Multi-Causal Predictors of Academic Performance Among Senior Secondary School Students: Peer Influence, Social Network Use, and Gender

*H O Adewuyi³
³Department of Educational Psychology, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the causal relationship between peer influence, social network usage, gender, and academic performance of senior secondary school students. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Both the independent and dependent variables were measured with standardized instruments, which included peer influence factor scale ($\alpha = .81$), social network questionnaire ($\alpha = .78$), and student achievement scale ($\alpha = .83$). The result showed that academic performance has a significant relationship with all the independent variables when put together, with the value of $R$ adjusted = .626 and $R^2$ adjusted = .386; the analysis of variance yielded an $F$ ratio value of 63.62 at 0.05 significant level. In terms of the magnitude of contributions, peer influence made the most with ($\beta = .554, t = 11.772, p<0.05$) followed by social network usage ($\beta = .168, t = 3.562, p<0.05$), while gender had no significant contribution ($\beta = -.094, t = -2.064, p>0.05$). Therefore, it is advised that parents, guardians, and other interested parties be made aware of the consequences of uncultured use of social media among peers and that students be encouraged to make effective and efficient use of their time, especially their free time.

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school students are undoubtedly tomorrow’s leaders because they are today’s youth. Thus educators, parents, counseling psychologists, and other education stakeholders are constantly looking for the modus operandi to bring about positive academic accomplishment among secondary school students. The value a nation sets on education is crucial to its ability to grow economically, scientifically, socially, and technologically (Arshad et al., 2015). For this reason, the need for an adequate standard of education cannot be overstated. Academic performance among students, particularly at the secondary school level, is a crucial factor in determining the future of youth and the nation. Learning and academic performance imply the process of achieving both the educational objectives of the individual and the country. According to Aremu and Sokan (2002), variables that hinder substantial academic achievement have become a phenomenon of interest to everyone due to the increasing importance of learning outcomes. The terms "academic performance" and "scholastic functioning" have been used to describe this occurrence in literature. Scholars, parents, policymakers, and planners have been interested in students' academic performance (Kircaburun, 2016; Ayanwale et al., 2023).

According to Bekkering & Ward (2020), the school's primary goal is to assist students in succeeding academically. The researchers assert that, notwithstanding the institution's
additional objectives, establishing solid scholarship is always prioritized. Additionally, academic accomplishment is highly valued by practically everyone involved in education, and parents typically expect their children to perform extraordinarily well in school (Adewuyi, 2021). Based on their prior knowledge, personality qualities, and social networks, students learn differently at the beginning of an activity. The latter refers to how much parents and teachers encourage their children to study, make it simpler to access educational resources, and teach them strategies that hasten skills development. Parents' academic aspirations for their children affect their children's performance in school both directly and indirectly (Azizi et al., 2019; Cavilla, 2017).

However, there is cause for concern given the current lackluster performance of senior secondary school students. A focused effort is required to address the continuous underachievement that senior secondary school students consistently describe, according to Onyemah & Omoponle (2022). Although there may have been other factors that affected students' academic performance, for the sake of this study, peer influence, gender, and social media use were taken into consideration as predictors.

Peer Influence and Academic Performance
The influence of peers on academic success has received a number of attention from scholars worldwide. A complete grasp of how peer interactions affect academic achievement is essential for instructors, educators, parents or guardians, educational psychologists, and the educational system. In particular, academic achievement and degrees of education that align with it tend to forecast a person's average income, which is vital to guarantee their way of life. Given this, eliminating the adverse effects of peer pressure on academic attainment is a crucial step toward educational reform. Performance in the classroom has a significant impact on academic progress. According to Hodgkinson (1991) and the US General Accounting Office, it is associated with completing secondary school, successfully transitioning into adult duties, achieving financial independence, and positively contributing to society.

A small group of people who are close friends, are of a similar age, and engage in the same activities is referred to as a peer group by Bankole & Ogunsakin (2015) and Castrogiovanni (2002). With an average of five or six members, peer groups or cliques frequently consist of two to twelve people. Teenagers find comfort and support in peer groups, which also help form their identities. Teenagers consider questions connected to social identity theory, such as “Who am I?” and “What do I want out of life?” When a teen identifies with a group, whether it be the stereotypical jocks, Goths, or punks, they may feel as though they are closer to discovering the solutions to some of these issues. Because adolescents spend twice as much time with peers as they do with parents or other adults, peers tremendously impact one another's lives. Peers, however, can also significantly contribute to an adolescent's well-being, as has already been mentioned. However, it's important to remember that peer pressure can be lethal or result in adverse outcomes. It is crucial for professionals working in the field of education to understand the many nuances of peer influence to avoid these adverse effects (Adewuyi, 2023).

Gender and Academic Performance
One of the individual characteristics connected to differences in academic performance and motivational functioning of students is gender. According to multiple studies, boys prefer to ascribe their intellectual accomplishment to aptitude and luck more than girls do; however, studies have demonstrated that boys and girls have different attribution patterns (Bekkering & Ward, 2020; Josiah & Etuk-Iren, 2014). Girls often blame external causes for their successes and failures, and when they do blame themselves, they typically blame aptitude rather than effort (Kanmodi et al., 2020). However, boys frequently exhibit an attributional pattern that allows them to enhance their self-perception by attributing their successes to reliable internal characteristics such as effort.
There hasn't been much research on how gender influences cognitive processes, intellectual capacities, areas of interest, stereotypical notions of daily activity, and the capacity for various tasks. To explain the differences between male and female personalities, two theories have been advanced. The first argument holds that since men are the archetype of the humans, women must be considered in relation to men. The second hypothesis (Hand et al., 2017; Klein, 2004) proposes that men symbolize the cognitive domain, which is highly valued in Euro-American culture, and women reflect the affective domain, which is less highly valued. In general, biological factors, society, and prejudices are blamed for the disparities between boys' and girls' academic performance (Klein, 2004).

Social Network Use and Academic Performance

The use of social networks by students in senior secondary schools has emerged as a significant factor influencing their academic performance cum achievement. In recent years, the phrase "social media" has come to be used often (and with varying definitions) to refer to many venues for electronic communication and interactions (Ayanwale et al., 2023). Al-Emran and Shaalan (2015), Gao et al. (2012), and Chen and Bryer (2012) all claim that social networks and media are "technologies that facilitate social interaction, make a practicable partnership, and enable discourses across stakeholders." This definition includes websites, social networking sites, electronic blog postings, audio/video tools like YouTube, Internet chat rooms, text messaging on mobile devices and computers, and audio/video resources like YouTube. The Internet may be used for more than just informational purposes. People have found that they can establish new acquaintances, reconnect with old friends, and even find long-lost relatives by using the Internet to interact with others for professional or commercial purposes. Because they are made up of various formats and topics and do not require advanced internet knowledge or expertise, social networking sites (SNSs) have emerged, simplifying the procedure. It follows that anyone can connect using SNSs. Given their widespread acceptance, it is hardly surprising that SNSs have changed how people interact and live. Teachers and students use SNSs as a communication tool, particularly in the West. Students use these platforms to communicate with their teachers and provide feedback, a two-way process (Harrath & Aloibaidy, 2016).

SNSs are Internet-based services that promote social connections between individuals or groups within an enclosed framework for relationships, meeting new individuals, and exchanging content. They also have functionality that allows users to generate public or semi-public private profile pages containing their chosen information. Finally, they serve as a channel for user communication (EU, 2009). SNSs that match the abovementioned requirements include websites like Facebook, Whatsapp, BBM, MySpace, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. Since 2000, there has been a significant increase in internet usage in general and social networking sites in particular. According to some research, 65% of teenagers between 12 and 17 years old utilize social media websites online, and approximately 78% of American adults frequently use the Internet and social media platforms (Yusuf et al., 2018; Abdulqader & Almunsour, 2020).

According to more recent estimates, YouTube generates over 3 billion daily views, LinkedIn has over 100 million members, Twitter publishes over 177 million times per day, and Facebook has over 750 million users worldwide (Opesemowo et al., 2023; Chen & Bryer, 2012). Following the introduction of Facebook and other social networking sites into the Nigerian system in 2005, social networking became more popular there from 2006 to 2011. And the majority of subscribers are young people, most of whom are in their senior year of high school. The age group between 18 and 29 has consistently been shown to utilize social networking sites the most; however, since 2008, the age group between 15 and older has experienced the most significant growth in SNS usage (Hampton et al., 2011). According to Gopalan et al. (2022), 61% of adolescents between 12 and 17 regularly send messages to their peers on SNSs. In general, social networking sites have been reported to be more frequently used by women than males.
for communication and information exchange. According to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center, Whatsapp is the most popular social networking site (92% of respondents), followed by Facebook (62%), Twitter (56%), MySpace (29%), LinkedIn (18% of respondents) and other SNSs (10%) (Domizi, 2013, Abdulqader & Almunsour, 2020).

Purpose of the Study
Investigation into the exacerbating factors affecting poor performance is essential as it helps to discover the problem awaiting solution. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the predictors of senior secondary students' academic performance in Igbomina Land, Nigeria; in particular, the study proceeded to make findings on:

i. The joint contribution of peer influence, gender, and social network usage on senior secondary school students' academic performance in Igbomina land, Nigeria.

ii. Identify the significant effect of peer influence on senior secondary school students' academic performance in Igbomina land, Nigeria.

iii. Identify the effect of gender on senior secondary school student's academic performance in Igbomina land, Nigeria.

iv. Examine the relative effect of social network usage on senior secondary students' academic performance in Igbomina land, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study
It is important to note that educators' primary aim and objective is to mold students to become the leaders of tomorrow, whereas some fail to achieve this. This research work, therefore, critically examined the factors that predict senior secondary school student academic achievement in Igbomina land. Information gathered from this research will be pertinent and go a long way in unveiling the effect of peer influence, gender, and social network usage on student academic performance. The result provides epiphany and advantage to the general public, particularly educators, counseling psychologists, parents, and guardians. The study also gave recommendations to benefit the government in making policies that will help the students, teachers, and other stakeholders. Parents need to help their wards in making the right decisions. Policymakers were encouraged to create policies in tandem with current trends and guardians to help the students against making bad choices due to negative peer pressure. The study is also expected to be a source of inspiration for future research.

Research Questions
1. To what extent could the joint contribution of peer influence, gender, and social network usage affect student academic performance in Igbomina land?
2. What is the relative contribution of peer influence, gender, and social network usage to secondary school student's academic performance in Igbomina land?

Hypotheses
1. There is no significant relationship between peer influence and academic performance.
2. There is no significant relationship between gender and students' academic performance.
3. There is no significant relationship between social network usage and students' academic performance.

RESEARCH METHOD
This research examines the correlation between peer influence, gender and social network usage, and student academic performance among senior secondary school students in Igbomina land. The research design adopted in this study is the descriptive survey research design. The population of this study covered all senior secondary school students in Igbomina land. Therefore, The researcher chooses its sample of the population using random sampling
techniques and six schools for its study. Fifty (50) students, consisting of both male and female students, were chosen at random across each school to make generalizations concerning the population.

**Instrumentations**
Three valid and standardized instruments on peer influence, social network usage, and academic achievement shall be used to collect data.

**Peer Influence Factors Scale.**
The peer influence factor instrument measured the relationship between peer influence and students' academic achievement. The scale was taken from (Kagu, 2020). It is a 10-item scale with five Likert-scale response categories: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), and severely disagree (SD). The scale had a reliable internal consistency score of 0.81 and an alpha coefficient of 0.70.

**Social Networking Usage Survey**
The survey was taken directly from Lachheb (2014). It is a ten-item questionnaire with a variety of questions and choices. According to reports, the questionnaire had a reliability coefficient of 0.78.

**The Student Achievement Scale**
The student achievement scale created by Adewuyi (2019) assessed students' overall academic performance. It is divided into two sections: section I asks questions about the student's demographics, and section II contains multiple-choice tests on the three main general subjects of mathematics, English, and biology. Each topic has ten items with four options (A–D). Using the Kruder-Richardson formula (KR), the test's internal consistency produced a 0.77 and a reliability coefficient of 0.83.

**Data Analysis**
The data collected from the study were analyzed using a t-test, Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC), and multiple regression statistical methods.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

**Research Question One:** What is the significant joint contribution of independent variables (social network usage, peer influence, and gender) to the student's academic performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Multiple regression analysis on students' academic performance data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R(adjusted)=.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R²(adjusted)=.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error of estimate = 17.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis of variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Sum of Square (SS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57111.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19037.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88578.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145690.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the independent variables (social network usage, peer influence, and gender), when pulled together, significantly affect students' academic performance. The value of R (adjusted) = .626 and R² (adjusted) = .386. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F- ratio value of 63.62 and was found to be significant at 0.05 levels.
Research Question Two: What is the significant relative contribution of the independent variables (social network usage, peer influence, and gender) to the student's academic performance?

Table 2. Relative contribution of independent variables to the prediction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network usage</td>
<td>1.100</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>3.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer influence</td>
<td>1.733</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>.554</td>
<td>11.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-4.123</td>
<td>1.998</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>-2.064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that each of the independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of students' academic performance. In terms of the magnitude of contribution, peer pressure made the most significant contribution (Beta= .554; t= 11.772; p<0.05) to the prediction, followed by social network usage (Beta= .168; t= 3.562; p<0.05), while gender (Beta= -.094; t= -2.064; p>0.05) had no significant relative contribution to students' academic performance.

Research Hypothesis One: There will be no significant relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance

Table 3. The summary table showing a significant relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer influence</td>
<td>28.38</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic performance</td>
<td>41.85</td>
<td>22.07</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 showed a significant relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance (r= .598; P<0.05). This means that peer influence has a significant influence on students' academic performance.

Research Hypothesis Two: There will be no significant relationship between social network usage and students' academic performance

Table 4. The summary table shows a significant relationship between social network usage and students' academic performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social network usage</td>
<td>18.71</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic performance</td>
<td>41.85</td>
<td>22.07</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 showed a significant relationship between social network utilization and students' academic performance (r= .316; P<0.05). This means that social network utilization significantly influences students' academic performance.

Research Hypothesis Three: There will be no significant difference in the student's academic performance based on gender

Table 5. The summary table shows significant differences in the student's academic performance based on gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>43.72</td>
<td>23.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 showed no significant difference in the student's academic performance based on gender ($r= 2.92; P>0.05$). This means that gender has a significant influence on students' academic performance.

Discussion

The independent variables (social network use, peer influence, and gender) considerably impact students' academic achievement, according to the first study question's findings. The outcome showed that the linear combination of the three independent variables could explain 83.5% of the student's academic performance variance. The F-ratio value of 63.62 ($p<0.05$) further supported the outcome. The findings indicate that the three independent factors' ability to predict students' academic success is high and could not have occurred by chance. This outcome is consistent with Martin Ford's motivational systems theory (MST), according to Pintrich & Schunk (1996). Despite being the central analytical unit in the framework, the individual is a part of the biological, social, and environmental conditions crucial for growth. MST tries to articulate the evolution of the entire person in context, much like a biologist would be able to talk about a single plant and its connections to its immediate biological niche and the larger environments in which it resides. Ford proposed a simple mathematical formula to combine all these components into a single model. Meaningful "performance and competence" are produced when a motivated, competent, and biologically capable individual interacts with a responsive environment (Wonu & Anaekwe, 2014).

According to the answer to the second research question, each independent variable significantly influenced students' academic achievement prediction. Peer pressure had the most significant impact on the prediction in terms of magnitude ($Beta=.554; t= 11.772; p<0.05$), followed by social network use ($Beta=.168; t= 3.562; p<0.05$), while gender ($Beta=-.094; t= -2.064; p>0.05$) had no discernible influence on students' academic performance. This finding was supported by the study (Ryan, 2000), which put forth the idea that peer groups are individuals of their age who persuade you to do something or refrain from doing something, regardless of your personal preferences. Peer influence, a more subtle version of peer pressure, comprises changing one's conduct to meet others' perceived standards (Burnett et al., 2011; Adewuyi & Dwarika, 2023). To further substantiate this finding, Mosha (2017) claimed that most adolescents succumb to peer pressure over insignificant stuff like music, clothing, or hairstyles. Adolescents' identities are often closely associated with their relationships with their peers, and engaging in peer collaboration is a crucial developmental stage. Some of their classmates are looked up to as role models by many students. Teachers, parents, and peers offer advice and comments to adolescents about how to think and behave in social circumstances.

Contradictory results have been found about the effects of social media on students' academic performance, just as there are contrasting advantages and concerns related to its use. Researchers who studied the impact of social media use, especially the use of SNSs, on college students' academic achievement found that it had a negative effect, with higher usage frequently leading to decreased academic performance as shown by grades (Hussain et al., 2013). Also, Al-Emran and Malik (2016) and Junco et al. (2011) investigating the same subject, found a minimal correlation or perhaps an increase between social media use and academic achievement among students. While it is common to come across studies with contradictory findings, what is especially important among the research studies being evaluated is the prevalent discovery that there are more mediating factors that must be considered before any conclusive judgments regarding their influence on academic achievement can be made. The degree and kind of social media use, the user's character (e.g., extroverted or introverted), the user's socio-economic and cultural upbringing, the user's ability to "self-regulate" their actions concerning the amount of time utilized online and off, the differences in the information, operation, and structure of the different SNSs, and their learning capacity are a few examples of these mediating factors (Greenwood et al., 2016).
It is clear and consistent with the current conclusion that gender significantly influences students' performance. The findings of experts in the field of gender studies, such as (Aagard, 2015), who think that the cognitive differences between men and women have been exaggerated, are relevant to this. For instance, Englander et al. (2010) note significant overlap in the distribution of results for math and visuospatial tasks between girls and boys. However, overall, girls outperform boys in academic performance, grade point average, and reading ability. In different nationwide research, the disparity between male and female pupils' reading and writing abilities grew as the students advanced through the curriculum. According to a study by Moreno et al. (2019), girls are more likely than boys to be enrolled in special/remedial education classes because they are more likely to engage with academic topics, pay attention in class, exert more significant intellectual effort, and participate in class activities.

According to the first research hypothesis's findings, peer influence and students' academic performance are significantly correlated. This implies that peer pressure dramatically impacts how well students do in school. The results of Kagu (2020), who reported on a nationwide Gallup poll, released that 13 to 17-year-old students are consistent with this outcome. It was discovered that when asked why they believed the Columbine High School massacre occurred, 40% of the sample indicated peer influence. The results of the Gallup poll revealed that American youths directly blame themselves for disasters like Columbine rather than blaming parents, gun regulations, or media violence. The survey revealed that young people in this nation believe that improving student communication and removing any barriers that might be causing hatred between groups in today's American high schools are two of the best strategies to prevent similar incidents from happening again. According to this study, peer pressure might be a concerning phenomenon for both kids and adults in a classroom context.

According to the outcome of the second hypothesis, there is a substantial correlation between students' use of social networks and their academic achievement ($r=0.316; P<0.05$). This indicates that the use of social networks has a significant impact on how well pupils do in school. This is in keeping with earlier studies in the discussion of senior secondary school students frequent use of social media platforms and the potential impact of those platforms on students' academic performance. The central question in this discussion is whether high school and college students' increasing social media usage genuinely enhances or degrades their academic performance (Connolly, 2011; Omoponle, 2019; Filade et al., 2019). Furthermore, given the anticipated continued rise in the usage of these tools by students as early as the junior secondary school level (Anderson & Rainie, 2012; Lenhart, 2009), this issue has broad implications, especially for the fields of education, e.g., the identification and use of complementary teaching methods, the design and implementation of complementary curriculum decisions, and the design of non-classroom educational assignments, the allocation of financial resources from the government to initiatives in the fields of education and social welfare as well as the development of new business opportunities and communications (e.g., the selection of suitable channels for the transfer of knowledge among people) (Chen, & Bryer, 2012).

Other, more widespread worries about social media use, such as psychological effects, privacy and safety issues, problems with individual self-control and self-regulation, and problems with human versatility, frequently obscure the question of whether social media enhances or degrades academic performance. Summarizing the research information provided, it can be said that each factor has a different impact on the use of social media and academic performance. These findings significantly influence educational systems worldwide, with earlier statistics showing dramatic growth in social media use (especially among those under 18).
According to the third study hypothesis’s findings, there was no discernible gender difference in the student's academic performance. This proves that students' academic achievement is not significantly influenced by gender. Josiah & Etuk-Iren (2014) claim that sex does not strongly predict intellectual ability, interests, or even emotional qualities following this finding. Babalola and Fayombo (2009) assert that there are vastly more differences between particular females and boys than between "average" boys. They argued that people generalize to specific individuals, from "average" girls or "average" boys. Averages might sometimes be highly misleading to them. The current study also supported Adewuyi's (2019) findings, which indicated no significant gender differences in the underachievement of students among 300 senior secondary school students (t = 62.48, df = 298, P < 0.05 level of significance). This result concurs with Tsui's (2007) finding no gender disparities in the total mathematics achievement of 1,078 high school seniors taking the 2002 College Entrance Examination in China. Chi-Chau (1997) investigated how goal frameworks in the classroom affected students' goal orientation, math prowess, and intrinsic motivation. In these learning circumstances, he also evaluated the effects of gender and the interactions between gender and goal structure on the factors associated with learning mathematics. The findings revealed no gender differences in goal orientation, mathematical aptitude, intrinsic motivation, or failure-belief characteristics.

To further understand how students' attitudes about academics vary by gender and by the grouping method used for mathematics instruction, Azman (2014) surveyed high school students. The survey focused more explicitly on the effect of cooperative grouping as an alternative to conventional training for enhancing girls' attitudes toward mathematics. There were no significant main effects for gender and instructional approaches, according to a 2x2 analysis of variance. The results of this study, however, are in direct opposition to those of (Adeyemi, 2019; Fagbule et al., 2020), among others, who discovered in their research at various periods that male students performed much better than female students in science disciplines.

CONCLUSION

Peer influence, social network use, and gender were all examined as potential predictors of academic achievement in this study. The results revealed a favorable link, with peer influence having the strongest correlation while gender was left out. Based on the study’s findings, it is essential to enhance these variables to end the persistent problem of students' poor performance. This leads to the conclusion that parents, teachers, and even students should act urgently to express concern about the peers that students interact with. Programs should be implemented to increase parental involvement in their children’s education to combat the danger of social media usage, poised to overwhelm the educational system as students become obsessed with it. The study also reiterates that gender stereotyping in academia should be discouraged.

Recommendation

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

• The effects of uncultured social media use should be explained to the parents or guardians. This would make it easier to assess students' performance levels earlier and offer the best remedies whenever issues arise.

• School counselors should put more effort into planning seminars and conferences on the effects of these factors, such as peer pressure, social media use, and others, on students' academic success and general welfare.

• Encouraging students to use their time effectively and efficiently, especially when they have spare time, is essential. This time should be spent on productive pursuits rather than the immorality and frivolity that have taken over social media.

• The home and the school should work together to help the students focus on their education. They should also screen, supervise, and control the peers the students interact with.
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Ethics Statement
The University of Ibadan examined and authorized the investigations that used human subjects. The participants' legal guardian/next of kin gave their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Data Availability Statement
The article/supplementary material contains the study's original contributions; contact the corresponding author for more information.

Conflict of Interest
The researchers declare that no financial or commercial ties exist that might be interpreted as having a potential conflict of interest.

REFERENCES


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Author(s):

*Habeeb Omoponle Adewuyi (Corresponding Author)
Department of Educational Psychology,
University of Johannesburg,
Robert Sobukwe 232, South Africa
Email: ahabeeb@uj.ac.za; adewuyihabeeb@gmail.com