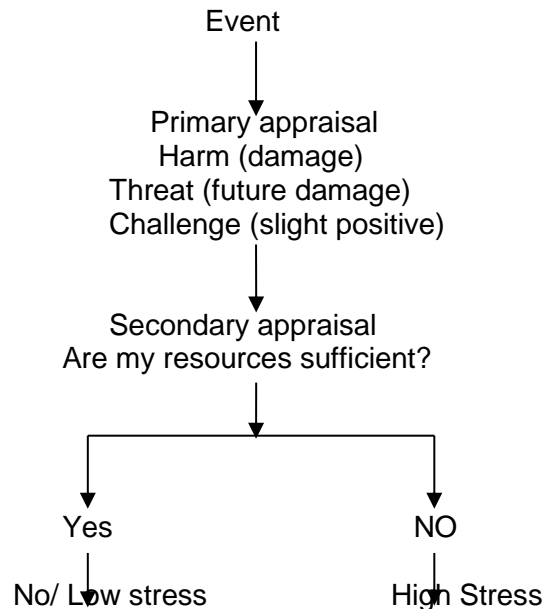

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Transactional Model of Stress Theory (Lazarus and Folkman 1984)
This is a model of psychological processes involved in stress, which was developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). In this model, stress is perceived as an individual's cognitive interpretation of potentially stressful events. The emphasis here lies more on how the events are perceived rather than the objective events themselves. According to them, Stress is a dynamic process involving individuals and environment. However, the environment provides the initial stimulus, but the key determinants of stress are the way individuals perceive the environment and how they use the coping resources available to deal with it. It has been argued that stress is neither an environmental stimulus nor a psychological response; rather it is a relationship between environmental demands and the ability to deal with them. Because stress is usually perceived as a transaction between individual and environment, there are two important processes that constitute this transaction; the psychological appraisal and coping respectively. The psychological appraisal is viewed as the individuals' constant assessment of the situation and the resources available in order to deal with it (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). However, individuals who encounter a potentially stressful situation, they appraise the amount of potential danger as well as their resources for dealing with the danger. Moreover, individuals experience stress when the perceived threat exceeds perceived available resources for coping with it. Lazarus (1978) regards coping as individuals' cognitive and behavioural efforts, which they use to deal with a stressful situation. This approach is appropriate to this study, because the dynamic relationship between the person and the environment in stress perception and reaction is especially magnified in undergraduate students (Lazarus & Folkman 1984).
Richard Lazarus (1966) argued that the role of stress differed significantly across individuals, depending on how they interpreted the event and outcome of a specific sequence of thinking patterns called appraisals. He suggested two major types of appraisals when one face any potentially stressful event. During primary appraisal, one ascertain whether the event is positive, negative, or neutral, and if negative, if it is harmful, threatening, or challenging. A harm (or harm-loss) appraisal is made when one expect to lose or actually lose something of great personal significance. For example, when one break up a close relationship one, lose confidence. After one make primary appraisal, one assesses whether or not one has the necessary resources to cope with the event. During secondary appraisal one essentially determines whether one can deal with the event and how one can cope.

Main Stages of Lazarus' Cognitive Appraisal Model

Event

Primary appraisal
Harm (damage)
Threat (future damage)
Challenge (slight positive)

Secondary appraisal
Are my resources sufficient?

Yes   NO

No/ Low stress   High Stress

Life-Span Theory (Johann Nikolaus Tetens (1736–1807) and Adolphe Quetelet 1796–1874).
Life-span developmental theory is usually considered to be a "meta-theory" in that it is a set of themes for approaching the study of development and aging. The life-span approach is not a set of empirically testable hypotheses; rather, it provides a broadened orientation to the study of aging. It should also be pointed out that life-span theory is not new, but has its origins in the work of several eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers, especially Johann Nikolaus Tetens (1736–1807) and Adolphe Quetelet (1796–1874). It is a theory that explains social support. According to this theory, social support develops throughout the life span, but especially in childhood attachment with parents. Social support develops along with adaptive personality traits such as low hostility, low neuroticism, high optimism, as well as social and coping skills. The development of coping skills as it links to stress will be concentrated on in this literature. Lifespan theories are popular from their origins in Schools of Human Ecology at the universities, aligned with family theories, and researched through federal centers over decades (e.g., University of Kansas, Beach Center for Families; Cornell University, School of Human Ecology).

Social support may play a role at two different points in the causal chain linking stress to illness. First, support may intervene between the stressful event (and expectation of that event) and stress reaction by attenuating or preventing a stress appraisal response. That is, the perception that others can and will provide necessary resources may redefine the potential for harm posed by a situation and/or bolster one's perceived ability to cope with imposed demands, and hence prevent a particular situation from being appraised as highly stressful. Second, adequate support may intervene between the experience of stress and the onset of the pathological outcome by reducing or eliminating the stress reaction or by directly influencing physiological processes. Support may alleviate the impact of stress appraisal by providing a solution to the problem, by reducing the perceived importance of the problem, by tranquilizing the neuro-endocrine system

so that people are less reactive to perceived stress, or by facilitating healthful behaviors, hence, providing applicable ways to cope with academic stress among undergraduate students.

Social Information Processing Theory (Joseph Walther 1992)
Social information processing theory (Walther, 1992) offered a testable set of theoretical mechanisms regarding how and why individuals are able to engage in personal communication in so-call lean online environments. Walther, an interpersonal communication scholar, developed SIP theory under the assumption that nonverbal communication is more complex than the CFO approach suggested. Walther argued that nonverbal communication cues are generally perceived as a whole, and the absence of one or more cues need not spell doom for communicators. Human beings are social by nature, and, regardless of medium, CMC users are motivated to engage in the same relational behaviors that are prevalent in face-to-face interaction. As such, Walther predicted that users could find other ways to communicate the meaning that was often conceptualized as being of a nonverbal nature. Walther (1992) discussed the relational nature of CMC and reviewed extant research to derive a set of theoretical assumptions and propositions that became the basis of SIP theory. In this article, Walther noted inconsistencies in the growing body of research regarding online communication; one-shot experimental studies indicated that online communication was less personal than face-to-face interaction, yet studies with more naturalistic designs indicated that online community members were forming real friendships. Walther claimed that these inconsistencies might be the

Empirical Studies
Academic Stress and Social Media Addiction
Academic stress remains a significant concern for undergraduates, often exacerbated by technological influences, particularly social media use. With the increasing digital immersion of university students, research has shown that excessive engagement with social media platforms can contribute to psychological distress and poor academic outcomes. Empirical evidence consistently supports a complex, bidirectional relationship between academic stress and social media addiction.

González and García (2024) found that social media addiction among university students was indirectly associated with diminished academic engagement, mediated by increased depression and reduced self-esteem. Their study emphasized that while social media use did not directly impact engagement, the psychological toll it exerted through negative emotional states significantly reduced students' academic involvement. Further evidence from Taş (2022) highlights the role of the COVID-19 pandemic in intensifying social media addiction and perceived stress among undergraduates. As students increasingly relied on online platforms for academic and social purposes, the study identified a notable rise in stress levels linked to prolonged digital exposure. This association suggests that social media addiction may amplify academic stress, particularly in periods of social isolation and uncertainty. In a similar vein, Abdulsalim et al. (2025) reported that high levels of social media addiction among undergraduate students were positively correlated with anxiety and negatively correlated with academic performance. Their cross-sectional study emphasized that students who were more addicted to social media experienced greater academic difficulties, underscoring the disruptive impact of excessive online engagement on learning.

Zeng et al. (2022) provided further insight by examining the predictive roles of academic anxiety and social isolation in smartphone addiction. They concluded that students who experienced higher academic stress and loneliness were more likely to develop problematic social media use, using online platforms as a maladaptive coping mechanism. This in turn contributed to a reinforcement loop where increased online activity exacerbated academic disengagement. Additionally, Zhang et al. (2022) investigated the mediating roles of mobile phone addiction and sleep quality between academic stress and depression. Their findings revealed that academic stress was associated with mobile phone addiction, which impaired sleep quality and led to higher

depression levels. The study reinforces the notion that social media addiction is not only a byproduct of academic stress but also a contributing factor to the deterioration of students' mental health and academic stability.

Academic Stress and Peer Pressure

Academic stress has become a pervasive concern among students globally, with multiple studies identifying peer pressure as a significant contributing factor. Researchers have investigated how students' social environments, especially peer influence, intensify the psychological burden associated with academic expectations.

Gautam and Sharma (2024) examined the effect of peer pressure on academic stress among adolescents in India. Their findings revealed a strong positive correlation, indicating that students who experienced higher levels of peer pressure were also more likely to report elevated academic stress. The study emphasized how social comparison, competition, and fear of exclusion from peer groups contributed significantly to students' emotional strain. Similarly, Sarfika et al. (2024) conducted a cross-sectional study among junior high school students and reported that peer conformity pressures, such as the need to match friends' academic performance or behavior, significantly predicted higher levels of stress. The study highlighted the role of normative peer influence in shaping academic behaviors, often leading to unhealthy stress responses in adolescents.

Nguyen-Thi et al. (2024) explored how peer pressure, alongside educational stress, affects students' openness to psychological help-seeking. Their study of high school students in Vietnam showed that peer-driven stigma about mental health services often compounded academic stress, making students less likely to seek support. This underscores how peer dynamics not only influence stress levels but also shape coping mechanisms.

Mordi and Onoyase (2023) added a Nigerian perspective by investigating the joint effects of peer pressure, self-esteem, and examination anxiety on academic performance. Their findings showed that peer pressure was a significant predictor of both academic stress and performance, especially in contexts where students felt pressured to outperform peers or meet unrealistic expectations set by their social circles. Further supporting these findings, Akhter et al. (2023) explored the impact of peer influence on academic stress among dental students in Saudi Arabia. The results indicated that peer competition and group expectations significantly elevated students' psychological distress, contributing to symptoms of anxiety and burnout.

In the U.S. context, Yoo (2024) highlighted the mental health implications of academic testing and peer comparisons among adolescents. The study reported that excessive peer-driven competition often leads to increased stress, depression, and anxiety, particularly during exam periods.

Finally, Otumadu and Nwankwo (2024) studied the interactive effects of peer pressure, family functioning, and academic stress on suicidal tendencies among university students. Their findings stressed the urgent need for institutional support systems to address how negative peer dynamics can heighten academic stress and its extreme consequences. In sum, empirical evidence consistently underscores that peer pressure is a major psychosocial factor influencing academic stress. These studies reveal that whether through direct competition, fear of social exclusion, or stigmatization of help-seeking, peer influence significantly shapes students' academic experiences and well-being. These findings are crucial for designing interventions aimed at reducing stress and promoting healthy peer interactions within academic environments.

Academic Stress, Age, Sex and Level of Study

Academic stress is a prevalent concern among undergraduate students, influenced by various demographic factors such as age, sex, and level of study. Understanding how these variables interact with academic stress can inform targeted interventions to enhance student well-being and academic performance. Research indicates that age plays a significant role in the experience of academic stress. Onolemhenhen and Abel (2020) conducted a study among undergraduates in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria, revealing that academic stress levels decreased with

increasing age. Younger students, particularly those in their first year, reported higher stress levels, which declined in the second and third years but rose again in the final year. This pattern suggests that maturity and adaptation to the academic environment may alleviate stress over time, although final-year pressures can reignite stress levels. Similarly, Zeng et al. (2022) found that academic anxiety and social isolation were significant predictors of increased social media use among undergraduates, which in turn contributed to higher levels of smartphone addiction and academic stress. The study highlighted that younger students might be more susceptible to these stressors due to less developed coping mechanisms.

Sex differences have also been observed in the experience of academic stress. González and García (2024) reported that female university students exhibited higher levels of social media addiction, which indirectly affected their academic engagement through increased depression and reduced self-esteem. This finding suggests that female students may be more vulnerable to certain stressors that impact their academic performance. Contrastingly, Abdulsalim et al. (2025) found that male students reported higher levels of academic stress compared to females. The study indicated that males perceived high stress scores in interpersonal and intrapersonal, social, and drive- and desire-related stressors. This discrepancy highlights the complexity of sex-related differences in academic stress, suggesting that cultural and contextual factors may influence these experiences.

The level of study is another critical factor influencing academic stress. Onolemhenhen and Abel (2020) observed that first-year students experienced the highest levels of academic stress, which decreased in the second and third years but increased again in the final year. This U-shaped pattern may be attributed to initial adjustment challenges and the culminating pressures of final-year academic requirements. Zhang et al. (2022) examined the mediating roles of mobile phone addiction and sleep quality between academic stress and depression among students. The study concluded that academic stress led to increased mobile phone addiction, which negatively affected sleep quality and subsequently contributed to higher levels of depression. These findings underscore the importance of addressing academic stress across different levels of study to prevent adverse mental health outcomes.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional survey research design to examine the influence of social media addiction, peer pressure on academic stress. The research was carried within the premises of Lagos State University (LASU). The choice of this institution stems from the fact that LASU is an ideal setting to get enough participants of diverse background that can enhance generalization of findings. And the institution has the required characteristics to provide answers to the subject matter of this research investigation

Participant and Sampling Technique

Participants of this study which comprise four hundred and fifty four undergraduate students of Lagos State University was selected by the researcher using convenient sampling technique. The participant was selected from among undergraduate students in Lagos State University across all faculties and departments which include: social sciences, faculty of management sciences, faculty of Art, school of communication, faculty of sciences, faculty of law and the school of transport as well as diverse demographic characteristics which include; age, sex, level of study and family background using convenience sampling technique. Out of this, 189 (41.6%) were males while 265 (58.4%) were females, 405 (89.4%) of the total number of participants falls under the age bracket 19-29 years, 39 (8.6.7%) falls under the age bracket 30-39 years, 10 (2.2%) falls under the age bracket 40-49years above. 117 (25.8%) of the participants were 100 level undergraduate students, 186 (41.0%) were 200 level undergraduate students, 112 (24.7%) were 300 level undergraduate students while 39 (8.6%) were 400 level undergraduate students.

386(85.0%) of the participants were single while 68 (15.0%)   were married. 259 (57.0%) were Christians while 193 43.5 %) were Muslims.

Instrument/Psychometric Properties

The researcher developed questionnaire to collect primary data. The questionnaires comprised of a total of 74 items and was divided into five (4) sections; A, B, C, and D.

Section A: This section comprises of information on demographic variables concerning; age, sex, level of study and family background.

Section B: This contains a 16-item inventory that measures academic stress developed by Sun, Jiandong, Dunne, Michael P., Hou, Xiang-Yu, & Xu, Ai-qiang (2011). The reseachers reported the Cronbach's alphas for each sub divisions of their scale indexes. All alphas are very large, ranging from 0.72 to 0.90. The questionnaire was designed in a 5 point Likert scale format, the students were asked to report the extent to which they have been stressed considering the time they have spent in school, answering a level of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)

Section C: This contains a 30-item inventory that measures peer pressure developed by Palani and Mani (2016). The researchers reported the Cronbach's alpha for peer pressure scale as 0.84. The scale was designed in a 5 point Likert scale format ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD).

Section D: This contains a 21-item inventory that measures Social Networking Addiction developed by Palani and Mani (2016). The researchers reported the Cronbach's alpha for peer pressure scale as 0.84. The scale was designed in a 7 point Likert scale format ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD).

RESULTS

Hypothesis One

The hypothesis which stated that undergraduates with high level social media addiction will score significantly higher on measure of academic stress than their counterparts with low level social media addiction was tested using t-test for independent means. The result is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Summary table of independent t-test showing the influence of social media addiction on academic stress among undergraduate students.

	Social Media Addiction	N	Mean	Std D.	Df	t-value	Sig
Academic Stress	Low	234	37.56	9.61			
					452	-9.07	<.01
	High	220	46.12	10.52			

The result on the table showed that there is significant influence of social media addiction on academic stress among undergraduate students (t= -9.07; df (452); P<.01). It can be further seen that undergraduates with high level social media addiction score significantly higher on measure of academic stress than their counterparts with low level social media addiction. The stated hypothesis is thereby confirmed.

Hypothesis Two

The hypothesis which stated that social media addiction and peer pressure will have significant independent and joint influence on academic stress was tested using multiple regression. The result is presented in the table below:

Table 2:*Summary of multiple regression showing joint and independent influence social media addiction and length of time spent on social media on long-term memory.*

Model	R	R^2	F	P	β	t	P

					.282	6.33	<.01
	.524	.274	85.14	<.01			
Social Media Addiction					.282	6.33	<.01
Peer Pressure					.335	7.52	>.01

From the table it can be deduced that there is a significant joint influence of social media addiction and peer pressure on academic stress among undergraduate students (R^2 = .274; F= 85.14; P<.01). The predicted variables accounted for over 27% variance on the dependent variable. It can be further revealed that social media addiction (t= 6.33, β= .282; p<.01) and peer pressure (t= 7.52, β= .335; p<.01) have significant independent influence on academic stress among undergraduate student. The stated hypothesis is thereby confirmed.

Hypothesis Three

The hypothesis which stated that undergraduates under high peer pressure will score significantly higher on measure of academic stress than their counterparts experiencing low level of peer pressure was tested using t-test for independent means. The result is presented in the table below:

Table 3: Summary table of independent t-test showing the influence of peer pressure on academic stress among undergraduate students.

	Peer Pressure	N	Mean	Std D.	Df	t-value	Sig
Academic Stress	Low	227	38.46	11.22			
					452	-6.63	<.01
	High	227	44.95	9.59			

The result on the table showed that there is significant influence of peer pressure on academic stress among undergraduate students (t= -6.63; df (452); P<.01). It can be further seen that undergraduates under high peer pressure scored significantly higher on measure of academic stress than their counterparts experiencing low level of peer pressure. The stated hypothesis is thereby confirmed.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis stating that undergraduates with high levels of social media addiction would score significantly higher on measures of academic stress than their counterparts with low levels of social media addiction was confirmed. The results indicated a significant influence of social media addiction on academic stress among undergraduates. Specifically, students exhibiting higher levels of social media addiction reported elevated academic stress levels. This finding aligns with the study by Abdulsalim et al. (2025), which found a positive correlation between social media addiction and increased anxiety levels among university students, subsequently impacting their academic performance. Similarly, Zeng et al. (2022) reported that academic anxiety and social isolation were significant predictors of increased social media use among undergraduates, which in turn contributed to higher levels of smartphone addiction and academic stress.

The second hypothesis, asserting that social media addiction and peer pressure would have significant independent and joint influences on academic stress, was also supported. The analysis revealed a significant combined effect of social media addiction and peer pressure on academic stress among undergraduate students, with the predictive variables accounting for over 27% of the variance in academic stress levels. This outcome is corroborated by the study conducted by Gautam and Sharma (2024), which found that peer pressure significantly affected the level of academic stress among adolescents. Additionally, Otumadu and Nwankwo (2022) reported that peer pressure had a significant positive relationship with students' suicidal tendencies, indicating the profound impact of peer dynamics on students' mental health.

The third hypothesis, which posited that undergraduates experiencing high levels of peer pressure would score significantly higher on measures of academic stress than those experiencing low levels of peer pressure, was confirmed. The findings demonstrated that students subjected to higher peer pressure reported greater academic stress. This is consistent with the research by Akhter et al. (2023), which highlighted that female dental students in Saudi Arabia experienced more academic stress than their male counterparts, suggesting that peer and academic pressures disproportionately affect certain student demographics

Recommendations
Academic stress is built up in the psyche of the individual due to inability to perform up to the set expectations in academics. Basically, in Nigeria every student is expected to soar excellently in every academic activity as it is seen as the bases of getting a good job and becoming successful. However every individual has the innate behaviour to set goals to achieve while undertaking any tasks. When this falls short, tension creeps in and begins to haunt his mind forever. In order to help students overcome these stressors, the government should help creating awareness through print media and organize seminars to orient students about entrepreneurial skills and other legal ways of becoming a successful person. Parents should give 100% support to their children and lots of encouragement as it has been observed that more social support reduces academic stress. Parent should also sensitize their wards on the risk involved in the new environment they will find their self so as to be able to show high level of concentration on their studies to achieve greater academic excellent, Universities should also reduce academic activities by cutting off unnecessary outlines, tests and assignments.

Limitation
The study was faced with some limitations; these limitations should be considered in further studies. First, the sample size of the study appears to be small also the settings of the study did not cover enough areas in the country and this affected the generality of the results. Aside peer-pressure, and social media addiction, time management, poor concentration and study habit should also be considered as an important predictor of academic stress among undergraduate students. In addition, further research work needs to examine relative influence of personality factors and school environment on academic stress among undergraduate students.

REFERENCES

Adewale, A. A., & Yusuf, M. O. (2019). Social media and academic performance of students in selected Nigerian universities. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 10(22), 45–54.

Alabi, O. T., & Oluwole, D. A. (2020). Peer group influence and academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Psychology and Counseling*, 5(3), 40–55.

Almenayes, J. J. (2014). The relationship between Internet addiction and academic performance among university students in Kuwait. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 42(1), 83–94. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2014.03.001

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

Aremu, A. O., & Oluwole, D. A. (2001). Gender and birth order as predictors of normal pupil's anxiety pattern in examination. *Ibadan Journal of Educational Studies*, 1(1), 1–7.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469

Audu, R., & Esere, M. O. (2022). Academic stress and its impact on undergraduate students' mental health in Nigeria. *Journal of Psychology and Behavioural Studies*, 8(2), 114–125.

Azher, M., Khan, R. B., Salim, M., Bilal, M., Hussain, A., & Haseeb, M. (2014). The relationship between Internet addiction and academic performance among university students. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 4(3), 723–732.

Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands–Resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309–328. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115

Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Prentice-Hall.

Bao, W. (2020). COVID-19 and online teaching in higher education: A case study of Peking University. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(2), 113–115. https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.191

Bashir, S., Mahmood, K., & Shafique, F. (2008). Internet use and its impact on students' academic performance. *Journal of Education and Research*, 1(2), 27–34.

Bayram, N., & Bilgel, N. (2008). The prevalence and socio-demographic correlations of depression, anxiety and stress among a group of university students. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 43(8), 667–672. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-008-0345-x

Beiter, R., Nash, R., McCrady, M., Rhoades, D., Linscomb, M., Clarahan, M., & Sammut, S. (2015). The prevalence and correlates of depression, anxiety, and stress in a sample of college students. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 173, 90–96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2014.10.054

Bennett, L., & Glasgow, N. (2009). Social media and peer pressure among youth: A qualitative study. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24(3), 253–270. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558409333865

Blair, C., & Raver, C. C. (2015). School readiness and self-regulation: A developmental psychobiological approach. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 66, 711–731. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010814-015221

Boyes, M. E., & Cluver, L. D. (2013). Relationships between familial HIV/AIDS and symptoms of anxiety and depression: The mediating effect of social support. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 25(1), 29–41. https://doi.org/10.2989/17280583.2013.767262

Brown, C. M., & Lee, C. H. (2017). Academic stress and Internet addiction among college students: A moderated mediation model of depression and social support. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 109(5), 728–739. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000168

Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98(2), 310–357. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.98.2.310

Essel, G., & Owusu, P. (2017). Causes of students' stress, its effects on their academic success, and stress management by students. *Thesis, Arcada University of Applied Sciences*. https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/124792

Field, T., Diego, M., & Sanders, C. E. (2001). Adolescent depression and risk factors. *Adolescence*, 36(143), 491–498.

Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2019). *IBM SPSS statistics step by step: A simple guide and reference* (15th ed.). Routledge.

Gustems-Carnicer, J., Calderón, C., & Calderón-Garrido, D. (2019). Stress, coping strategies and academic achievement in teacher education students. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(3), 375–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1576629

Kaur, H. (2020). Academic stress and mental well-being among college students: A correlational study. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8(1), 331–339. https://doi.org/10.25215/0801.041

Khan, M. J., Altaf, S., & Kausar, H. (2013). Effect of perceived academic stress on students' performance. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 146–151.

Kumar, A., & Sharma, R. (2016). Influence of peer group on academic performance of adolescents. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 2(5), 824–827.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1987). Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping. *European Journal of Personality*, 1(3), 141–169. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2410010304

Majeed, M. A., & Rana, R. A. (2017). Influence of peer pressure on academic performance and social behavior among adolescents. *Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 27(2), 45–62.

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1987). Validation of the five-factor model of personality across instruments and observers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52(1), 81–90. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.52.1.81

Oluwatayo, J. A. (2011). Cognitive entry characteristics and academic achievement of students in colleges of education in South Western Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 2(7), 38–45.

Rosenberg, M., & Simmons, R. G. (1975). *Black and white self-esteem: The urban school child*. American Sociological Association.

Seaward, B. L. (2017). *Managing stress: Principles and strategies for health and well-being* (9th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Son, C., Hegde, S., Smith, A., Wang, X., & Sasangohar, F. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on college students' mental health in the United States: Interview survey study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(9), e21279. https://doi.org/10.2196/21279

Suleiman, L. A., & Adekunle, O. A. (2022). Social media usage and its influence on the academic performance of undergraduate students in Nigeria. *African Journal of Information and Communication Technology*, 13(4), 97–109.

Taylor, S. E., & Stanton, A. L. (2007). Coping resources, coping processes, and mental health. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 3, 377–401. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.3.022806.091520

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Ugwuegbulam, C. N., & Nwachukwu, J. O. (2020). Peer pressure and academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 10(2), 143–151. https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2020-0036

UNICEF. (2021). *The state of the world's children 2021: On my mind—Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health*. https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2021

WHO. (2020). *Adolescent mental health*. World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health

World Health Organization. (2021). *Mental health and COVID-19: Early evidence of the pandemic's impact*. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240028480

Yahaya, L. A., & Bello, A. T. (2018). Relationship between peer group influence and academic achievement of students in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. *KIU Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(2), 123–129.

Yerkes, R. M., & Dodson, J. D. (1908). The relation of strength of stimulus to rapidity of habit formation. *Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology*, 18(5), 459–482. https://doi.org/10.1002/cne.920180503

Yusuf, O. A., & Adigun, J. T. (2022). Social media addiction and academic performance among undergraduates in selected Nigerian universities. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Technology*, 17(1), 85–96.