Social Media Addiction among Nigerian Students Abroad: Evidence from a Focus Group Discussion

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Abstract

The results of this research provide a detailed account of social media addiction among international students. A qualitative investigation using a focus group discussion was carried out among 25 affirmative Nigerian students studying at one public university in Northern Cyprus. It was found that Facebook is the most used and preferred social media among the students. In addition, the students primarily use social networking technologies for chatting, commenting and posting, reading news feeds, dating, and only occasionally employ it for academic purposes. Hence, the excess use of social networking sites transformed students into addicts as the entire respondents divulged that they use social media for more than 6 hours in a day. It was similarly discovered that depression and anxiety trigger students higher social networking sites involvement. Furthermore, social loneliness was likewise established as a factor that triggers their constant use of social media. This implies that the use of social media reduces boredom and provides maximum relaxation. In addition, higher levels of perceived support from online social networking friends similarly encouraged students to stay more online, thereby resulting in excessive social media use. This study concludes that the utilisation of social media has no direct negative influence on the students' academic performance, rather has a negative effect on their psychological well-being and health, resulting to sleep deprivation, fatigue, weakness, tiredness and blurry vision.

Keywords: Academic performance; psychological wellbeing and health; social media; social media addiction; students.

Introduction

In recent decades, social media has been described as a web-based instrument that permit users to make a profile and create a network attached to that profile as well as interact with others utilizing this application (Xenos, Vromen, & Loader, 2014). This means that through social media people create their online profiles which enable them to interact more easily with others, as well as disseminate opinions and information. These sites include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, MySpace, blogs, wikis, and Snapchat (Boulianne, 2015; Bryer & Zavatarro, 2011). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) described social media applications as an offshoot of the Web 2.0 that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. It is a medium for collaboration and sharing of content such as videos, photos and messages through internet tools (Bhargava, 2010; Mersham, Theunissen, & Peart, 2009). Substantiating this view, Rodrigues and Niemann (2017) remarked that social media enables two-way communication and enhanced participation. Indeed, it is a convenient, personalized digital

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two-way medium of communication and information sharing among and between people (Katz, Barris, & Jain, 2013).

It should be noted that there is a difference between social media and social networking sites. Basically, social media are computer-based technologies that enhance the creation and dissemination of information, ideas, feelings, career interests and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks (Obar & Wildman, 2015). Although, "social media" is often used to be synonymous with "social network," Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) clearly categorised social networks as a type of social media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Imo, Google+ and LinkedIn. These social networks permit users to share and communicate in a much more active and interactive way than other social media. In view of this, ample evidence largely from a growing body of research has shown that for over ten years, social networking sites (SNSs) have seen a sporadic increment in the number and ubiquity (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015; Ellison, Steinfie`ld, Lampe, 2007; Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Panek, Nardis, & Konrath, 2013; Olufadi, 2016). It offers new approaches to meeting individuals as well as connecting with companions or strangers, thereby providing individuals with the possibilities of networking and sharing media content. (Enikuomehin, 2011; Sanchez-Carbonell, X., Beranuy, Castellana, Chamarro, & Oberst, 2007). Specifically, social networking sites are utilized by people for communication, entertainment, learning, and social interaction etc (Fasae & Adegbilero-Iwari, 2016; Manjunatha, 2013). Evidently, the significance of web-based social networking is expanding on a daily basis and not surprisingly, its impact on people, particularly youngsters are inevitable (Kirik, Arslan, Çetinkaya, & Mehmet, 2015).

Hence, the advent of the Internet today has made youngsters to be engaged, glued, and frequent users of social media. This situation which is now in its alarming stage has attracted research into the issue of technological and social networking addictions (Dau, 2015; Carbonell, & Panova, 2017). A growing body of research evidence has established that these sites have become a vital part of youths' social life and an everyday agenda regardless of where they are (Tiwari, 2017). In line with this notion, an investigation submitted that the exorbitant utilization of social media among students might lead to addiction and this could be a cause for concern, due to the excessive time they spend surfing the web (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Therefore, through the web, people take part in a variety of activities some of which might be conceivably addictive (Boyd, 2007) and such occupies a central role in the way they communicate and connect with each other (Olufadi, 2016). As such, investigators have portrayed the role of web-based social networking as both beneficial and deleterious. This implies that the exorbitant utilization of social media may conceivably influence a person's academic performance and other activities as well as affect well-being (Echeburúa & de Corral 2010; Griffiths, 2005, Shaffer et al., 2004). For example, evidence largely from existing studies argued that although the advent of the internet has provided numerous benefits to its users, however, some have become so addicted to it that they cannot control themselves. Moreover, on a daily basis, they spend so much time on their smartphones, tablets, and laptops chatting, uploading pictures/videos as well as blogging (Cassidy et al., 2011; Abdulahi, Samadi, & Gharleghi, 2014; Echeburúa & de Corral, 2010), by so doing they get addicted to such technological devices (Olufadi, 2016). This suggests that social media utilisation affects students' academic skills as they waste too much time on them (Musa, 2015; Yoo & Kim, 2013; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010).

Conversely, other growing body of empirical documented research designated that the academic performance and well-being of the students was not affected by the use of social media (Alwagait, Shahzad, & Alim, 2015; Mbodila, Ndebele, & Muhandji, 2014; Tamirat &

Molly, 2014; Negussie & Ketema, 2014). Consequently, this situation has attracted further body of research, yet, many of the investigations on social media and addiction among students have focused merely on either health, mental, (Block, 2008; Collier, 2009; Pies, 2009; Brand, Young, & Laier, 2014; Ko, Yen, Yen, Chen, & Chen, 2012; Morrison & Gore, 2010; Busari, 2016; Kalekhan, Zacharia, Souza, D'souza, & Baliga, 2016; Alavi, Maracy, Jannatifard, & Eslami, 2011; Gunduz, 2007; Goel, Subramanyam, & Kamath, 2013)   or academic performance (Jafarkarimi, Saadatdoost, Sim, & Hee, 2016; Balci & Gölcü, 2013; Vidyachathoth, Kumar, & Pai, 2014; Olaleke, Iroju, & Olajide, 2015; Mahmood & Farooq, 2014; Abdulahi et al., 2014). With little or no attention on the effect of social media addiction on both the psychological/mental, health and academic performance of students. Moreover, evidence has also demonstrated that these studies predominantly focused on students in their domestic country with only but a limited research focusing on international students (Zaremohzzabieh, Samah, Omar, Bolong, & Kamarudin, 2015). This suggests that there is an ample attention on students in their domestic countries, and merely focusing on students in their home country, will lead to a limited understanding of the vast deleterious effect of social media addition on students.

It is therefore pertinent for research to extend to investigate social media addiction among students who are studying abroad, as well as examine the possible effect of social media addiction on both the psychological/mental, health and academic performance of students. This will contribute and extend the international literature on social media addiction. Consistent with this argument, it is therefore appropriate to study international students' use of social media and its addictive effect on their academic and wellbeing most especially in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Universities. There is evidence to show that there are no studies to date that has attempted to understand social media addiction among international students in TRNC. But there is a research that examines the use of social networking sites among international students located in Auckland, New Zealand (Rahman, 2014). Moreover, the only attempted research in TRNC that used intentional students as participants primarily focused on the use of social media for their information need (Adamu, 2015). To address this, this paper investigates through a focus group discussion in in-depth the prevalence of social media addiction among students, exploring its effect on both academics and health.

1.1. Aim and article structure

The aim of this paper is to examine social media addiction among students abroad. It extends to explore its effect on both academics, health and psychological well-being. As set out in (Fig. 1), this paper is divided into six (6) main sections describing the introduction and background; literature review; methodology; results and implication; discussion and conclusion; limitation and direction for further research.
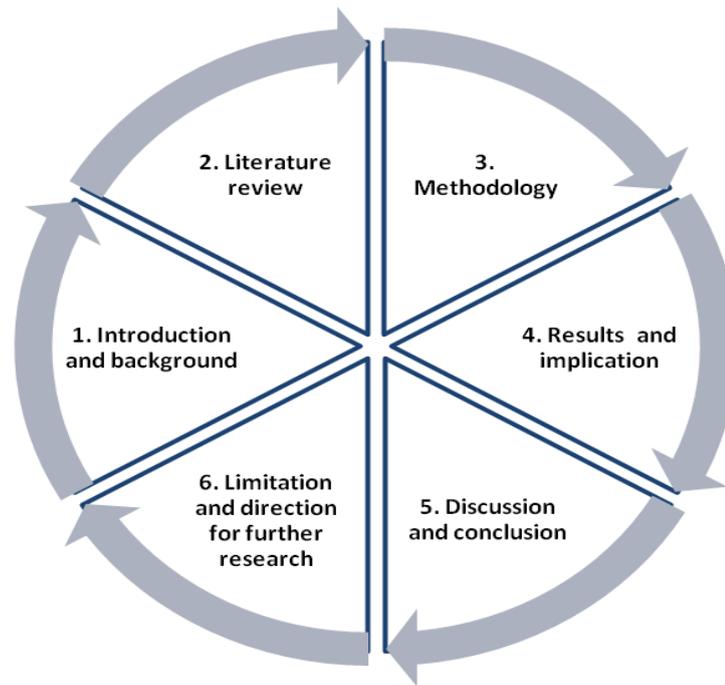
Figure 1: Article structure

2. Literature review

This section will describe the theoretical framework of this present research as well as explicate the concept of social media addiction. It will extend to demonstrate previous research on social media addiction among students.

2.1. Theoretical underpinning

This study is anchored on the use and gratification theory propounded by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch in 1974. According the usage and gratification, students have a variety of needs (social, academic work, etc.) to use the social media, which lead to different degrees of exposure to its applications (Facebook, Twitter, Badoo, Snapchat etc.) and result in varying degree of gratification and pleasure experience (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). Relating this theory to the current study, university students' use social networking sites for various reasons such as physical and psychological, depending on the gratification derived from it (Apuke & Ezeah, 2017). Some may use it for chatting while others to retrieve educational information. These students chose and utilize a particular social media (Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Snap chat, etc.) based on how well each one helps them meet specific needs or goals. Therefore, some students may tend towards over-involvement with or pathological use of the internet facilities and social networking sites, and gradually develop addictive tendencies (Ekwueme & Akagwu, 2017; Chou & Hsiao, 2000). This means that the addict group might feel that the social media is more entertaining, fun, and interactive; and could help escape from the real-world responsibilities and identification.

2.2. Describing social media addiction

In recent decades, investigators from different parts of the world have begun giving attention to Internet-based addiction phenomenon (social media addiction) and have undertaken various studies in this area. Social media has been described as a multi-purpose platform and a web-based technology which has the ability to allow the sharing of videos,

text, sound and images in a more collaborative and interactive manner (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010). Furthermore, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that the six most widely used social media include Wikipedia, Blogs (e.g. Blogger, Type Pad and WordPress, etc.); Microblogs (e.g. Twitter and Friend Feed); Media Sharing Sites (Video and Photo) such as YouTube and Flickr; Social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, IMO, Google+ and LinkedIn and lastly RSS (See Figure 2 for detailed illustration).

Figure 2: Social media categories (Apuke, Dogari & Ayih, 2017)

On the other hand, much of the research on addiction described addiction as an urge that affects people who regularly engage or do a particular thing that becomes uncontrollable resulting to harmful consequences on their physical, social and mental health (Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2015, Parashar & Varma, 2007; Stein, Hollander, & Rothbaum, 2009). Although this term has been generally associated with substance use. Nonetheless, evidence has shown that the ubiquitous nature of social media and its frequent utilization is now likened to an overdose drug intake that users get addicted to, resulting in educational and mental health implications (Block, 2008; Collier, 2009; Pies, 2009). Thus, internet addiction is regarded as the excessive employment of the Internet (social media) that it begins to affect daily, social and working life. This could be as a result of difficulty in gaining acquaintances in real life which may inspire a person to seek friends on social media as well as difficulty in maintaining communication with family and friends resulting in establishing a safe communication with an individual met online (Kirik et al., 2015). Similarly, another pool of research has evidently proven that social media addiction is characterized by preoccupation with social media technologies, hiding about the behaviour, psychological withdrawal, and continued use despite behavioural consequences as well as loss of control over surfing online (Gedam, Shivji, Goyal, Modi, & Ghosh, 2016; Brand, et al, 2014; Ko et al., 2012; Morrison & Gore, 2010).

Hence, the most significant problem that we face with the internet is the internet addiction that is associated with loss of control of the user (Gedam et al., 2016; Brand et al., 2014; Przepiorka, Blachnio, Miziak, & Czuczwar, 2014). Concretising this view, Busari (2016) observe that this overuse goes beyond an average amount of time spent on technological gadgets, but rather compulsive use of the internet to an extent that it is given priority over all other responsibilities that affect time and attention in school work, and domestic responsibilities at home, and even teenagers' interaction in school and at home. Indeed, a considerable amount of studies ascertained that social media addiction is associated with numerous health and physical problems such as somatization, depression (Błachnio, Przepiórka, & Pantic, 2015), anxiety (Gunduz, 2007), paranoid ideation, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity, obsessive-compulsive specifications among others (Alavi et al.,

2011). Kalekhan et al. (2016) reiterated that an excessive use of social network sites (SNSs) and online games has been negatively associated with conscientiousness, honesty/humility and agreeableness and positively associated with neuroticism, narcissism, and aggression.

Specifically, a study has confirmed that depression and anxiety are among the most emphasized psychological and physical health effect of social media addiction (Goel et al., 2013) and depression and anxiety symptoms may worsen as an outcome of addiction (Baer, Saran, Green, & Hong, 2012). Furthermore, Arora (2015) remarked that other symptoms and effect of logging on to social networking websites for a long time, mostly before going to sleep are sleep deprivation, weakness and tiredness and these cause harm to teens physical and mental health. Additionally, Block (2008) discovered fatigue, feelings of anger and social isolation as other consequences for constant social media usage. Moreover, Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) associated the high comorbidity of social media addiction with psychiatric disorders, especially affective disorders (including depression), anxiety disorders (generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder), and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The same study concluded that several factors are predictive of problematic social media use, including personality traits, parenting and familial factors, alcohol use, and social anxiety.

Having described what social media addiction entails, it is pertinent to document previous empirical studies on social media addiction among students. This is because there are a considerable number of studies that have reported social media addiction among students in an academic setting, considering either the mental, physical and academic performance (Yang & Tung, 2007; Aghazamani, 2010; Shaffril, Samah, Uli, & D'Silva, 2011; Wang et al., 2011; Wilson, Fornasier, & White, 2010). As such, reviewing these studies will identify the gap in existing research and propose an area for further research which this present study aims at filling.

2.3. Studies on the social media addiction among students

Evidence largely from documented empirical research has shown that social media addiction in the academic milieu has attracted a growing body of investigations. For example, Dau (2015) investigated the impact of social media addiction among the students of tertiary institutions in Northern Nigeria and the level at which the students are addicted. Findings from the study showed that the majority of the respondents use almost all popular social media platforms with Facebook having the largest number of users. It was also found that the majority of the respondents use these social media platforms, mainly for social needs such as friendship and dating. In the same way, Al-Menayes (2015) examine dimensions of social media addiction among university students in Kuwait. It was disclosed that social media addiction, has three independent dimensions such as the user's experience with social media, time spent using social media and satisfaction derived from them. In the same survey, it was also found that social media addiction was a negative predictor of academic performance as measured by a student's GPA.

Corroborating these findings, Błachnio, Przepiorka, and Pantic (2016) reported that Facebook addiction was in relation to lower self-esteem and was also negatively related to life satisfaction. In addition, other research ascertained that neurotic personality and high levels of perceived support from online social networks predicted the degree of excessive internet use (Hardie & Tee, 2007). This is consistent with a research performed with an online survey among 315 respondents in the Netherlands, which showed that psychological variables have direct and indirect effects on Facebook addiction. This implies that social

loneliness is a strong predictor of Facebook addiction just as the construct of Facebook anxiety (the anxiety not getting on Facebook whenever a user wants) which leads to a higher Facebook addiction as well (Steggink, 2015). These inferences are in harmony with a survey among 5280 social media users from several Spanish-speaking Latin-American countries, which divulged that for girls, feeling depressed seems to trigger higher SNS involvement and for boys, anxiety triggers higher SNS involvement (Oberst, Wegmann, Stodt, Brand, & Chamarro, 2017). In a related inquiry carried out among students in Turkey, it was likewise ascertained that social media addicts differentiate from each other according to their usage purposes. For example, Addicts use social networking sites for some specific purposes such as communicating with friends, reaching out for information about people, spending leisure times, reading and writings on their walls, instant messaging, entertaining, and relaxing (Balci & Gölcü, 2013).

Correspondingly, Tiwari (2017) through a questionnaire investigated the existence of Internet addiction among youth in colleges of Bhopal. The study concluded that the majority of youths are using social networking sites not for any educational purpose, but just for the sake of entertainment and as a communication channel. This suggests that this may adversely affect their studies and career as they waste their prime time on it, without focusing on their career. In the same vein, Al-Menayes (2014) reiterated that students who spend an increasing amount of time online underscore which affects their academic performance. This means that too much time and dedication to social media may distract students and make them under-perform. Moreover, social media addiction has been reported to be a negative predictor of academic performance as measured by a student's GPA (Al-Menayes, 2015). Such under-performance, includes lack of paying attention to details, attention to pronunciation and grammar, consequently deterring students from writing a complete sentence as well as use proper grammatical methods while writing text/message (Roy & Chakraborty, 2015). Strengthening this view, Kunle (2011) stated that a lot of students today cannot stay for two-three hours without checking, commenting and updating their profiles on social media at the expense of academic and other activities.

In recapitulating the effect of social media addiction among students, Choi and Lim (2016) examined the effects of social and technology overload on the psychological well-being of young South Korean adults, and the result proves that overload induced by SNS use led to addiction issues and undermined users' psychological well-being. These results conform to evidence from a prior documented research which established that electronic media use is highly prevalent among today's youth, and its overuse in the general population has been consistently associated with the presence of psychiatric symptoms (Baer et al., 2012). Another study divulges that, Facebook is the most popular sites among the youths; it provides individuals with a way of maintaining and strengthening social ties which can be beneficial in both social and academic settings. However, these same sites, badly affect students' privacy, safety, the focus of attention to studying, physical as well as mental health (Deb Roy & Chakraborty, 2015). This implies that social media addiction is typically characterized by psychomotor agitation, anxiety, craving (Johansson & Götestam, 2004), loss of control, impairment of function, reduced decision-making ability (Ha et al., 2006) which might lead to negative impact on academic performance (Vidyachathoth et al., 2014).

In addition, a survey among students in India concluded that although social media platform has provided the youth with a golden opportunity in exchanging knowledge, finding employment and social quotient among them as well as increased participation in issues of social importance. Yet, privacy has taken a beating due to overexposure to social media. Moreover, participation in chats and discussions on subjects of least importance is killing the

valuable creative time among youth. This situation has created a change of character, lose of concentration and a spike in psychological disorders (Parvathy & Suchithra, 2015). Corroborating these results, Zainudin, Din, and Othman (2013) survey found that Internet and social media addiction among Malaysian university students caused problems with academic performances, creates bad personality and encourages the practice of unhealthy lifestyle. This implies that there were significant differences in academic performances, personality and lifestyle between "Average user" and "Excessive users. This outcome is in accordance with an investigation from Singapore regarding the excessive social media use among Singapore Youth (Mythily, Qiu, & Winslow, 2008) which concluded that excessive social media users reported that their grade/school work suffers because of the time spent online. In the same survey, it was found that social media addiction affected their personality. They easily got depressed and feel moody when they are away from social media platforms. Contrary to this notion, Asiedu (2017) results on Ghanaian students use of social media as regards their academic and social lives reported that the positive effects of social media outweigh its negative, hence, students should not be entirely discouraged from visiting social media sites. Olaleke et al. (2015) likewise reported that online SNSs enhance students' contact as well as increase students' participation in class, especially amongst introverted students who find it hard to raise questions before their peers in school.

All the above literature reviewed indicate that social media addiction exists, yet, most of the studies that have been carried out on social media addiction have predominantly centred on students in their domestic country with a little emphasis on international students. Moreover, most of the studies have used quantitative questionnaire survey to understand the effect of social media addiction among students. Conversely, this present research will adopt a qualitative method via a focus group discussion among international students in TRNC. The rationale for adopting focus group is to demonstrate in an in-depth students' experiences of social media use and its addiction on their psychological/mental, health and academic pursuit.

3. Methods

3.1. Study design

The main intention of this paper is to examine in-depth the social media use and addiction among international students in TRNC. To achieve this, a qualitative investigation using a focus group discussion was carried out among 25 affirmative students.

3.2. Subjects and sample procedure

The participants were twenty-five (25) full-time undergraduate Nigerian students studying at one public university in Northern Cyprus. The University runs 25 undergraduate courses (https://goo.gl/yzo4bt), therefore, one student each was selected. The researchers adopted a purposive sampling technique to select the participants. The selection criteria were based merely on those who acknowledged that they regularly utilise social media technologies as well as are willing to participate in the investigation. It is believed that selecting those who frequently use social media will provide a deeper understanding of the areas social media addiction affect the students.

3.3. Tool and method for data gathering

Three (3) focus group session [25 participants with (8) eight students each in group 1 and 3, and 9 students in group 3] was conducted at the institution's premise without the

presence of their lecturers (see Table 1 for seating arrangement). The questions of the focus group were entirely developed by the researchers, however, other relevant studies (Asiedu, 2017; Parvathy & Suchithra, 2015; Choi & Lim, 2016; Oberst et al., 2017; Błachnio et al., 2016; Al-Menayes 2015; Dau, 2015) formed the basis for the questions. Before the investigation, the drafted questions were given to four experts in the field of communication. The experts systematically examined the questions so as to conform with the aim of this present research.

While the focus group session was going on, the lead researcher took notes as well as recorded the conversation. The notes enabled the researchers to take note of the participant's facial expressions such as a frown, head nodding and sighing. A consent form was signed by each participant before the focus group session started. The focus group discussion lasted for about 60-90 minutes to complete. The audio-taped focus group discussions were transcribed manually. For anonymity purposes, the students were identified using their focus group number and the order of sitting in the focus group discussion. The interview started with *demographic questions about age and study subject*. Subsequent questions centred *on the social media mostly used by students, the purpose behind using social networking sites among students, ascertaining whether students are addicted to social media, examining the possible causes of social media addiction among students, examining whether the excessive use of social media affect academic performance of students,* and *to examine the effect of excessive social media usage on the psychological and health of students*. The demographic information about the research participants of the focus groups is depicted in Table 1. Students in each focus group are represented by a code to protect their identity. For example, BACH_A-1 represent Bachelor of Architecture student in group 1, GA_S-2 represents Gastronomy student in group 2, and BSC_N-3 represent the Nursing student in group 3.

Table 1. The participants characteristics

Group Number	Focus group code	Gender	Discipline	Age Range
Group 1	BACH_A-1	Female	Bachelor of Architecture	23-29
	B_F-1	Female	Banking and Finance	
	B_A-1	Male	Business Administration	
	CIV_E-1	Male	Civil Engineering	
	COMP_E-1	Female	Computer Engineering	
	B_E-1	Female	Bachelor Economics	
	EE_E-1	Male	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	
	EC_E-1	Female	Electrical and communication Engineering	
Group 2	EL_T-2	Male	English language teaching	23-29
	GA_S-2	Female	Gastronomy	
	H_M-2	Male	Health management	
	HP_M-2	Female	Horticulture production and marketing	
	I_A -2	Male	Interior Architecture	
	I_R-2	Male	International relations	
	L_A-2	Female	Landscape architecture	
	MI_S-2	Male	Management Information System	
	NM_A-2	Male	New Media and Journalism	
Group 3	BSC_N-3	Male	BSc. Nursing	23-29
	Pharm_C -3	Female	Pharmacy	
	BA_Psy-3	Male	Psychology	
	P_R-3	Female	Physiotherapy and rehabilitation	
	P_A-3	Female	Public administration	
	S_E-3	Male	Software Engineering	
	T-M-3	Female	Tourism Management	
	PSIR 2_3-3	Female	Political sciences/international relations	

Moreover, Table 1, also divulge that the entire students were between the ages of 23-29, and (n=13) 46.4% were female, while (n=15)53.6% were male. This means that there were more male participants.

3.4. Data analysis

During the data analysis phase, analysis across and between the data continued until no more thematic patterns could be identified. The data were treated equally without looking for specific differences. This implies that rather than looking for differences, the analysis focused on identifying common themes. All interview transcripts were printed, read multiple times, and notes were recorded in the margins to identify potential themes. These were then collated, reviewed, and examined for connections and redundancies. The data were analysed manually using thematic coding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Over time, the themes were expanded, contrasted and changed as more transcripts were analysed. To reduce bias, data analyses were reviewed by the research assistants recruited for this present investigation. The results of this analysis are presented below.

4. Results and discussion

Table 2 below, summarizes the key running heads that were identified in the analysis. Each of these themes is discussed further below, illustrated by examples.

Table 2. Running heads emerged from the focused group discussion

Themes	Summarised findings
Social media mostly used by the students	It was found that Facebook is the most used and preferred social media among many students today
The purpose of using social networking sites among students	The students mainly use social networking technologies for chatting, commenting and posting, reading news feeds, dating, and only occasionally utilize it for academic purposes
The possible causes of social media addiction among students	It was found that depression and anxiety trigger students higher SNS involvement. Social loneliness was also pointed out as a factor that triggers their constant use of social media
The excessive use of social media and academic performance of students	It was established that the utilization of social media has no direct negative influence on the students' academic performance.
To examine the effect of excessive social media usage on the psychological and health of students	The excess usage of social media has a negative effect on students' psychological well-being and health, resulting in sleep deprivation, weakness, fatigue, tiredness and blurry vision.

4.1. Social media mostly used by the students

All the students who took part in the focus groups have smartphones and a Laptop. (n=18) 72% utilise Facebook and WhatsApp messenger more than any other social media, while (n=5) 20% preferred Twitter and Snapchat, and (n=2) 8% preferred IMO. This implies that the majority of the students prefer to use Facebook and WhatsApp than any other social media platform. This result is consistent with prior studies which discovered that the majority of students use almost all popular social media platforms with Facebook having the largest number of users (Dau, 2015). Another study divulges that, Facebook is the most popular sites among the youths; it provides individuals with a way of maintaining and strengthening social ties which can be beneficial in both social and academic settings. In view of this submission, one of the students remarked that:

> The use of Facebook enhances my contact as well as increase my participation in class. Sometimes I find it difficult to raise questions in class, however, am always at ease asking my peers online certain things taught in class that I don't fully grasp [H_M-2].

Consistent with this notion, another student stated that:

> I love and prefer Facebook more than any other social media platforms due to its news feed. Through its News and Video feeds, I get acquainted with certain information that improves my academic pursuit as well as post certain information that enhances the knowledge of my peers [COMP_E-1].

This submission suggests that Facebook is certainly the most used and preferred social media among many students today. Olaleke et al. (2015) reported that online SNSs enhance students' contact as well as increase students' participation in class, especially amongst introverted students who find it hard to raise questions before their peers in school.

4.2. The purpose of using social networking sites among students

The entire students agreed that they use social networking sites mainly for communication and dating, and only occasionally it is being used for educational purposes. They all held the notion that social media is a means of entertainment, fun, and interactivity; and could help them escape from the real-world tasks and identification. For example, a student submitted that: 'I really do not see social networking sites as a tool for educational purposes, but rather a medium to communicate with my friends and well-wishers [I_R-2].'

In addition, another student stated that:

> I love social networking sites because it allows me to meet new friends online, and from there, I can date a person freely. This reason has made me stay glued to my smartphones at every time of the day [PSIR 2_3-3].

Supporting this view, another student likewise claimed that:

> I use social media as a multi-purpose platform because it provides me with the ability to share videos, text, sound and images in a more collaborative and interactive manner. Therefore, through video calls online I get to discuss with my fiancée and family members back home [PSIR 2_3-3].

These comments suggest that the students mainly use social networking technologies for chatting, commenting and posting, reading news feeds, dating, and only occasionally utilize it for academic purposes. This result is in harmony with Dau (2015) who found that a majority of Nigerian students use social media platforms, mainly for social needs such as friendship and dating. By implication, Nigerian students both home and abroad, mainly utilize social media for almost the same purposes. In a related research carried out among students in Turkey, it was found out that students use social networking sites for some specific purposes such as communicating with friends, reaching out to people's information, spending leisure times, reading, writings on their walls and others', instant messaging, entertaining and relaxing (Balci & Gölcü, 2013). Moreover, Tiwari (2017) concluded that the majority of youth are using social networking sites not for any educational purpose, but just for the sake of entertainment and as a communication channel. All these findings are linked with the use and gratification assertion which suggests that students have a variety of needs (social, academic work, etc.) to use the social media, which lead to different degrees of exposure to its applications (Facebook, Twitter, Badoo, Snapchat etc.), and result in varying degree of gratification and pleasure experience (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). Hence, university students' use social networking sites for various reasons such as physical and psychological, depending on the gratification derived from it (Apuke & Ezeah, 2017). Such gratification as established in this present research is associated with communication, dating and entertainment purposes.

4.3. The possible causes of social media addiction among students

In this section, the students were asked how long they spend daily online in order to ascertain if they are social media addict. Based on the findings of the study, the entire respondents divulged that they utilize social media more than 6 hours in a day. In addition, they all claimed to use it at every given moment in time. It is now part of them and it's something they cannot do without. This implies that the students have become so addicted to social media sites, thereby spending an increasing amount of time online and as well-made social media part of their daily routine. For example, one of the students stated that:

> I cannot stay an hour without logging on my social media page. Chatting, video calling, and reading news and video feeds are what I love doing on a regular basis. I am so into social media that even at night I feel the urge of chatting up my friends and meeting new friends. I cannot imagine a world without electronic interactivity [S_E-3].

Supporting this viewpoint, another student commented that:

> I do not use social media sites for only an average amount of time, but rather use it to a large extent. I give it a priority over all other responsibilities which sometimes affect my time and attention in school work, and domestic responsibilities at home, as well as my physical interactivity with peers in school and at home. Indeed, I am really addicted to social networking sites, but I don't care because I derive maximum satisfaction from it [P_R-3].

These comments suggest that the students are social media addicts. They always have the desire and urge to log onto social media at any given opportunity and some of them cannot stay an hour without logging on social media sites. This result corroborates with research assertion which suggests that social media addiction is associated with loss of control of the user (Gedam et al., 2016; Brand et al., 2014; Przepiorka et al., 2014). Another study concluded that the overuse of social media goes beyond an average amount of time spent on technological gadgets, but rather compulsive use to an extent that it is given priority over all other responsibilities that affect time and attention in school work, and domestic responsibilities at home, and even teenagers' interaction in school and at home (Busari, 2016). In addition, a research reported that the exorbitant utilization of social media among students might lead to addiction and this could be a cause for concern, due the longer time they spend surfing the web (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Therefore, through the web, students take part in a variety of activities some of which might be conceivably addictive (Dau, 2015; Boyd, 2007) and such occupies a central role in the way they communicate and connect with each other (Olufadi, 2016). Consistent with the findings of this present study, a survey observed that a lot of students today cannot stay for two-three hours without checking, commenting and updating their profiles on social media at the expense of academic and other activities (Kunle, 2011).

Having ascertained the prevalence of social media addiction among the students. The researchers inquired further the reasons for their constant use of social media sites. All the students who took part in the focus group discussion remarked that feeling depressed and anxiety triggers their higher SNS involvement. Social loneliness was also pointed out as a factor that triggers their constant use of social media. In view of this, they believed that the use of social media reduces boredom and provides maximum relaxation. In addition, they claimed that higher levels of perceived support from online social networking friends encouraged them to stay more online, thereby resulting in excessive social media use. For example, a student concluded that:

> Whenever am bored, anxious and depressed, I just log onto to my social media sites to chat with friends and well-wishers. I do this every time because of the nature of the world we are living today, which is full of anxiety and depression [Pharm_C -3].

These results imply that the main reasons why the students excessively use social networking sites are to reduce the feeling of depression, anxiety and social loneliness. This result counteracts studies which found that depression and anxiety are among the most emphasized psychological and physical health effect of social media addiction (Goel et al., 2013) and depression and anxiety symptoms may worsen as an outcome of addiction (Baer et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the findings of this present research are in harmony with a survey conducted among 5280 social media users from several Spanish-speaking Latin-American countries, which divulged that for girls, feeling depressed seems to trigger higher SNS involvement and for boys, anxiety triggers higher SNS involvement (Oberst et al., 2017).

4.4. The excessive use of social media and academic performance of students

It was discovered in this study that the excessive use of social media does not necessarily affect the students' academic pursuit and performance. As far as these crops of students are concerned, social media use does not deter their academic grades and performances. For example, a student maintained that:

> Although I use social media frequently, it does not affect my priority of making good grades. I have this notion that I left my country to make a better future, therefore, no matter how I utilise social media I still do well in my studies [I_A -2].

Furthermore, another student claimed that:

> I do not believe that social media affect my grades, there are times that I even chat while reading, yet it does not stop me from getting the best out of my research and study. I am presently a 4-point grade student and yet I am frequently on various social media sites. The student concluded that I love multitasking and this involves chatting and reading simultaneously [EL_T-2].

Overall, the above comments imply that the utilization of social media has no direct negative influence on academic performance. This result is contrary to prior studies which divulged that the exorbitant utilization of social media may conceivably influence a person's academic performance (Echeburúa & De Corral 2010; Griffiths, 2005, Shaffer et al., 2004). Corroborating this view, ample research evidence has likewise shown that social media utilisation affects students' academic skills as they waste too much time on them (Musa, 2015; Yoo & Kim, 2013; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). Similarly, Zainudin et al. (2013) survey found that Internet and social media addiction among Malaysian university students caused problems with academic performances. Nevertheless, the results of this present study support the assertion which indicated that the academic performance and well-being of the students was not affected by the use of social media (Alwagait et al., 2015; Mbodila et al., 2014; Tamirat & Molly, 2014; Negussie & Ketema, 2014).

4.5. Effect of excessive social media usage on the psychological/mental and health of students

It was established from the focus group discussion that the entire students' psychology/mental state and health is being affected by the excess usage of social networking sites. The students divulged that the symptoms and effect of logging on to social networking websites for a long time, mostly before going to sleep are sleep deprivation, weakness, fatigue, and tiredness, and these cause harm to their physical, psychological and mental health. In addition, the students pointed out that they experience blurry vision as a result of constant exposure to their laptop and smartphone screen lights, and this greatly affects their sight. Consistent with this view, a student lamented that:

> The constant usage of social media has made me become an addict. Even at night, I do chat with friends, resulting in late night sleep. I wake up every morning tired and dizzy and it sometimes affects my thinking capability [B_A-1].

This advocates that the excessive use of social media has a negative effect on the psychological and health of students. This finding conforms with a study which reported that excess use of social media affects students' privacy, safety, the focus of attention to study, physical as well as mental health (Deb Roy & Chakraborty, 2015). In addition, Zainudin et al. (2013) found that social media addiction among Malaysian university students encouraged the practice of unhealthy lifestyle.

5. Conclusion

The results of this investigation provide a detailed account of social media addiction among international students. It has generated useful data to build more understanding and insight into social media addiction among students. Therefore, it can be inferred from this study that Facebook is certainly the most used and preferred social media among many students today. In addition, the students mainly use social networking technologies for chatting, commenting and posting, reading news feeds, dating, and only occasionally utilize it for academic purposes. Hence, the excess use of social networking sites has transformed students into addicts as the entire respondents divulged that they utilize social media more than 6 hours in a day. This suggests that students continually have the desire and urge to log onto social media at any given opportunity and some of them cannot stay an hour without logging on social media sites.

It was likewise found that depression and anxiety trigger the students higher SNS involvement. Social loneliness was also pointed out as a factor that triggers their constant use of social media. This implies that the use of social media reduces boredom and provides maximum relaxation. In addition, higher levels of perceived support from online social networking friends encouraged students to stay more online, thereby resulting in excessive social media use. It was likewise established that the utilization of social media has no direct negative influence on the students' academic performance, but rather has a negative effect on their psychological well-being and health, resulting to sleep deprivation, weakness, fatigue, tiredness and blurry vision.

6. Limitation and direction for further research

As this investigation is founded on real-life experiences, it contributes to enhancing the empirical research results that are beneficial for understanding social media addiction among students abroad. The study was likewise premeditated to address the research inquiries within the setting of a large population of Nigerians learning overseas. Yet, it simply focused on undergraduate Nigerian students at one public university in Northern Cyprus, and the nature of the samples (a convenience sample) employed is a restraint as regard to the broader transferability and generalizability of the results. In addition, there is an absence of "statistical generalisability". This is consistent with the views of the investigators who argued that interpretive research (such as this current research) is not suitable for generating "statistical generalisable" findings (Myers, 2013; Walsham, 2001). Nevertheless, a longitudinal and ethnographic study where a researcher spends a significant amount of time observing the students' use of social media and its addictive tendencies would be valuable in providing richer insights about how social media affect students in general. Conclusively, a quantitative-based research via survey with a significant number of respondents (i.e. increasing the number of the university and participant to be investigated) may yield different results and the findings could then be generalised to a larger population.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues (Including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc.) have been completely observed by the authors.

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