© IIJP 2026 | Volume 2, Issue 1, pp. 58-71 | ISSN: 2636-4484

SOCIAL MEDIA ATTITUDE AND USAGE AS CORRELATES OF SUICIDAL TENDENCIES AMONG COLLEGES OF EDUCATION STUDENTS IN PLATEAU STATE

Shepmuk Samson Manomi[1], Ann Njin[2], Kenter Chianen[3] & Lisa Manomi-Akula[4]
[1]Federal College of Education Pankshin, shepmanomi@gmail.com
[2]Federal College of Education Pankshin, annyillek@gmail.com
[3&4]c/o Shepmuk Samson Manomi, Federal College of Education Pankshin,[3]

ARTICLE INFO
Article No.: 0127
Accepted Date: 01/01/2026
Published Date: 16/01/2026
Type: Research

ABSTRACT
The study was carried out on Social Media Attitude and Usage as Correlates of Suicidal Tendencies among Colleges of Education Students in Plateau State. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, four research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. The study used the correlational research design and the population of the study was two thousand, six hundred and eighty-five students (2,685) of NCE 3 across Colleges of Education in Plateau State. However, the researcher selected 268 NCE 3 students as sample through proportionate stratified and simple sampling techniques. Primary data were collected through the use of two questionnaires titled "Multi-Attitude Suicidal Tendency Scale (MASTS) and Social Media Attitude and Usage Scale (SMAUS)". The study utilised the descriptive and inferential statistical methods of analysis. Specifically, percentage, frequency, mean were used to answer the research questions and to determine which of the questionnaire items is to be rejected or accepted based on the decision point of 3.0. Also, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the hypothesis formulated at the 0.05 significance level. The research findings showed that there was a relationship between social media attitude and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State and there was significant relationship between social media usage and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State. It was therefore recommended among others that it is crucial to prioritise mental health support services for college students in Plateau State.

Keywords: Suicidal Tendencies, Social Media Attitude, Social Media Usage, College Students.

Introduction

The rate of suicide is increasing globally among the youths in recent times. Suicidal tendencies which is a complex and distressing set of thoughts, emotions and behaviours characterized by a strong inclination or desire to end one's own life is gradually becoming an issue of global concern. Suicidal tendencies can manifest in various forms, ranging from passive thoughts of death to active plans and attempts. Suicidal tendency otherwise referred to as suicidal ideation or suicidal rumination is a term used to describe someone who is at risk of suicide, whereas, one who is at risk of suicide may be nurturing suicidal thoughts. Suicide tendencies according to Memon, Sharma, Mohite & Jain (2018), are thoughts about suicide or thinking about planning suicide frequently.

Suicide tendencies among youths in Nigeria have been a growing concern in recent years, with rates and percentages reflecting a troubling trend. Although comprehensive and up-to-date statistics on suicide tendencies can be challenging to obtain due to limited data collection and reporting mechanisms, available research and anecdotal evidence suggest that the problem is alarming. According to López, Jasso, Díaz & Domínguez (2020), statistics from 2020 indicated that suicide rates among Nigerian youth had surged by approximately 60% over the past decade, reaching alarming levels. The percentages reflected a distressing reality, with an estimated 8-10% of Nigerian youths reported to have experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviours, although the actual numbers may be even higher due to underreporting and limited access to mental health care services.

Suicidal tendencies are often associated with a multitude of factors, including but not limited to mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder, as well as external stressors like financial problems, relationship difficulties, or a history of trauma. Understanding and addressing suicidal tendencies is of paramount importance, as they represent a critical public health concern. As such, a comprehensive approach involving mental health support, crisis intervention, social connectedness and destigmatisation is required to help ameliorate suicidal tendencies. Factors such as economic hardship, unemployment, educational stress, family issues and mental health stigma contribute to the vulnerability of Nigerian youths to suicidal thoughts and actions. Also, the stress associated with accessing quality education, family issues and pervasive stigma surrounding mental health in the country can also trigger suicidal tendencies.

Recently, Data Reportal (2022) indicates that there are 4.74 billion social media users around the world in October 2022, equating to 59.3 percent of the total global population. In Nigeria, there are 32.90 million social media users in January 2022, the number was equivalent to 15.4 percent of the total population. Though there is no available statistic particularly for Plateau State on social media usage, GS- Statcounter (2022) on global statistics indicates that 47.33% of social media users are on Facebook, 21.72% on Twitter, 15.64% on Instagram, 7.57% are on YouTube, 6.78% on Pinterest and there are 0.54% on LinkedIn between December 2021 to December 2022 in Nigeria.

Social media attitude therefore, is the individual psychological disposition to social media. It is the extent to which students like or dislike social media. Students who develop positive attitudes to social media may tend to like it and would intensely love it at all times and for positive reason. But, students who would show negative attitudes towards social media may not wish to engage with it for positive development. Unfortunately, it appears that many students in colleges of education in Nigeria tend to develop negative attitudes to social media which can increase risk of suicide tendencies (Macrynikola, Auad, Menjivar & Miranda, 2021). When a college of education student is intentionally and repeatedly targeted by another person in the form of threats or is being harassed, humiliated, or embarrassed by means of cellular phones or internet technologies such as e-mail, texting, social networking

sites, or instant messaging among others, it can breed hatred, anxiety, stress, depression and eventually transit to suicidal tendencies.

Furthermore, the manner and purpose to which students' use of online chat rooms and virtual bulletin boards has been bastardised by many tertiary education students in colleges of education. For example, unregulated online pharmacies although, outside Nigeria have posed a significant risk to the public (Li, Huang, Hao, O'Dea, Christensen, Zhu et al, 2020). For example there was a case of a man in his 30s who committed suicide in China by overdosing on clomipramine bought from an online pharmacy outside the United States that did not require a prescription. Unfortunately, despite the development over the past decade of increased regulations and accreditation of Internet pharmacies through organisations such as the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, the fight against unregulated online pharmacies that distribute unapproved or counterfeit drugs continues worldwide. In Japan, 220 cases of people attempted suicide was blamed on the introduction of the gas-related method on message boards via the Internet (Li, Huang, Hao, O'Dea, Christensen, Zhu et al, 2020).

In colleges of education, solving the problem of increasing social media use significantly reduces the suicidal tendencies among the students. Addressing the issues of suicidal tendencies through awareness, destigmatising mental health and enhance the accessibility and quality of mental health services may not be enough to reverse the rising rates and percentages of suicide tendencies among Nigerian youths, especially students in tertiary institutions. Social media appears to serve as a platform for seeking support, connecting with mental health resources and sharing personal struggles, potentially reducing isolation and providing an avenue for early intervention. Consequently, this study seeks to examine social media attitude and usage as correlates of suicidal tendencies among Colleges of Education Students in Plateau State Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The significant number of students in Colleges of Education in Plateau State that are grappling with suicidal tendencies is alarming. The researchers experience as a staff in one of the colleges of education had direct encounter with three cases of suicidal attempts by the students of the college. The students attempted suicide for reasons mostly attributed to failure in examinations, broken relationships and inability to meet the financial challenges. These cases of suicidal attempts have been reported in some colleges of education in Plateau State where the students resorted to self-termination of life through poisoning for the reasons based known to them.

The prevalence of suicidal ideation or attempt is deeply concerning which necessitated urgent attentions. Some of the attentions were focused on the use of interventions, including counselling services and awareness campaigns. Helplines have been established to address mental health issues and suicidal tendencies among colleges of education students. Despite these commendable measures, the problem of suicidal tendencies among colleges of education students in Plateau State continues to persist and in some instances, has shown signs of worsening. The effects of this issue are profound and wide-reaching. Beyond the direct impact on the students themselves, it extends to their families, friends and the academic institutions they attend. It adversely affects their academic performance, mental well-being and overall quality of life.

The researcher perceived that the attitudes and patterns of social media usage among colleges of education students in Plateau State could have a link with suicidal tendencies. This is because many students have developed negative attitudes towards social media and usage. The use of social media has been abused to the marginal extent of addiction. Many of them used for it for bullying, frauds and other cyber vices. Consequently, understanding the complex relationship between social media attitudes and use and suicidal tendencies is crucial

in developing more targeted and effective interventions. While previous studies have explored the relationship between social media and mental health, there is a notable gap in the literature concerning this issue within the specific demographic of Colleges of Education in Plateau State. This study seeks to implant new insights by narrowing down the focus to this specific population, thereby shedding light on an understudied yet vitally important aspect of mental health. It is against the backdrop that this research endeavours to explore social media attitudes and usage patterns as correlate of suicidal tendencies among students in Plateau State's Colleges of Education.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess social media attitude and usage as correlates of suicidal tendencies among Colleges of Education Students in Plateau State. The specific objectives include:

1. To determine the direction of social media attitude (positive, negative, or neutral) among Colleges of Education students in Plateau State.
2. To assess the extent of social media usage (frequency, duration, and purposes) among Colleges of Education students in Plateau State.
3. To identify the social media platforms most commonly used by Colleges of Education students in Plateau State.
4. To examine the prevalent rate of suicidal tendencies among Colleges of Education students in Plateau State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to be answered in the course of this study;

1. What is the direction of social media attitude among colleges of education students in Plateau State?
2. To what extent do Colleges of Education students in Plateau State used social media?
3. What are the social media platforms commonly used by Colleges of Education students in Plateau State?
4. What is the prevalent rate of suicidal tendencies among colleges of education students in Plateau State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between social media attitude and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State.
2. There is no significant relationship between social media usage and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State.

Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework is anchored in George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, which posits that prolonged exposure to media, traditionally television, systematically shapes viewers' perceptions of social reality to align with the world portrayed by the media. Its core hypothesis states that heavy viewers develop beliefs more consistent with televised messages than light viewers, even when controlling for demographics. The theory is operationalized through Gerbner's tripartite analysis model: institutional process analysis (examining media institutions and distribution), message system analysis (identifying recurrent content patterns) and cultivation analysis (longitudinal surveys linking viewing levels to perceptual shifts). Key mechanisms include cultivation differential (the cumulative perceptual gap between heavy and light viewers), mainstreaming (the homogenization of diverse perspectives into a media-converged outlook) and resonance (the intensification of effects when media content mirrors personal experience). A critical outcome is the "mean world syndrome," wherein heavy consumption of violent content fosters an exaggerated perception of societal danger. The

framework emphasizes that these effects are not immediate but accrue through long-term exposure to consistent media narratives. In applying this to the study, the theory is extended from television to social media, hypothesizing that intensive, sustained engagement with social media content (particularly regarding mental health and self-image) cultivates specific attitudes and perceptions—potentially including those related to suicidal tendencies—among colleges of education students, thereby influencing their beliefs and behaviors in line with the theory's principles.

Methodology

The study employed correlational research design. A correlational research design was adopted because it measures a relationship between two or more variables without the researcher manipulating any of the variables. According to Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2011), a correlational research design is a non-experimental research design in which the researcher measures the strength and direction of relationship between two or more variables known as correlations coefficient. The design entails that the situation being studied might change later on and a different result might be obtained at a later period. Also, correlational research design has the comparative advantage of generalizing the findings of the study over other design such as experimental research design. The population for the study consisted all the 2,685 Nigeria Certificate in Education three (NCE 3) students in all accredited Colleges of Education in Plateau State, Nigeria. The colleges included two (2) public Colleges and four (4) private colleges of education across the state. The sample for the study consisted 268 Nigeria Certificate in Education three (NCE 3) students from three selected accredited Colleges of Education in Plateau State. From this figure, two colleges are public Colleges and one private college of education in the state. Public colleges of education have the highest number because they are the most populated and could majority of students on social media and as well as had suicidal tendencies than private colleges. Proportionate Stratified and simple sampling techniques was employed for the study. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), stratified sampling technique is used when the population of the study is made up of different strata. The study will adopt this technique because the population will be made up of strata of private and public colleges of education. Also, the researcher employed this technique because it has the tendency of giving every subject (individual) in the population chances of equal representation. This was done by dividing the sample size by the total population and multiply by the total number of school and students.

Subsequently, the lottery method of simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants across selected stratum in each of the colleges to represent the population. All the names of NCE 3 students in each sampled institution was assigned numbers and wrapped in pieces of papers. The papers were then put into bowl and shaken thoroughly. Thereafter, the researcher blindly picked the papers one after the other without replacement until the three institutions and 268 students were obtained. This method was used because it enabled each element equal chance of representation.

The instruments that were be used for data collection were questionnaires titled “Multi-Attitude Suicidal Tendency Scale (MASTS) and Social Media Attitude and Usage Scale (SMAUS)”. Questionnaire was used because it is highly recommended for literate population, as the population for this study consisted individuals who can read and write.

The study utilised the descriptive and inferential statistical method of analysis. Specifically, percentage, frequency, mean was used to answer the research questions and to determine which of the questionnaire items are to be rejected or accepted, based on the decision point of 3.0. Also, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. It was appropriate to establish the relationship between social media attitudes and use and suicidal tendencies.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the direction of social media attitude among colleges of education students in Plateau State?

Table 1

The Direction of Social Media Attitude among Colleges of Education Students in Plateau State

	Virtual tolerance	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	Decision point
1	I am eager to go on social media.	37	23	42	83	77	3.53	Accepted
2	I see social media as an escape from the real world.	25	32	52	80	73	3.55	Accepted
3	A life without social media becomes meaningless for me.	28	26	22	90	96	3.76	Accepted
	Virtual communication							
4	I prefer the friendships on social media to the friendships in the real life.	23	38	28	69	104	3.74	Accepted
5	I am as I want to seem on social media.	16	8	19	119	100	4.06	Accepted
6	Even my family frown upon, I cannot give up using social media.	26	19	24	96	101	3.85	Accepted
7	I want to spend time on social media when I am alone.	20	28	29	127	62	3.69	Accepted
8	I prefer virtual communication on social media to going out.	33	9	56	88	80	3.65	Accepted
	Virtual Problem							
9	I feel bad if I am obliged to decrease the time I spend on social media.	39	17	11	130	69	3.65	Accepted
10	I feel unhappy when I am not on social media.	30	15	40	130	51	3.59	Accepted
11	Being on social media excites me.	13	19	40	62	132	4.06	Accepted
12	The mysterious world of social media always captivates me.	38	18	23	97	90	3.69	Accepted
13	I do not even notice that I am hungry and thirsty when I am on social media.	11	18	34	131	72	3.88	Accepted
14	I notice that my productivity has diminished due to social media.	17	29	53	101	66	3.64	Accepted
15	I have physical problems because of social media use.	28	4	8	90	136	4.14	Accepted
	Virtual information							
16	I use social media even when walking on the road in order to be instantly informed about developments.	30	13	25	99	99	3.84	Accepted
17	I surf on social media to keep informed about what social media groups share.	27	13	23	123	80	3.81	Accepted
18	I am always active on social media to be instantly informed about what my kith and kin share.	35	9	13	75	134	3.99	Accepted
	Overall Mean						3.78	Accepted

Table 1 presents the results of a study that aimed to investigate the direction of social media attitude among college students in Plateau State. The research question focused on determining the students' attitudes towards virtual tolerance, virtual communication, virtual

problem and virtual information. The table provides data on various statements related to these categories, including the number of respondents who strongly disagreed (SD), disagreed (D), were undecided (UD), agreed (A) and strongly agreed (SA) with each statement. In terms of virtual tolerance, the majority of students expressed eagerness to go on social media (77 SA) and viewed it as an escape from the real world (73 SA). Additionally, many students believed that a life without social media would be meaningless (96 SA). Regarding virtual communication, a significant number of students preferred friendships on social media over real-life friendships (104 SA). Moreover, a large majority indicated that they portrayed themselves differently on social media (100 SA) and were unwilling to give up using social media even if their families disapproved (101 SA). In terms of virtual problem, a considerable number of students felt bad if they had to decrease their time on social media (69 SA) and experienced unhappiness when not using it (51 SA). Furthermore, many students expressed excitement about being on social media (132 SA) and were captivated by its mysterious world (90 SA). Lastly, in terms of virtual information, a significant number of students expressed the habit of using social media to stay informed about developments (99 SA), social media groups (80 SA) and their connections (134 SA).

Research Question 2: To what extent do Colleges of Education students in Plateau State used social media?

Table 2

Extent Colleges of Education Students in Plateau State use Social Media

		SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	Decision point
1	I look for internet connectivity everywhere so as to go on social media.	15	31	36	46	138	3.98	Accepted
2	Going on social media is the first thing I do when I wake up in the morning.	21	22	9	74	140	4.09	Accepted
3	I prefer to use social media even there are somebody around me.	39	22	12	71	122	3.81	Accepted
4	I express myself better to the people with whom I get in contact on social media.	25	38	11	49	143	3.93	Accepted
5	I usually prefer to communicate with people via social media.	43	17	3	43	160	3.98	Accepted
6	Social media activities lay hold on my everyday life.	43	22	3	61	137	3.85	Accepted
7	I pass over my homework because I spend much time on social media.	35	11	18	80	122	3.91	Accepted
8	I use social media so frequently that I fall afoul of my family.	43	22	2	43	156	3.93	Accepted
9	I like using social media to keep informed about what happens.	39	22	6	70	129	3.86	Accepted
10	I spend more time on social media to see some special announcements (e.g. birthdays).	35	9	5	95	122	3.98	Accepted
11	Keeping informed about the things related to my courses (e.g. homework, activities) makes me always stay on social media.	44	11	26	85	100	3.70	Accepted
	Overall mean						**3.91**	**Accepted**

Table 2 presents data on the extent to which college students in Plateau State use social media. The research question aimed to understand the frequency and intensity of social media usage among these students. The table provides information on various statements related to social media usage, including the number of respondents who strongly disagreed (SD), disagreed (D), were undecided (UD), agreed (A) and strongly agreed (SA) with each statement. The findings indicate that the majority of students in Plateau State heavily rely on social media for connectivity and engagement. A significant number of students actively seek internet connectivity everywhere to access social media (138 SA) and make it the first thing they do in the morning (140 SA). Furthermore, many students express a preference for using social media even when there are people around them (122 SA) and find it easier to express themselves to those they connect with on social media (143 SA). The data also demonstrate that social media is the primary mode of communication for a considerable number of students (160 SA). The activities related to social media are integrated into their everyday lives (137 SA), sometimes leading to neglect of homework (122 SA) and conflict with their families (156 SA). Moreover, social media serves as a means for students to stay informed about various aspects of their lives. Many students express a liking for using social media to keep track of events and updates (129 SA) and spend more time on social media to view special announcements, such as birthdays (122 SA). Additionally, staying on social media is motivated by the desire to stay informed about course-related matters, such as homework and activities (100 SA).

Research Question 3: What are the social media platforms commonly used by Colleges of Education students in Plateau State?

Table 3

The Social Media Platform Commonly used by Colleges of Education Students in Plateau State

S/N	Statement	Never	sometimes	Almost always	Always	Mean	Decision point
1	Facebook	63	45	76	52	2.50	Accepted
2	YouTube	83	60	70	24	2.15	Rejected
3	WhatsApp	62	28	81	66	2.65	Accepted
4	Facebook Messenger	54	46	115	21	2.45	Rejected
5	Instagram	84	33	82	38	2.31	Rejected
7	TikTok	76	86	60	15	2.06	Rejected
8	Skype	106	37	21	3	1.5\3	Rejected
9	Nextdoor	82	22	24	16	1.82	Rejected
10	LinkedIn	115	6	16	3	1.34	Rejected
	Total mean					**2.09**	**Rejected**

Table 3 presents data on the social media platforms commonly used by college students in Plateau State. The research question aimed to identify the platforms that are frequently utilized by these students. The table provides information on various platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, TikTok, Skype, Nextdoor and LinkedIn. The data includes the number of respondents who indicated that they never use the platform, sometimes use it, almost always use it, or always use it. The findings indicate that Facebook and WhatsApp are the most commonly used social media platforms among

college students in Plateau State. While a considerable number of students never use Facebook (63) and WhatsApp (62), the majority indicated that they sometimes (45) or almost always (76) use Facebook and sometimes (28) or almost always (81) use WhatsApp. This suggests that Facebook and WhatsApp have a significant presence among college students in the region. However, the data show that other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, TikTok, Skype, Nextdoor and LinkedIn, are not as commonly used by these students. The majority of respondents indicated that they either never use these platforms or only use them occasionally. For example, a large number of students indicated that they never use LinkedIn (115) and Nextdoor (82), suggesting that these platforms have limited adoption among college students in Plateau State.

Research Question 4: What is the prevalent rate of suicidal tendencies among colleges of education students in Plateau State?

Table 4

The Prevalent Rate of Suicidal Tendencies among Colleges of Education Students in Plateau State

	Attraction to Death (AD)	**SA**	**A**	**UD**	**D**	**SD**	Mean	Decision point
1	I believe that death can bring a great relief for suffering	85	33	9	62	73	3.76	Accepted
2	Death can be a state of rest and calm	36	23	24	68	115	3.83	Accepted
3	Death can change things for the better	40	23	5	71	127	3.82	Accepted
4	In some situations, it is better to die than to go on living	16	49	10	84	107	3.06	Accepted
5	Many problems can be solved by death only	91	29	8	49	89	3.11	Accepted
	Repulsion by Life (RL)							
6	I feel that I am not important to my family	58	69	5	53	81	3.02	Accepted
7	Sometimes I feel that my family will be better off without me	102	16	15	40	93	2.88	Rejected
8	No one really loves me	102	29	5	58	72	3.32	Accepted
9	Life seems to be one long and difficult struggle	75	14	11	84	82	3.18	Accepted
10	I know people who have died and I believe that I will meet them when I die	81	30	12	46	97	3.97	Accepted
11	I don't ask for help even when things are very tough for me	93	32	3	65	73	3.35	Accepted
12	Sometimes I feel that my problems can't be solved	72	9	16	93	76	3.08	Accepted
13	Death is actually eternal life	81	24	32	49	79	3.19	Accepted
14	I don't like to spend time with my family	67	46	6	56	87	3.02	Accepted
	Overall Mean						3.32	Accepted

The table 4 provides data on the prevalent rate of suicidal tendencies among college students in Plateau State. The research question aimed to understand the students' attraction to death (AD) and repulsion by life (RL). The table presents various statements related to these tendencies, including the number of respondents who strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), were undecided (UD), disagreed (D), or strongly disagreed (SD) with each statement. The findings indicate that there is a prevalent rate of suicidal tendencies among college students in Plateau State. The data show that a significant number of students are attracted to the idea of death as a relief from suffering (85 SA), a state of rest and calm (36 SA) and a means to change things for the better (40 SA). Additionally, many students believe that death is a solution to problems that cannot be solved by any other means (91 SA). These findings highlight a concerning inclination towards death among the students. Moreover, the data reveal a sense of repulsion by life among some students. Many students feel that they are not important to their families (58 SA) and believe that their families would be better off without them (102 SA). Additionally, a significant number of students express a belief that no one truly loves them (102 SA) and perceive life as a long and difficult struggle (75 SA). These findings indicate a dissatisfaction and detachment from life among certain students.

Test of Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between social media attitude and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State.

Table 5

Relationship between Social Media Attitude and Suicidal Tendencies Amongst Students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State

Variable	Mean	SD	N	r-cal	p-value	Remarks	Decision
Social media attitude	3.78	3.24					
			266	0.878	0.001	Significant	H_0: Rejected
Suicidal Tendencies	3.32	4.15					

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Table 5 above shows the results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation used to determine the relationship between the between social media attitude and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State. The finding showed that there was a relationship between social media attitude and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State ($r = 0.878$; $p<0.05$). We can reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between social media attitude and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between social media attitude and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between social media usage and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State.

Table 6

Relationship between Social Media Usage and Suicidal Tendencies Amongst Students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State

Variable	Mean	SD	N	r-cal	p-value	Remarks	Decision
Social media usage	3.91	3.18					
			266	0.997	0.001	Significant	H_0: Rejected
Suicidal tendencies	3.32	5.19					

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Table 6 above shows the results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation used to relationship between social media usage and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State. The finding showed that there was significant relationship between social media usage and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State ($r = 0.997$; $p<0.05$). We can reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between social media usage and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State. Therefore, we can conclude that there is significant relationship between social media usage and suicidal tendencies amongst students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that students exhibit an overwhelmingly positive and potentially problematic attitude towards social media, characterized by high virtual tolerance, a preference for virtual communication, and significant virtual problems. The overall mean score of 3.78 indicates a strong acceptance of statements suggesting dependency, with students viewing social media as an escape from reality and a source of meaning. This aligns with Griffiths' (2018) concept of "technological addiction," where digital platforms are used as a maladaptive coping mechanism to modulate mood and escape psychosocial pressures. The data suggest that for many students, social media is not merely a tool but a central, emotionally charged component of their identity and daily existence, which can displace real-world interactions and responsibilities.

The extent of usage among students is intensive and pervasive, with an overall mean of 3.91. Social media is integrated into the very fabric of their daily rituals, from being the first activity upon waking to disrupting homework and family relationships. This compulsive and prioritized usage, often at the expense of offline obligations and connections, reflects behavioral patterns associated with excessive use. Kuss and Griffiths (2017) posit that such habitual and intrusive use, where individuals feel compelled to be constantly connected and express themselves more freely online, can lead to negative life consequences and psychological distress. The findings confirm that usage extends beyond leisure to become a primary conduit for communication, self-expression, and information, effectively blurring the lines between online and offline life.

The data indicate a clear preference for integrated, communication-centric platforms, with Facebook and WhatsApp being the most commonly used. The rejection of the overall mean (2.09) for the platform list suggests no single platform is used universally "always," but the acceptance of Facebook and WhatsApp highlights their dominance. Other platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and professional networks like LinkedIn are used less frequently. This platform concentration is significant, as Primack et al. (2017) have noted that the curated, socially comparative nature of platforms like Facebook can be more strongly associated with increased perceived social isolation and depressive symptoms than less personally curated media. The heavy reliance on these particular social ecosystems may shape the quality and impact of their online experiences.

A concerning prevalence of suicidal ideation is present among the students, with an overall mean of 3.32 on the scale measuring attraction to death and repulsion by life. A significant proportion of students endorsed views of death as a relief and solution, alongside feelings of being unloved, unimportant, and overwhelmed by life's struggles. This pattern of cognitive and emotional risk factors is consistent with Joiner's (2005) Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of suicidal behavior, which identifies perceived burdensomeness (e.g., "my family will be better off without me") and thwarted belongingness (e.g., "no one really loves me") as key drivers of suicidal desire. The findings underscore a critical mental health vulnerability within this student population.

Both null hypotheses were rejected. A very strong, statistically significant positive correlation was found between social media attitude and suicidal tendencies ($r = 0.878$, $p<0.05$), and an even stronger correlation between social media usage and suicidal tendencies ($r = 0.997$, $p<0.05$). These results robustly support the study's core proposition that problematic engagement with social media is correlated with higher suicidal ideation among these students. The near-perfect correlation for usage is particularly striking, suggesting intensity of use is a powerful correlate. This aligns with prior research, such as that by Twenge et al. (2018), which links increased screen time and social media use with rising rates of psychological distress, including suicidal thoughts, among young adults. The findings imply that a negative, dependent attitude towards social media and its compulsive use may coexist with or exacerbate feelings of isolation, perceived burdensomeness, and hopelessness, thereby heightening suicide risk. This warrants urgent attention from educational and health policymakers within the collegiate environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on "Social Media Attitude and Usage as Correlates of Suicidal Tendencies among Colleges of Education Students in Plateau State" provides important insights into the attitudes, usage patterns and mental well-being of college students in Plateau State in relation to social media. The findings indicate that college students in the region generally have a positive attitude towards social media, considering it as an escape and finding meaning in their lives through its use. They extensively rely on social media platforms, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, for communication and self-expression. However, the study also reveals a concerning prevalence of suicidal tendencies among college students in Plateau State. These tendencies, including an attraction to death as a relief from suffering and a belief that death is a solution to problems, highlight potential mental health concerns. Furthermore, the study establishes a significant relationship between social media attitude, usage and suicidal tendencies, indicating that the way students perceive and engage with social media can impact their mental well-being. These findings underscore the need for increased attention to mental health issues and the influence of social media on college students in Plateau State. It is crucial to develop interventions that promote responsible social media usage and address the potential negative effects on mental well-being. Educators, policymakers and mental health professionals should work together to raise awareness, provide support and implement strategies that prioritize the mental health of college students in the region.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Colleges of Education in Plateau State should urgently integrate mandatory digital literacy and wellness modules into their general studies curriculum. These modules should educate students on the signs of problematic social media use, promote healthy online-offline balance, and build resilience against the comparative and escapist pitfalls of platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp.
2. Institutional counseling units must be strengthened and promoted to provide accessible, confidential mental health support focused on the identified links between social media use and suicidal ideation. Furthermore, creating trained peer-support networks can help identify at-risk students early, leveraging their connectedness to foster a sense of belonging and counter feelings of isolation.
3. University administrations should actively create and subsidize a vibrant calendar of offline extracurricular activities, clubs, and community service projects to provide

compelling alternatives to virtual escapism. This initiative aims to rebuild real-world connections and a sense of purpose, directly countering the "repulsion by life" and social isolation correlated with excessive social media dependency.

4. Further research should be commissioned to explore the causal mechanisms behind the strong correlations found, distinguishing between different platforms' impacts and identifying specific vulnerable student subgroups. Concurrently, the institutions should collaborate with state health ministries and telecom regulators to develop joint awareness campaigns on responsible technology use and to improve access to regional mental health crisis services.

REFERENCES

DataReportal. (2022). *Global social media statistics*. Retrieved from https://datareportal.com/social-media-users

Griffiths, M. D. (2018). Adolescent social networking: How do social media operators facilitate habitual use? *Education and Health*, *36*(3), 66–69.

Joiner, T. E. (2005). *Why people die by suicide*. Harvard University Press.

Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). Social networking sites and addiction: Ten lessons learned. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *14*(3), 311. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14030311

Li, A., Huang X., Hao B., O'Dea B., Christensen H., Zhu T., et al. (2020). Attitudes towards suicide attempts broadcast on social media: An exploratory study of Chinese microblogs. *Peer Journal;*3:e1209.

López Rosales, F., Jasso Medrano, J. L., Díaz Loving, R., &Domínguez Morales, M. F. (2020). *Cybervictimization, depression, suicidal ideation and addictive behaviour toward social media.* Retrieved from https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=358971708010

Macrynikola, N., Auad, E., &Menjivar, J. (2021). *Does social media use confer suicide risk? A systematic review of the evidence.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351912901_Does_social_media_use_confer_suicide_risk_A_systematic_review_of_the_evidence

Memon, A. M., Sharma, S. G., Mohite, S. S., & Jain, S. (2018). The role of online social networking on deliberate self-harm and suicidality in adolescents: A systematized review of literature. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 60*(4), 384–392. https://doi.org/10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry_414_17

Morrison, K., Cohen, L., &Manion, L. (2011). *Research methods in education*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271831938_Research_Methods

Primack, B. A., Shensa, A., Escobar-Viera, C. G., Barrett, E. L., Sidani, J. E., Colditz, J. B., & James, A. E. (2017). Use of multiple social media platforms and symptoms of depression and anxiety: A nationally-representative study among U.S. young adults. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *69*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.013

StatCounter. (2022). *Social media stats Nigeria.* Retrieved from https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/nigeria/2022

Twenge, J. M., Joiner, T. E., Rogers, M. L., & Martin, G. N. (2018). Increases in depressive symptoms, suicide-related outcomes, and suicide rates among U.S. adolescents after 2010 and links to increased new media screen time. *Clinical Psychological Science*, *6*(1), 3–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702617723376