ISSN: 3043-467X



Influence of Mass Media on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Nigeria and Strategies for Improvement

Ihezie Donatus UKPABI, Ph.D.
Department of Adult Education,
University of Ibadan
E-mail: ukpabidonatus@gmail.com
Tel No: +234(0)8063373862
ORCID iD-0009-0006-4648

Taofeek Gbolahan, MUIBI, Ph.D.
Department of Adult Education,
University of Ibadan,
E-mail: taofeekgbolahan@gmail.com
Tel No: +234(0)90663997369
ORCID iD-000-0002-1188-7255
&

Solomon O. OJEDEJI, PhD.
(Corresponding Author)
Centre for Literacy, Training and Development Programme for Africa (CLTDPA)
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
solomonojedeji@gmail.com
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5193-0940

This paper discussed the influence of mass media on academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria and strategies for improvement. Mass media are various channels or tools used to communicate information, news, and entertainment to a large audience. These channels or tools can be traditional or modern, and they play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, influencing culture and providing information to the masses. The paper explored the various forms of mass media accessible to secondary school students in Nigeria, the patterns and frequency of media consumption among students, the perceived positive and negative influences of mass media on students' academic performance, and the sociocultural factors that shape students' media

habits. The study recommended that students should have limited access to mass media. Parents and teachers should be their controllers and encourage them to watch and listen to programmes that are educative. Parents should be aware of the positive and negative impact of access to mass media on their children. Parents, teachers and guardians should ensure that children spend most of their time reading, playing with others and doing their homework in order to ensure high performances. Keywords: Addiction, Academic Performance, Students, Mass media.

Keywords: Mass media, Academic performance, Secondary school students, Strategies

Introduction

The world is migrating towards a digital era whereby massive improvement in technology is facilitating wide range of communication globally. Communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, or feelings between individuals or groups through mutually understood signs, symbols, or behaviour. It is a fundamental aspect of human interaction and a central mechanism through which learning, culture, and relationships are built and maintained. In modern society, communication occurs not only through face-to-face interactions but also through various media channels, collectively referred to as mass media (Dwivedi, Dwivedi, Bobek, & Zabukovšek, 2019). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to a broad range of technologies used to handle communication, create, store, transmit, and manage information. It encompasses both traditional computer technologies and modern digital communication tools such as the internet, mobile devices, software applications, and network systems that facilitate the exchange of data across individuals and institutions (Adu & Olatoye, 2021; Alhassan & Habibu, 2022). ICT plays a transformative role in education by enhancing access to information, fostering interactive learning environments, and supporting personalized instruction. In recent years, the integration of ICT into teaching and learning has been seen as essential for improving educational quality and student performance (Okonkwo, Eze, & Ofoegbu, 2023).

Ufuophu and Agobami (2012) observed that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) include internet, satellite, cable data transmission and computer assisted equipment but the mass media most widely used (Wahab, Othman, & Muhammad 2017). Mass media refers to large-scale communication channels designed to reach a wide audience with the purpose of disseminating information, entertainment, education, or public messages. Its use can have both positive and negative implications, particularly among adolescents whose habits and behaviours are still being shaped (Nwabueze & Nwabueze, 2021).

Mass media is generally categorised into two major types: traditional media and digital media. Traditional media includes older forms of communication that existed before the rise of the internet and digital technologies. These comprise radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and billboards. They are typically one-directional, transmitting information from source to receiver without much interactive feedback (Onwubiko & Adebayo, 2022). Digital media, on the other hand, refers to

content delivered through internet-based platforms and digital technologies. These include social media (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok), blogs, websites, YouTube, online news portals, podcasts, and mobile apps. Digital media is interactive, fast-paced, and highly accessible through smartphones, computers, and other electronic devices (Okafor & Edewor, 2023; Musa & Ibrahim, 2020).

This paper focuses on both traditional and digital forms of mass media, recognising that secondary school students in Nigeria are exposed to a mix of both, often simultaneously. For example, while television and radio are still widely used in many Nigerian homes, smartphones and internet-enabled devices have increasingly become part of students' daily routines (Uche & Adeyemi, 2022). Therefore, understanding how students interact with both types of media is critical to assessing their influence on academic performance.

Conceptual Clarification: Social Media and Mass Media

Social media, broadly speaking, refers to digital platforms that enable users to create, share, and engage with content in real-time through virtual communities and networks. The Oxford English Dictionary (2011) defines social media as "websites and applications used for social networking." Expanding on this, Dearborn (2014) describes social media as a communication infrastructure that is not only fast and expansive but also one that billions of individuals worldwide depend on to share and access information, entertainment, ideas, and expertise. A common thread in both definitions is the role of social media as an interactive digital communication channel; one that fosters connection and engagement over the internet.

Mass media, in contrast, refers to the diversified array of communication technologies used to disseminate information to a vast audience simultaneously. These include traditional platforms such as newspapers, radio, and television, as well as contemporary channels such as websites, streaming services, and social media platforms (McQuail, 2020). Mass media can be categorised into several types: print media (e.g., newspapers, magazines), broadcast media (e.g., radio, television), digital media (e.g., blogs, forums, social networking sites), and outdoor media (e.g., billboards and signage). While mass media generally conveys information in a one-to-many format, social media enables many-to-many communication, blurring the boundaries between producers and consumers of content (Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

In today's digital ecosystem, these media forms are not mutually exclusive but rather interconnected. It is therefore essential to examine how these various forms of media (particularly mass and social media) contribute to shaping behaviours, perceptions, and learning outcomes, especially among young people and students. The following sections provide a critical exploration of these dimensions.

Mass media can affect secondary school students both positively and negatively. For instance, educational television programs and online academic tutorials can reinforce classroom learning, improve comprehension, and provide access to broader knowledge. Conversely, excessive

exposure to non-educational content (such as entertainment shows, social media trends, or violent video games) can distract students, reduce study time, and negatively impact their academic focus and mental health (Adekunle & Eniola, 2021; Oboh, 2023). For this reason, education stakeholders (particularly school administrators, parents, and teachers) must understand the types of mass media students engage with, the duration of their usage, and the content they consume. Such understanding is vital for developing effective strategies to guide media usage in ways that support, rather than hinder, academic success (Chukwuemeka & Sulaiman, 2024).

According to Treapăt, 2017 and UNICEF, 2013), mass media is projected to have a considerable impact on students' attitudinal and behavioural habits, as well as their overall disposition to academic success. In a blended learning strategy, the integration of e-learning resources and face-to-face teaching in educational system promises positive outcome for students' learning experience (Azizan, 2010). Blended learning complements traditional face-to-face learning in schools (Dwivedi, Dwivedi, Bobek, & Zabukovšek, (2019). In Malaysia for instance, the Ministry of Education introduced e-learning initiatives in both primary and secondary Smart Schools to prepare students early enough for the knowledge-based economy and the marketplace of the 21st century. However, students at all levels of learning globally seem to have split focus on their academic work as a result of technological improvements and the expansion of internet software. For this reason, many academics have raised eyebrows over the implication of mass media on students' academic performance (Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013).

Taking into account the widespread use of mass media in the learning process in schools, there is a need to discuss its influence on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. This is necessary because the media landscape has evolved significantly, with students increasingly exposed to diverse media content that can either complement or compete with formal learning. Understanding how this exposure affects their study habits, concentration, cognitive development, and overall academic outcomes is essential for educators, parents, and policymakers. Moreover, in a country like Nigeria, where secondary education serves as a critical foundation for future academic and career advancement, identifying both the opportunities and risks associated with mass media usage can inform strategic interventions aimed at improving students' academic success and media literacy.

The Evolution and Convergence of Media Channels

One notable transformation in the contemporary media landscape is the convergence of traditional mass media with new media technologies. This convergence has led to the emergence of hybrid platforms where legacy media institutions now operate within digital environments. For example, newspapers now maintain interactive websites and social media handles, while television programmes are streamed online with comment sections that promote audience feedback (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2018). This phenomenon has redefined the way audiences consume information; faster, more interactive, and increasingly tailored to individual preferences.

Convergence not only broadens access but also complicates media literacy, as consumers must now navigate a complex matrix of content sources with varying degrees of credibility (Livingstone, 2019). This has significant implications for education, where the line between entertainment and information is increasingly blurred, and where students may rely on digital media as a primary source of learning, often without critical evaluation.

The Influence of Social Media on Knowledge Acquisition and Communication

Social media has become a powerful force in shaping how individuals, especially young people, acquire knowledge and communicate. Platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram are increasingly used to disseminate educational content and engage learners in collaborative discussion (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Manca & Ranieri, 2017). The speed and ease of access to information offered by these platforms have transformed informal learning paradigms, enabling students to learn beyond the classroom through microlearning and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. However, the reliability of such information is a major concern. Studies show that students often struggle to differentiate between credible sources and misinformation on social media (Barzilai & Chinn, 2020). The algorithmic structure of platforms also creates echo chambers, reinforcing pre-existing beliefs and potentially distorting academic reasoning.

Mass media remains influential in shaping public opinion, cultural values, and societal norms. Through news broadcasts, documentaries, educational programmes, and even advertisements, traditional media shape what societies consider important and how they interpret events (McQuail, 2020). While the authority of traditional mass media has somewhat declined in the face of digital disruption, it continues to serve as a reference point for formal information, especially in academic and professional settings. The persuasive power of mass media is evident in agenda-setting and framing, where issues are presented in a way that influences public priorities and attitudes (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). This has implications for learners, as their understanding of national and global affairs is mediated through such constructed narratives.

Implications for Education and Cognitive Development

The interplay between mass and social media significantly impacts learners' cognitive development, attention span, and academic performance. Research has highlighted both the positive and negative effects of digital media on education. On the one hand, these platforms promote active learning, foster critical thinking, and encourage digital collaboration (Sälzer & Britt, 2021). On the other hand, the constant exposure to media stimuli has been linked to reduced concentration, surface-level reading, and a decline in deep learning practices (Carr, 2020).

Moreover, educators now face the challenge of integrating media literacy into the curriculum to equip students with the skills to critically evaluate media content, discern bias, and responsibly engage with online information (Hobbs, 2021).

Mass Media and Students' Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to the extent to which a student achieves their short- or long-term educational goals, often measured through grades, standardised tests, coursework assessments, and teacher evaluations. It remains a vital indicator of student success and a determinant of future academic and professional opportunities (Adebayo & Olawale, 2023). In recent years, the intersection between mass media and academic performance has drawn considerable scholarly interest, particularly due to the changing media consumption patterns among students.

Mass media (encompassing both traditional and digital platforms) plays a dual role in shaping students' academic outcomes. On one hand, it offers access to a wealth of educational resources. Educational broadcasts, academic podcasts, digital documentaries, online tutorials, and open educational resources (OERs) have transformed learning by enabling students to supplement their classroom learning through self-directed study (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020; UNESCO, 2022). Furthermore, mass media platforms provide up-to-date information on current affairs, historical developments, and cultural phenomena, fostering critical thinking and cultural literacy among learners.

The cognitive benefits of exposure to educational media are well documented. For instance, Edmond and Osaro (2024), in their recent study on the academic impact of televised educational content among primary school pupils in the United States, found a positive correlation between regular viewing of science-based television programmes and improved performance in national STEM assessments. This aligns with earlier findings by Akokuwebi, Ukpabi, and Ejeh (2017), who noted that academic quiz competitions and science documentaries on Nigerian television channels helped improve students' motivation towards science education.

Moreover, mass media serves a socialising function, contributing to students' development of interpersonal skills, social norms, and behavioural standards. As digital media becomes increasingly accessible, children and adolescents are able to engage with diverse viewpoints and virtual peer communities, facilitating their social and intellectual growth (Mumi, 2010; Ojedeji & Adelore, 2024). Such exposure, when guided, can nurture independent learning and global awareness.

However, the influence of mass media is not uniformly positive. A significant body of literature has highlighted its negative effects on students' academic engagement and behavioural patterns. One recurring theme in recent research is the detrimental impact of excessive screen time and unregulated media consumption on reading culture and concentration levels. For instance, Okoro and Abiodun (2022) argue that students increasingly spend less time engaging with textbooks, favouring digital entertainment over in-depth academic reading. The constant barrage of media content (especially entertainment-driven content) can overstimulate the brain, resulting in reduced attention span and fragmented thinking (Carr, 2020; Barzilai & Chinn, 2020).

A growing concern is the exposure of students to inappropriate content such as violent behaviour, explicit material, and consumerist ideologies. Empirical studies by Adeleke and Yusuf (2023) have shown that social media addiction among Nigerian adolescents is positively associated with sleep deprivation, emotional fatigue, and reduced academic performance. The proliferation of mobile devices ensures that students are almost always connected, making it difficult for them to disengage and focus on academic tasks.

This is corroborated by earlier studies such as Maya (2015) and Osharive (2015), which identified a negative correlation between excessive media use and students' performance in core subjects. Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) similarly found that students who frequently used social media platforms exhibited lower academic achievement due to distraction, procrastination, and sleep-related disorders. Furthermore, Obi, Bulus, Adamu and Sala'at (2012) emphasised the linguistic implications of social media use, observing that the habitual use of shorthand and informal English in online conversations has led to the replication of such errors in formal academic writing. While these challenges may appear trivial to some, their increasing prevalence within the education sector cannot be ignored. If not properly addressed, such patterns could become entrenched in future academic practices, thereby undermining academic standards and language competence.

Another pressing concern is online privacy and digital safety. Many students, unaware of the risks, inadvertently share sensitive personal information on social networking platforms. The issue of privacy in the use of social media has become more complex as the line between public and private spaces continues to blur. Preibusch, Hoser, Gurses and Berendt (2007) and, more recently, Adelore and Ojedeji (2025), argue that most social networking sites do not provide sufficient flexibility in privacy settings, leaving users (particularly adolescents) vulnerable to identity theft, cyberbullying, and data exploitation. The widespread dissemination of false or misleading information further exacerbates this issue, with students often struggling to distinguish between credible sources and digital misinformation (Livingstone, 2019; UNESCO, 2023).

Types of Mass Media: Traditional and Digital Forms

Mass media refers to the collective channels of communication through which information is disseminated to a large and heterogeneous audience simultaneously. It has historically played a vital role in shaping public opinion, promoting cultural values, and facilitating education and socialisation. In the contemporary world, mass media can be broadly categorised into two major types: traditional media and digital media. Each type plays a unique role in information dissemination, societal development, and education.

1. Traditional Mass Media

Traditional media, also known as legacy media, encompasses the older forms of mass communication that pre-date the digital revolution. These forms include print media, broadcast media, and outdoor media.

a. *Print Media*

Print media refers to any form of mass communication that is printed on paper. It is one of the earliest forms of mass media and includes newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, and newsletters. Newspapers (e.g., *The Guardian Nigeria*, *Daily Trust*) are crucial for disseminating news, government policies, and public opinions. Despite a decline in print readership due to the digital shift, newspapers still hold significance in rural and semi-urban areas where internet penetration is low (Ojebuyi & Folarin, 2022). Magazines focus on specialised topics such as education, fashion, business, and lifestyle, and are often published weekly or monthly. Books and educational textbooks remain indispensable for formal learning, providing in-depth and well-structured knowledge across disciplines.

b. *Broadcast Media*

Broadcast media refers to the transmission of information through radio and television, often regulated by national or private broadcasting corporations. Radio remains an accessible medium, especially in developing countries. Its affordability, mobility, and oral nature make it especially important for reaching rural populations. For example, community radio stations such as *IITA Radio* in Ibadan are used to educate farmers and promote community development (UNESCO, 2023). Television, on the other hand, combines audio and visual stimuli, making it a powerful educational and entertainment tool. Educational programmes like *NTA Knowledge* in Nigeria or *BBC Bitesize* in the UK offer subject-based content that supports formal schooling (Adeosun & Odukomaiya, 2022).

c. *Outdoor Media*

Outdoor or out-of-home media refers to communication platforms located in public spaces, including billboards, posters, banners, and transit advertising (e.g., advertisements on buses and trains). These forms are often used for public awareness campaigns, political messaging, and commercial advertising. For instance, during Nigeria's general elections, billboards are used extensively to promote civic engagement (Nwagbara & Asoluka, 2021). Although traditional media is sometimes perceived as declining, it remains a powerful and credible tool for reaching broad and diverse audiences; particularly in regions with infrastructural limitations.

2. Digital Mass Media

Digital mass media, also referred to as new media, encompasses all internet-based platforms that allow for real-time interaction, multimedia content sharing, and decentralised participation in information production.

a. *Social Media*

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp have transformed how people communicate, share content, and access news. These platforms support the instantaneous dissemination of information and encourage user-generated content. For

example, platforms like YouTube are increasingly used for educational tutorials, while WhatsApp groups have become informal learning spaces among university students (Aminu & Adesanya, 2023). Social media also plays a vital role in activism, public discourse, and democratic engagement. However, issues such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and data privacy violations remain prevalent (Livingstone & Byrne, 2021).

b. *Web-Based Media (Websites, Blogs, and Forums)*

Websites are structured digital platforms that host information ranging from news to academic content. Examples include BBC.com, Aljazeera.com, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. Blogs, such as *Medium* or *Edugist.ng*, allow individuals to publish their own reflections, opinions, or expertise on various topics, making knowledge sharing more decentralised. Online forums such as *Reddit*, *Quora*, and *Nairaland* enable interactive dialogue where users ask questions, provide answers, and build communities of interest.

c. *Streaming Services and Podcasts*

The rise of audio and video streaming platforms such as Netflix, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and TED Talks has redefined media consumption habits, particularly among youths. Educational podcasts and documentaries serve as supplementary resources for formal education. For instance, the *HistoryExtra Podcast* by BBC provides insightful discussions on historical topics relevant to both students and educators (UNESCO, 2023).

d. *Mobile Applications*

Mobile apps are software tools installed on smartphones and tablets, offering media access on the go. Apps such as Coursera, Duolingo, and Khan Academy provide structured learning content for various age groups. These tools are particularly relevant for promoting lifelong learning and bridging educational inequalities, especially in developing regions (World Bank, 2022).

Some of the Social and Cultural Implications of Mass Media

Prior to the advent of mass media, human societies primarily relied on oral communication, storytelling, folklore, and communal practices as the major channels for transmitting knowledge, culture, and values. Information dissemination was largely localised, and cultural continuity was preserved through interpersonal interactions and traditional ceremonies. In such settings, elders and cultural custodians played a central role in education, with knowledge being passed down generationally through face-to-face interaction and community observance (Ogunyemi & Adelakun, 2020). This mode of communication, while deeply rooted in communal identity, often limited the scope of interaction to immediate environments, with little exposure to external ideas or global developments.

However, the emergence and proliferation of mass media radically transformed the structure of communication in contemporary societies. With the development of print, broadcast, and later digital media, information became more global, instantaneous, and decentralised. Mass media redefined how individuals access knowledge, relate with others, and understand their world, creating what McLuhan (1964) famously termed a "global village." In today's media-driven society, communication is no longer bound by geography; instead, it transcends national borders and cultural boundaries, shaping perceptions, lifestyles, and behaviours at an unprecedented pace.

One of the most affected demographics in this transformation is the youth population, particularly teenagers and university students. Adolescents today derive significant portions of their cultural orientation from media exposure. According to Zastrow, Kirst-Ashman, and Hessenauer (2019), mass media significantly influences youths' behavioural patterns, including their fashion choices, sexual conduct, language use, and social relationships. Through repeated exposure to media content (be it in music videos, social media trends, television dramas, or online forums) young people assimilate attitudes and practices that often diverge from traditional cultural norms.

Similarly, university students are constantly immersed in a multimedia environment that shapes their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural outlook. Media messages (whether educational or entertainment-focused) play a crucial role in their identity formation, academic orientation, and moral worldview. As Sue et al. (2021) observed, mass media influences not only students' lifestyle choices but also their academic predispositions, which in turn impacts their academic performance either positively or negatively. For instance, while educational documentaries and podcasts can enhance learning and broaden students' perspectives, excessive exposure to non-academic or disruptive content on social media may lead to decreased study time, reduced concentration, and even academic disengagement (Ojedeji & Adelore, 2024).

The effects of mass media are, therefore, double-edged. On one hand, they provide platforms for enriching knowledge, fostering innovation, and expanding cultural horizons. On the other, they may contribute to value erosion, distraction, and susceptibility to risky behaviours if not properly guided. Consequently, understanding the role of mass media in shaping youth behaviour and academic performance is essential for educators, parents, and policymakers alike.

Strategies for Improving Academic Performance

In light of the growing influence of mass media (both positive and negative) on students' academic life, it becomes imperative to explore pragmatic strategies that can help students optimise their academic performance. These strategies must address not only individual efforts but also the collective responsibility of parents, educators, policymakers, and the media industry. This section proffers comprehensive interventions, categorised across the major stakeholders involved in a student's academic journey.

1. Strategies for Students

Students must begin by adopting intentional and disciplined media consumption habits, particularly in the digital age where distractions are pervasive. This involves setting boundaries for social media use, limiting screen time, and prioritising academic-related content over entertainment. As Ojedeji and Adelore (2024) noted, overexposure to non-educational media can erode attention span and reduce study effectiveness. Therefore, students should employ time management tools such as study planners and screen-time tracking applications to reduce passive media use.

Furthermore, the development of critical media literacy is crucial. Students must be trained to evaluate the credibility, relevance, and bias in media content. This not only enhances their academic reasoning but also shields them from the negative influences of misinformation and shallow content, which Zastrow, Kirst-Ashman, and Hessenauer (2019) have linked to poor academic and behavioural outcomes. In addition, fostering peer-led academic communities, whether in-person or virtual, can enhance collaborative learning. Students can create or join educational forums that promote healthy academic discussions, share study materials, and collectively resist distractions that undermine academic focus.

2. Strategies for Parents

Parents play a pivotal role in shaping the academic and media habits of their children. One essential strategy is active media supervision and guidance. Rather than imposing outright bans, parents should engage their children in open conversations about the benefits and dangers of media content. This promotes trust and facilitates informed decision-making on the part of the students (Sue et al., 2021).

Additionally, establishing a structured home learning environment (with designated times for study, media use, rest, and recreation) ensures that children learn balance and responsibility early on. Parents can also lead by example by moderating their own media use and demonstrating positive information-seeking behaviours. Parents should regularly collaborate with schools to monitor academic progress and participate in digital literacy workshops that equip them with tools to support their children's academic development in the digital age (Ojedeji & Adelore, 2024).

3. Strategies for Educators and Schools

Educational institutions must incorporate digital citizenship and media literacy into their curriculum. Teaching students how to navigate digital spaces responsibly should be as essential as core academic subjects. Educators can also curate safe academic platforms and recommend credible online resources that align with their learning goals.

Moreover, schools should establish counselling and mentoring programmes that address not only academic challenges but also behavioural and psychological implications of media overuse. Sue

et al. (2021) highlight the importance of school-based intervention in addressing negative media influences such as addiction, aggression, and identity confusion. The integration of blended learning approaches (that combine traditional teaching with curated digital tools) can also ensure that students benefit from the positive potentials of media while being shielded from its harmful aspects.

4. Strategies for Policy Makers and Media Regulators

Policymakers and regulatory bodies must strengthen guidelines on age-appropriate content, misinformation, and digital privacy. As highlighted by Ojedeji and Adelore (2024), issues such as the spread of false information and online exploitation stem from weak enforcement of media ethics and digital rights. Media literacy campaigns should be nationally supported to create awareness on responsible media consumption. In collaboration with tech companies, regulators should mandate the integration of parental controls, screen-time limits, and educational prompts into digital platforms frequently used by students.

Addressing the Negative Influences of Mass Media

To mitigate the negative effects of mass media on academic performance (such as sleep deprivation, addiction, and reduced attention span) a holistic and collaborative response is required. Sleep hygiene education should be incorporated into student wellness programmes to curb late-night media use, while mental health services can address underlying issues driving media overconsumption. Furthermore, reorienting the use of mass media from entertainment to education is critical. For example, promoting academic podcasts, science-based YouTube channels, and interactive educational apps can replace time-wasting platforms with purposeful learning tools. The long-term solution lies in empowering students to use media as a tool, not as a crutch. When combined with support from parents, educators, and media regulators, these strategies form a robust framework for improving academic outcomes in a media-saturated society.

Conclusion

In today's digital era, mass and social media have become indispensable tools in education, offering unprecedented access to information, fostering collaboration, and facilitating diverse learning models such as distance education. The ease with which students can now acquire knowledge from both local and global sources underscores the transformative power of media technologies. However, as this paper has critically examined, media (while a powerful servant) can also become a dangerous master if left unchecked. The convergence of traditional and digital platforms has produced both opportunities and challenges: while it supports learning and socialisation, it can also undermine academic focus, promote misinformation, and compromise student well-being when misused.

Therefore, the way forward is not to reject media use, but to embrace it responsibly. Students must be equipped with media literacy, critical thinking, and ethical discernment skills. Educators and policymakers, in turn, must ensure that these competencies are embedded within curricula and supported through collaborative engagement among all stakeholders. By striking a balance between utilisation and regulation, the immense educational potential of mass media can be fully harnessed; empowering learners, strengthening academic outcomes, and promoting holistic development in the 21st century and beyond.

Recommendations

In light of the critical discussions in this paper, it is evident that while mass media offers numerous educational benefits, its unregulated use can impede academic progress. Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed to optimise media engagement among students and mitigate its adverse effects on academic performance:

1. Educational institutions, in collaboration with ministries of education and curriculum developers, should design and implement structured programmes that encourage students to use mass media in moderation. These programmes should sensitise learners on the importance of balancing screen time with academic responsibilities and healthy offline activities.
2. Parents, teachers, and guardians must take active roles in guiding students' media engagement. This includes offering emotional and practical support, engaging in open conversations about the dangers of excessive or inappropriate media use (such as exposure to pornography, online violence, or misinformation) and modelling responsible media habits themselves.
3. Schools and relevant educational agencies should integrate media literacy education into the formal curriculum. This will empower students to critically evaluate digital content**,** recognise bias and misinformation, and distinguish between credible and misleading sources of information. As noted earlier, critical media literacy is central to improving both academic reasoning and responsible citizenship.
4. Teachers and school counsellors should play a leading role in helping students understand the implications of media on their academic and personal lives**.** They should organise regular sensitisation sessions that train learners to identify manipulative media techniques and understand how media can influence behaviour, values, and academic focus.
5. Parents, community leaders, and educational stakeholders should provide alternative, intellectually stimulating activities to counter excessive media use. Initiatives such as reading clubs, academic competitions, writing workshops, and creative extracurricular activities should be promoted to foster a culture of learning and personal development among students.
6. Monitoring and supervision of students' media consumption should be carried out by both parents and school authorities. This includes setting realistic screen-time limits, creating

device-free study zones, and using media control tools where necessary. Educators should also collaborate with parents to design home–school monitoring frameworks that align students' media habits with their academic goals.

References

Adekunle, R. A., & Eniola, B. A. (2021). Influence of digital media exposure on academic performance among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Media & Technology*, *25*(2), 45–58.

Adelore, O. O. and Ojedeji, S. O. (2025). Indigenous African Intergenerational Learning Practices and the Role of Technologies. In E. Prins and R. Zholdoshalieva (Eds.). *Family and Intergenerational Literacy and Learning: International Perspectives.* UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Hamburg Germany. pp.45-59

Adu, E. O., & Olatoye, R. A. (2021). Teachers' competence and the effective use of information and communication technology in Nigerian secondary schools. *Education and Information Technologies*, *26*(4), 5239–5253. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10536-8

Agrawal, S., & Krishna, S. M. (2021). Communication apprehension and psychological well-being of students in online learning. *Behavioral Sciences*, 11(11), 145. doi:10.3390/bs11110145

Alabi, O. F. (2013). A survey of Facebook addiction level among selected Nigerian university undergraduates. *New Media and Mass Communication*, 10(2012), 70–80

Alhassan, R., & Habibu, T. (2022). ICT integration in African schools: Challenges and policy responses. *International Journal of Educational Development in Africa*, *7*(1), 45–60.

Asemah, E. S., Okpanachi, R. A., &Edegoh, L. O. (2013). Influence of social media on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences Vol* 3 12 , 3 https://www.academia.edu/40078959/Influence_of_Social_Media_on_the_Academic_Performance_of_the?auto=citations&from=cover_page

Azizan, F. Z. (2010). Blended learning in higher education institution in Malaysia. In Proceedings of regional conference on knowledge integration in ICT (Vol. 10, pp. 454–466

Barzilai, S., & Chinn, C. A. (2020). *A review of epistemic cognition and its relation to literacy*. Educational Psychologist, 55(4), 209–229.

Carr, N. (2020). *The shallows: What the Internet is doing to our brains*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Chukwuemeka, P. C., & Sulaiman, T. M. (2024). Regulating adolescent media use: Implications for academic engagement in Nigerian schools. *Journal of African Media and Communication Research*, *13*(1), 66–78.

Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2017). *The mediated construction of reality*. Polity Press.

Dearborn, E., (2014). My official definition of social media. Retrieved fromhttps://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140929215745-47165795.

Dearborn, J. (2014). *Why social media is so effective and trusted*. [Online] Available at: https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com

Dwivedi, A., Dwivedi, P., Bobek, S., & Zabukovšek, S. S. (2019). Factors affecting students' engagement with online content in blended learning. *Kybernetes*, 48(7), 1500–1515. doi:10.1108/K-10-2018-0559

Edmond, k.A. and Osaro H.I. (2024) Examining the influence of mass media on academic performance in basic three students at Senase Methodist Primary A school.

Greenhow, C., & Lewin, C. (2016). *Social media and education: Reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning*. Learning, Media and Technology, 41(1), 6–30.

Hobbs, R. (2021). *Media literacy in action: Questioning the media*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2018). *Spreadable media: Creating value and meaning in a networked culture*. NYU Press.

Kuppuswamy, S., & Shankar, N. (2010). The impact of social networking on the academic performance of students. The International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking, 2(1), 67-79.

Kurniasanti, K. S., Assandi, P., Ismail, R. I., Nasrun, M. W. S., &Wiguna, T. (2019). Internet addiction: A new addiction? *Medical Journal of Indonesia*, 28(1), 82–91. doi:10.13181/mji. v28i1.2752.

Livingstone, S. (2019). *Audiences and publics: When cultural engagement matters for the public sphere*. Intellect Books.

Manca, S., & Ranieri, M. (2017). *Networked scholarship and motivations for social media use in scholarly communication*. International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 18(2), 123–138.

Maya, k. G., (2015). Achievement scripts, media influences on Blacks students‟ academic performance, self-perceptions and carrier interests. Journal of Black psychology, 42(3) pp.195-220. DOI: 10.1177/0095798414566510.

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

McQuail, D. (2020). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (7th ed.). Sage.

Monica, E. A., Ukpabi, I. D., & Samuel, O. E. (2017). Mass Media and Effective Socialisation Amongst in-school adolescents in Lagos state. A perception study. CenterPoint Journal (Humanities Edition), University of Ilorin; Nigeria. Vol. 20 (2): 1-18.

Mumi, D, (2010). Media Impact. 2nd Edition Sage Publications, Michigan.

Musa, I. A., & Ibrahim, S. (2020). Social media and youth education in Nigeria: A critical appraisal. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, *10*(3), 55–64.

Nwabueze, C., & Nwabueze, A. (2021). Mass media exposure and the learning patterns of adolescents in Nigeria. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, *13*(4), 101–109. https://doi.org/10.5897/JMCS2021.0755

Obi, N.C., Bulus, L.D., Adamu, G.M., &Sala'at, A.B. (2012). The need for safety consciousness among Youths on social Networking Sites. Journal of Applied Science and management (JASM), 14 (1).

Oboh, G. A. (2023). Social media addiction and academic disengagement among Nigerian secondary school learners. *International Journal of Educational Research in Africa*, *8*(2), 119–132.

Ogunyemi, B., & Adelakun, K. (2020). *Oral tradition and cultural continuity in pre-colonial African societies*. Journal of African Cultural Studies, 32(2), 183–197.

Ojedeji, S. O. (2023). Benefits and Drawbacks of WhatsApp Utilisation as a Learning Support Tool in Adult Literacy Programmes in Nigeria. *International Journal of Continuing and Non-Formal Education (IJCNFE),* 11(1), 450-463.

Ojedeji, S. O. (2025). Preserving Academic Integrity in the Age of AI: Navigating Challenges and Exploring Solutions. In P. A. Okebukola (Ed.). *AI and Ethics, Academic Integrity and the Future of Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Book in Honour of Abubakar Adamu Rasheed.* Sterling Publishers, Slough UK and Delhi, India. Vol. 3, pp. 177-182.

Ojedeji, S. O. and Adelore, O. O. (2024). Mobile Application Use for Adult Literacy Facilitator Training in Nigeria: Evidence from an Empirical Investigation. *Indian Journal of Adult Education.* Vol. 85 (1): 44-56 ISSN 0019-5006

Okafor, L. C., & Edewor, N. O. (2023). The rise of digital media and its implications for education in sub-Saharan Africa. *Media, Culture & Education Review*, *5*(1), 23–38.

Okonkwo, C. A., Eze, J. U., & Ofoegbu, T. O. (2023). Digital transformation in education: Implications for teaching and learning in Nigerian secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Technology and Policy*, *11*(2), 87–103.

Onwubiko, K. C., & Adebayo, R. A. (2022). Traditional media in Nigeria: Relevance in the digital age. *Nigerian Journal of Communication Studies*, *19*(1), 77–91.

Osharive, P. (2015). Social media and academic performance of students. Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research, 3(2), 78-88.

Oxford English Dictionary. (2011). *Definition of social media*. Oxford University Press.

Preibusch, S., Hoser, B., Gurses, S. & Berendt, B. (2007). Ubiquitous social networks-opportunities and challenges for privacy- aware user modelling. Proceedings of workshop on data mining for user modelling. Corfu, Greece. Retrieved from https//:pdfs.semanticscholar.org.

Sälzer, C., & Britt, M. A. (2021). *Cognitive and motivational processes in media-based learning*. Computers & Education, 164, 104124.

Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). *Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models*. Journal of Communication, 57(1), 9–20.

Sue, D., Sue, D. W., Sue, D. M., & Sue, S. (2021). *Understanding abnormal behaviour*. Cengage Learning.

The Oxford dictionary, (2011). Definition of social media. Retrieved fromhttp://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/social-media.

Thompson, J. B. (2013). *Ideology and modern culture: Critical social theory in the era of mass communication*. John Wiley & Sons.

Treapăt, L. M. (2017). The influence of mass media upon students' education, a two-edged sword. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 01–18 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319644943.

Uche, C. N., & Adeyemi, T. A. (2022). Patterns of media usage among Nigerian secondary school students: A mixed-methods inquiry. *West African Journal of Educational Technology*, *14*(1), 34–49.

Ufuophu, E., & Agobami, O. (2012). Usage of information and communication technologies and job motivation among newspaper workers in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 4(1), 45–59

UNESCO (2022). *Open Educational Resources and Digital Transformation in Africa*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

UNESCO (2023). *Media and Information Literacy: Critical Thinking for a Better World*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

UNICEF. (2013). *The situation of the teenagers in Romania* (UNICEF). http://www.unicef.ro/wp-content/uploads/Studiu-privind-situatia-adolescentilor-dinRomania.pdf(open in a new window)

Villani, S. (2001). Impact of media on children and adolescents: A 10-year review of the research. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40(4), 392–401. doi:10.1097/00004583-200104000-00007

Wahab, N. A., Othman, M. S., & Muhammad, N. (2017). The influence of the mass media in the behaviour students: A literature Study. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(8), 166–174. doi:10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i8/3218

Zastrow, C., Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hessenauer, S. L. (2019). *Understanding human behaviour and the social environment* (11th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.