Influence of Social Media and Identity Formation on Academic Self-Efficacy of Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan, Oyo State

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Being a M Ed Thesis Submitted to the Department of Arts & Social Science Education, Faculty of Education. Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Master of Education Degree in Guidance and Counselling

2025

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Certification

This is to certify that Esther **EMMA-JIMO** with matriculation number **LCU/PG/005601,** completed this thesis titled "**Influence of Social Media and Identity Formation on Academic Self-Efficacy of Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan, Oyo State"**, in the Department of Arts & Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Lead City University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master's Degree (M Ed) in Guidance and Counselling and that this thesis has not been previously submitted for any degree before.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to God Almighty for His unfailing grace and to every adolescent navigating challenges, striving to believe in themselves and pursuing academic success with hope.

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Acknowledgement

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the management of Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, and the Lead City University Library for creating a learning environment that fosters intellectual growth and personal development. I am deeply grateful to my exceptional supervisor, a true embodiment of wisdom, excellence and academic brilliance, Dr. Olabisi Killian, for her insightful feedback, consistent encouragement, and patient mentorship. My sincere appreciation also goes to Professor Afolakemi Oredein, the Provost of the Postgraduate College, whose visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to excellence continue to elevate the postgraduate experience at Lead City University. I am deeply grateful to Professor Donald Odeleye, Dean of the Faculty of Education, for his fatherly support, wise counsel throughout my programme. I deeply acknowledge Associate Professor Oluyomi Pitan, Head of the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, for her accessible leadership and consistent support. I also extend warm thanks to all my amiable lecturers, Prof. Donald Odeleye, Prof. Titilola Adebowale, Assoc. Prof. Monilola Oyetade, Dr. Sabina Obi, Dr. Morakinyo Oloyede, and all other distinguish lecturers in the Faculty, Prof. Senimetu Ileuma, Prof. Tunde Yara, Prof. A. Erwat, Assoc. Prof. L.T. Dada, Assoc. Prof. Toyin Oyedeji, Assoc. Prof. Ukamaka Akuche, Dr. Mojirade Ayantunji, Dr. Omobola Gambo, Dr. Seyi David, Dr. Deborah Ayeni, Dr. Christianah Sam-Kayode, Dr. Moyinoluwa Owojori, Dr. Hafsat Abdulsemihi, Dr. Albert Olaniyi, Dr. Dele Omoyajowo, Dr. Babatunde Kolasi, Dr. Adebajo, Miss Dolapo Awoniyi, and Miss Omenihu Oduali each of whom added value to my academic journey through their dedication, knowledge, and encouragement. Beyond the academic wall, I am profoundly grateful to my husband, Dr. Emma Jimo, whose steadfast support, emotionally, financially, and spiritually, was instrumental to this achievement. My

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heartfelt appreciation goes to my wonderful children, the Four Saints, for their patience and love. To my mother and siblings, thanks for your prayers, encouragement, and unwavering belief in me. Lastly, to my colleagues and friends in the Master's class, thanks for your collaboration, motivation, and shared determination. You made the journey more meaningful.

Finally, "Even though the above-mentioned institutions and persons have assisted in the process of this research work, I alone stand responsible for the errors, if any, found in the work."

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Abstract

Adolescents today increasingly form identities and learning development through digital spaces that influence academic confidence. This study examined the influence of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area, Oyo State. Addressing a gap in Nigerian literature, the study applied the Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Social Identity Theory to interpret adolescent development in a digital context. Three research questions guided this study with two hypothesis that were tested at 0.05 level of significance. An ex-post-facto research design was engaged. The target population comprised 6594 SS1 and SS2 students from public secondary schools in Ibadan South-West LGA. A sample size of 385 students was derived using Taro Yamane formula. Data were gathered through a validated self-designed questionnaire: The Social Media Usage Test (SMUT), Identity Formation Scale (IFS), Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES), and Reflective Assessment tool (RATISE). Reliability coefficients of α =0.796, 0.779 and 0.720, confirmed, internal consistency. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression while RATISE items were thematically analysised. Results indicated that students had a moderate level of academic self-efficacy (mean = 2.93), with social media use showing a significant positive correlation ($r = .297$, $p < .001$) and predictive power ($\beta = .306$, $p < .001$). The most exhibited identity behaviour among the respondents was self-expression. The joint effect of both variables accounted for 9.2% of the variance ($R^2 = .092$, $F = 18.515$, $p < .001$). The study concludes that purposive educational use of social media enhances academic self-efficacy. Based on the findings, it is recommended that stakeholders inculcate digital literacy and digital-based counselling programmes to support stable identity development and academic self-efficacy.

Keywords: Academic Self-Efficacy, Social Media Platforms, Identity Formation, Digital Literacy, Counselling Programme.
Word Count: 299

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The educational environment is set to promote holistic development and balance in students' lives which has led to a growing emphasis on the comprehensive development of students, drawing a significant attention from various stakeholders. Academic success is influenced by a variety of factors beyond mere intellectual ability, including psychological and social aspects. However, among these factors, this study focused on academic self-efficacy which stands out as a crucial determinant, reflecting a students'confidence in their ability to perform and complete academic tasks effectively. Academic self-efficacy is an extension of self-efficacy which is a concept grounded in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory[1]. It plays an important role in structuring scholars' motivation and overall academic performance. Students with high academic self-efficacy tend to be more persistent, engage effective study strategies, and achieve excellent academic results compared to their peers with moderate or lower academic self-efficacy, that usually struggle with increased anxiety and diminished motivation.

However, for senior secondary school students, understanding academic self-efficacy is particularly important, because these students are at a pivotal stage in their educational journey, facing high-stakes examinations and making critical decisions about their futures. The Nigerian educational system is also not helping as it is characterised with various challenges such as limited resources, large class sizes, and high examination pressures, all these complicates the students' academic experience[2]. Gaining insights into how academic self-efficacy affects senior secondary students can help stakeholders develop necessary interventions to enhance their academic success. Likewise, students' assessment of their own capacities to acquire new

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information, skills, experiences, training and subsequently apply them to meet academic performance standards are encompassed by the concept of academic self-efficacy.

Academic self-efficacy according to Bandura is defined as one's belief in one`s capability to accomplish academic tasks and goals[1]. This belief plays a vital role in students' academic outcomes sand motivation. Academic self-efficacy, is conceptualised in this study, as an internal confidence and drive that enables students to actively engage with academic challenges, set purposeful goals, and persist even in the face of obstacles. To better understand its influence, academic self-efficacy is categorised into three levels: low, moderate, and high, reflecting varying degrees of students' confidence in their ability to perform academic tasks effectively. Students with low academic self-efficacy often struggle with self-doubt, lack of motivation, and avoidance of academic challenges, which can hinder their academic performance. In contrast, those with moderate academic self-efficacy demonstrate fluctuating confidence, often influenced by external feedback from peers, teachers, and social comparisons, however, students with high academic self-efficacy are typically self-motivated, resilient, and proactive in their learning, displaying greater persistence and problem-solving abilities[2].

Academic self-efficacy plays a critical role in shaping students' academic behaviours, motivation, and achievement outcomes. It affects how students approach learning, handle academic pressure, and respond to both success and failure. Beyond individual effort, external influences such as social media exposure, identity formation, and peer interactions also shape students' perceptions of their academic competence. For this reason, understanding academic self-efficacy within the context of digital engagement is crucial, as it provides insights that can inform educational interventions and counselling strategies aimed at fostering academic

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confidence and resilience among students. Academic self-efficacy is shaped by multiple external factors such as parental involvement, peer relationships, and school environment[3].

However, this study focuses specifically on two major influences, these are, identity formation and social media use, as they are particularly relevant to adolescents navigating academic and personal development in a digital society. Identity formation plays a critical role in shaping students' motivation, sense of self, and commitment to academic goals. When adolescents experience a stable and coherent sense of identity, they are more likely to approach academic tasks with confidence and persistence. On the other hand, uncertainty or confusion about identity can lead to reduced motivation, anxiety, or avoidance of academic challenges[4]. In parallel, social media use has become a dominant part of adolescent life, offering a space for self-expression, social interaction, and peer validation. Social media and its different platforms can positively influence students' academic drive by exposing them to motivational content and supportive communities.

However, they can also introduce distractions, promote unrealistic comparisons, or reinforce negative identity formation[5]. The interaction between identity formation and social media use has significant implications for academic self-efficacy. A stable identity combined with purposive social media engagement can reinforce academic confidence, while poor identity development and harmful online experiences may diminish students' belief in academic abilities[5]. In the context of Nigerian adolescents, both social media engagement and identity formation jointly influence the academic self-efficacy, it is therefore important to examine how these two external factors shape their academic self-efficacy.

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Human development is a multifaceted journey that involves numerous psychological, emotional, and behavioural changes over time. One of the core branches of psychology that explores these transitions is refers to as developmental psychology, which investigates how individuals grow, adapt, and transform throughout the human lifespan[6]. Its objective is to explain changes in thought patterns, emotional responses, and behaviours as people age. Within this field, scholars examine three principal domains: physical development, cognitive growth, and socio-emotional evolution. These domains encompass a wide array of processes, such as language development, moral reasoning, personality shaping, self-concept, and most notably, identity formation. Grounded in theoretical frameworks, developmental psychology offers structured insight into how individuals progress through different life stages, beginning with infancy (birth to 1 year), toddlerhood (2–3years), early childhood (3–8years), adolescence (9–19years), adulthood (20–60 years), and eventually old age, defined from 60 or 65 years and above[7]

In many cultures, especially in African societies, older generations begin to shift their expectations of adolescents by encouraging emotional maturity and responsibility. Phrases such as, “You are no longer a child,” “Grow up,” and “Be mature,” are frequently used as markers of a new developmental stage. Motivational speakers and teachers also add to this rhetoric, prompting adolescents to “know themselves,” “understand their emotions,” and “become self-aware.” These social cues are intended to awaken a consciousness of personal growth and identity development. However, such periods of transition are often met with internal conflict. Adolescents commonly struggle with self-definition, frequently asking questions such as: “Who am I?” “How should I behave?” and “Whom should I associate with?” The responses to these questions are shaped by a diverse array of influences from

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their environment, both positive and negative. These influences help to form the adolescent's internal narrative and outward persona, which ultimately becomes the foundation of their self-identity. In this way, the identity formation of secondary school students significantly contributes to their perception of academic ability and personal efficacy[8].

The process of identity formation typically begins in early adolescence and continues to evolve through multiple life stages. It is considered a vital developmental task that is shaped by both internal introspection and external pressures. This identity formation involves constructing a consistent sense of self that integrates personal values, aspirations, cultural background, and social roles. Social media, a powerful tool of this age, has emerged as one of the most potent platforms for this exploration. It allows adolescents to engage in acts of self-expression, social comparison, and identity experimentation, which are central mechanisms of identity development[9]. The journey of identity formation is rarely linear, it includes moments of enthusiasm, doubt, instability, and redefinition. It is shaped not only by societal factors but also by individual differences, including gender. Gender norms play a significant role in the way young people internalise identity. Girls, for instance, are often socialised to prioritise social relationships, emotional connection, and physical appearance, while boys are usually encouraged to demonstrate independence, assertiveness, and leadership[7]. These socially defined roles influence how adolescents perceive themselves and how they form their identities.

To understand how identity formation unfolds in real-life experience, it is essential to examine the everyday mechanisms that facilitate or complicate the process. Among these, self-expression, social comparison, and identity experimentation are particularly significant,

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especially in a digitalised society. These concepts, though distinct, work together to help adolescents define and refine who they are. They are not types of identity, but rather processes through which identity is explored and constructed. Their relevance is deeply rooted in Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, which identifies the conflict between identity and role confusion as the core developmental task of adolescence.

According to Erikson, adolescents must explore different roles, values, and beliefs to arrive at a coherent sense of self[10]. Expanding on this, James Marcia proposed four identity statuses, diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement, that represent various combinations of exploration and commitment[9]. Of particular interest is the moratorium status, which captures the active search and trial that precedes firm identity commitments. While these foundational theories provide the comprehensive framework for understanding adolescent identity formation, they do not fully capture the behavioural processing through which adolescents shape their self-identity in a rapidly evolving society. For this reason, there is a need to examine this angle through self-expression, social comparison, and identity experimentation, as critical avenues for identity development relatable among Nigerian adolescents.

Self-expression refers to the act of conveying thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and personality traits through various verbal and non-verbal means. It allows individuals to make their inner experiences visible and to communicate their uniqueness to others[10]. For adolescents, who are just beginning to carve out their personal identities, self-expression plays an indispensable role. Whether through speech, clothing, social media posts, or artistic endeavours, expressing oneself is a way of both asserting and discovering personal values. Psychologically, the ability to express oneself contributes to emotional well-being and

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reinforces a sense of self-coherence[11]. In the context of contemporary Nigeria, many adolescents draw inspiration from public figures and celebrities whose lives are often widely documented online. For example, figures such as Naira Marley promote freedom and authenticity through their lifestyles, while artists like Wizkid, Davido, Tems, and Tiwa Savage model success, resilience, and confidence. These role models offer symbolic frameworks through which Nigerian youth shape and project their aspirations, especially through digital channels like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter[12]. Self-expression through these platforms not only shapes individual identities but also influences peer recognition and social belonging.

Beyond expressing oneself, adolescents are also keen observers of others. This gives rise to social comparison, a psychological process through which individuals evaluate their traits and achievements relative to those of others. First theorized by Leon Festinger, this mechanism helps individuals form benchmarks for self-evaluation[13]. Adolescents are especially prone to making these comparisons as they seek validation and belonging. Social comparisons can take two primary forms: upward, where individuals compare themselves to others perceived as more successful; and downward, where comparisons are made with those seen as less accomplished. While upward comparisons may motivate self-improvement, they also risk generating feelings of inadequacy. Downward comparisons, on the other hand, can offer temporary boosts in self-esteem but may encourage complacency. The rise of social media has intensified this process by curating idealised images of peers and celebrities, often fostering unrealistic standards. Adolescents scrolling through these images may internalise skewed expectations of beauty, success, and lifestyle, which can affect their sense of worth

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and identity. Thus, social comparison has become both a tool for self-discovery and a source of psychological tension during identity formation.

Identity experimentation on the other hand is the deliberate trial of different roles, behaviours, affiliations, and values in a bid to determine what aligns most authentically with the self. This is particularly evident in adolescence, a stage characterised by exploration and risk-taking. James Marcia's concept of moratorium speaks directly to this behaviour, where adolescents engage in exploration without making firm commitments[14]. Identity experimentation enables young people to "try on" various identities, whether through adopting new fashion styles, joining different social groups, or engaging in novel activities. In today's digital world, the internet provides a fertile ground for such experimentation. Adolescents can curate online personas, join niche communities, and express different aspects of themselves that may not find space in offline settings[14]. These virtual explorations can be empowering, offering a breadth of perspectives and experiences. However, they also carry the risk of fragmented identity if individuals struggle to reconcile their online and offline selves[15]. The challenge, therefore, is not only in the act of experimenting but in integrating these experiences into a unified and resilient self-concept.

In recent decades, the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into everyday life has significantly altered how individuals access information, express themselves, and connect with others. ICT encompasses a wide range of tools and platforms, ranging from computers and mobile devices to internet-based services, that support communication, learning, and interaction across physical and virtual spaces. Among the most transformative outcomes of ICT advancement is the rise of social media. These platforms

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have shifted communication from traditional face-to-face formats to instant, multimedia-based exchanges that allow users to create, modify, and share content with large audiences in real time. For adolescents, social media has become an extension of their social world, offering opportunities to explore identity, form peer bonds, and engage in digital communities that influence how they think, feel, and behave. Therefore, social media has become an integral part of adolescents' daily lives, particularly influencing both their sense of self and academic engagement.

Social media, is defined in this study as an interactive digital environment where individuals and groups create, share, and engage with content, forms networks that reshape social interactions, cultural expression, and information exchange. Studies reveal that Nigerian teenagers spend an average of two to three hours daily on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp[12]. These platforms expose them to a range of content, from educational materials and peer interactions to social trends and entertainment, which shape their evolving identities and academic self-efficacy[15]. Adolescents engage in constant interactions on these platforms, where they encounter peer comparisons, idealized lifestyles, and diverse viewpoints, all of which contribute to their self-perceptions and beliefs about their academic competence. The process of identity formation, which was once confined largely to family, school, and peer groups, is now complexly interwoven with social media interactions.

The importance of social media in education has been further amplified by global shifts in digital learning, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift towards digital connectivity accelerated the adoption of online tools, transforming how students engage with

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learning materials and interact with their peers[16]. Several social media platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook and TikTok have emerged as primary tools for communication, academic collaboration, and information exchange. WhatsApp, in particular, is the most widely used platform among Nigerian internet users, with over 92% utilising it for messaging and educational discussions. Facebook remains the main platform for news and academic content consumption, on the other hand, Instagram and TikTok provide spaces for entertainment, self-expression, and online identity construction[17]. These platforms have become essential not only for social interactions but also for shaping students' academic experiences. The influence of social media on academic self-efficacy manifests in both positive and negative ways, reinforcing the need to assess its broader influence on student engagement, motivation, and academic performance.

In the same vein, social media provide opportunities for students to access learning materials, collaborate with peers, and engage in discussions that enhance their understanding of academic subjects. Many students also benefit from exposure to motivational content, tutorials, and peer learning communities that boost their confidence in their academic abilities. In contrast, persistent engagement with social media can lead to distractions, reduce focus, and promote unhealthy comparisons. The idealized images and curated lifestyles often presented on social media can create unrealistic expectations, leading students to develop feelings of inadequacy or anxiety about their own achievements[18]. These mixed outcomes make it essential to investigate the dynamics of social media use and its influence on students' academic resilience. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the social comparisons fostered by social media, given that they are at a stage where identity formation is central to their development. Through platforms like Instagram and Snapchat,

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students are exposed to carefully curated images of success, beauty, and lifestyle, which can inspire them but may also create pressure to meet unrealistic standards. This tension highlights the dual nature of social media as both a source of motivation and a potential trigger for insecurity, reflecting its complex influence on adolescent users. As students navigate these influences, their perceptions of themselves and their confidence in their academic abilities are inevitably shaped by their online experiences.

However, without proper guidance, the interactions in these spaces can lead to fragmented identities, where students struggle to reconcile their online identities with their real-world experiences. This tension between online and offline identities can influence students' sense of belonging, self-esteem, and motivation to perform academically. The influence of social media is the multidimensional impact that social interactions, content consumption and screen time have on individuals' beliefs, behaviours, and perceptions, extending beyond the virtual realm to shape personal identity, relationships, and decision-making[19]. Social media has become a powerful tool for learning, identity exploration, and peer interaction. Senior secondary school students actively engage with digital platforms for various purposes, including accessing academic content, engaging in peer discussions, and showcasing personal achievements. However, the extent to which these engagements influence the academic self-efficacy depends mainly on content exposure, social media platform and screen time.

Content exposure plays a critical role in shaping students' academic engagement. The nature of the material consumed, ranging from educational resources to socially driven or entertainment-focused content, directly affects students' motivation and belief in their

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academic abilities[18]. While online tutorials, digital libraries, and peer-learning forums can support learning and promote self-directed study, excessive engagement with non-academic content may result in distraction, poor time use, and decreased interest in schoolwork.

Social media platforms are internet-based applications that allow users to create, post, and share multimedia content using smartphones or other digital devices. These platforms include WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), each offering interaction, feedback, and content exchange. Over recent years, their usage has become an essential part of everyday life for many Nigerian secondary school students. Beyond entertainment and casual communication, these platforms are now frequently used for academic discussions, personal growth, and peer connection. Particularly in public secondary schools across urban and semi-urban communities, students depend on mobile internet access to engage with school-related materials, seek clarification, or participate in online study groups.

Alongside content and platform types, screen time is the amount of time spent on digital devices for social media use, has become an important dimension of students' online behaviour. While moderate and purposeful screen time can support learning and academic planning, excessive or unregulated usage can lead to reduced concentration, poor time management, and academic fatigue. It is therefore not screen time in itself that determines academic outcomes, but the way it is structured and aligned with purposeful academic goals.

However, in today's digital landscape, the convergence of content exposure, screen time, and platform type is reshaping adolescents' academic experiences. These forms of social media engagement influence not only how students connect with others but also how they manage

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their academic priorities. In Nigeria, where educational infrastructure continues to evolve, digital platforms have become extensions of the classroom, allowing students to access information, collaborate, and explore learning beyond traditional boundaries. For adolescents in resource-constrained areas such as Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, the overlap between digital and academic spaces presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, students use mobile technology to access educational resources, receive peer feedback, and remain informed. On the other, they must also navigate the distractions, social expectations, and time pressures associated with continuous digital engagement. Balancing these dual demands has become a defining feature of adolescent academic life. While purposeful and regulated screen time can reinforce academic goals and build confidence, excessive or fragmented digital use may impair time management, reduce motivation, and foster academic fatigue.

These behavioural patterns are not isolated but part of a wider process of identity formation, in which adolescents evaluate themselves in light of peer opinions, online trends, and idealised digital standards. The adolescent stage is a critical period for identity development, and social media platforms provide an open space for experimenting with self-image and peer roles. Through exposure to curated content and peer influence, students develop evolving self-concepts that shape how they approach schoolwork and perceive their academic abilities. These internalised beliefs, in turn, influence academic self-efficacy, determining whether students see themselves as capable, competent, and motivated learners[20]. In light of these realities, this study investigates how social media and identity formation intersect to influence academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest. As adolescents increasingly engage with both online and offline

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environments, it becomes important to understand how their digital experiences, identity construction, and academic aspirations interact[21].

The blurred boundaries between traditional schooling and virtual engagement mean that students' academic journeys now unfold across both physical classrooms and online communities shaped by hashtags, visual culture, and real-time feedback. While this dynamic space offers opportunities for learning and identity growth, it also introduces risks of fragmented self-image and unrealistic expectations. Students must therefore develop strategies to integrate their digital and academic lives in ways that sustain motivation, well-being, and long-term academic success. However, in Nigeria, where public secondary schools often struggle with overcrowded classrooms, inadequate facilities, and limited access to quality learning resources, the influence of social media on students' academic experience has become an important area of study. As social media is now a major part of students' daily lives, shaping how they see themselves, interact with others, and approach their studies. The student's engagement with online communities and digital content, demands for a crucial investigation of how these experiences shape academic confidence and motivation.

Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, located within Oyo State, serves as an ideal setting for examining the influence of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy, particularly among public secondary school students. As a significant part of Ibadan, the largest city in West Africa, Ibadan Southwest is characterised by its cultural diversity, rapid urbanisation, and expanding digital landscape. The area is home to students from various socio-economic backgrounds, many of them, face educational challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and limited access to resources. Despite these challenges, increased

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smartphone penetration and internet accessibility have made social media a central part of students' daily lives, shaping their interactions, aspirations, and academic outlook. By focusing on public secondary schools in Ibadan Southwest, this study investigates how students in this environment navigate the relationship between social media use, identity formation, and their academic self-efficacy.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Adolescents in Nigeria are increasingly immersed in social media, yet little is understood about how digital engagement and identity development influence their academic self-efficacy. Although social media offers platforms for learning, peer connection, and self-expression, it also exposes adolescents to pressures that may affect their self-perception and academic confidence. These concerns are particularly pressing in settings like Ibadan Southwest, where students already face infrastructural and socio-economic challenges that affect their academic motivation. While global studies have examined the general effects of social media on adolescent development, there is limited empirical evidence in Nigeria that specifically investigates how social media use and identity formation interact to shape academic self-efficacy. This gap makes it difficult for teachers and counsellors to design relevant interventions that reflect students' lived experiences. The present study addresses this need by investigating how social media use and identity formation jointly influence academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The general aim of this study is to investigate the influence of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, Oyo state, while the specific objectives are as follows, to:

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i. ascertain the perceived level of senior secondary school students` academic self-efficacy in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area.

ii. Ascertain the most exhibited identity formation behaviour among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area.

iii. identify social media influence on academic self-efficacy of senior secondary school in Ibadan Southwest.

iv. examine the relative influence of social media and identity formation on senior secondary school academic self-efficacy.

v. establish the joint contribution of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy of senior secondary school students.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study addressed the following research questions

1. What is the perceived level of senior secondary school students` academic self-efficacy?

2. What is the most exhibited identity formation behaviour among senior secondary school students?

3. How does social media influence students` academic self-efficacy?

1.5 Hypotheses

Two hypotheses are formed to guide the study, these will be tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho1. There will be no significance relative influence of social media and identity formation on senior secondary school students` academic self-efficacy

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Ho2. There will be no significant joint contribution of social media and identity formation on senior secondary school students` academic self-efficacy

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant implications for various stakeholders, including teachers, counselling psychologist, Policymakers, parents, and students themselves. By understanding the influence of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy, it provides valuable insights that can be utilised to promote positive outcomes among students. Teachers would benefit from this study by gaining better understanding of how students' use of social media and their identity formation can affect their confidence in learning. With this knowledge, they can encourage students to use social media positively and also support them in building strong academic self-belief.

Counselling psychologists can develop targeted counselling interventions that leverage the beneficial aspects of social media and mitigating its negative effects, leading to improved academic performance and well-being. Policymakers can use the findings to inform educational policies related to technology use in schools, ensuring the healthy integration of social media into educational environments. This might include implementing digital literacy programs that teach responsible and effective social media use.

Parents can better support their children's healthy use of social media, monitor the content consumption and screen time in order to encourage positive online behaviours and providing guidance on managing potential risks. This understanding contributes to a more supportive home environment that fosters academic and personal growth. Students themselves can benefit from

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increased self-awareness and enhanced academic self-efficacy. Recognising the influence of social media on their identity and academic beliefs allows them to make more informed

decisions about their social media use, leading to more positive online interactions, greater academic confidence, and improved educational outcomes.

Ultimately, findings in this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on adolescent holistic development in the digital age and provide counselling interventions and practical recommendations that foster positive outcomes among senior secondary school students. The insights gained would be instrumental in creating supportive environments that promote healthy identity development and academic success in an increasingly digital world.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study investigates the influence of social media use and identity formation on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area of Oyo State. It specifically focuses on male and female students in Senior Secondary School One and Two, as these students are at a critical phase of academic decision-making and identity development. The study is limited to selected public secondary schools within the local government area.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

Some students required clarification of certain questionnaire items to ease their participation and ensure proper understanding. The research assistant provided brief explanations to guide participants' responses where necessary. Aside from this support, the data collection process proceeded smoothly and without significant difficulty.

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1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity of concepts used in this study, the following terms are operationally defined in line with their conceptual use in the research:

Academic Self-Efficacy is an internal confidence and drive that empowers students to actively engage with academic challenges, set purposeful goals, and persist in achieving educational success, even when faced with obstacles. In this study, academic self-efficacy is measured and categorised into low, moderate, and high levels, based on students' responses to structured items.

Identity Formation: This denotes the evolving developmental process through which adolescents explore, define, and integrate personal values, beliefs, roles, and aspirations, resulting in the development of a coherent and stable sense of self.

Identity Experimentation: This refers to the phase in which adolescents attempt different roles, behaviours, and perspectives in an effort to shape and clarify their personal identity.

Self-Expression: This refers to the ways in which individuals convey their thoughts, feelings, and sense of identity, especially through verbal, written, artistic, or digital means. In the context of this study, it particularly relates to online self-presentation on social media.

Social Comparison: This refers to the tendency of individuals, particularly adolescents, to evaluate themselves by comparing their academic performance, appearance, or achievements with those of others, often through social media. Such comparisons can influence their academic confidence and self-concept.

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Social Media: This refers to internet-based applications and platforms that allow users to create, post, and exchange text, audio, visual, or multimedia content through smartphones or other digital devices. Social media use in this study is examined through the following indices:

Screen Time: The amount of time students spend actively using social media platforms on digital devices. Excessive screen time is considered a possible factor in academic distraction, poor time use, and diminished concentration.

Content Exposure: The type and frequency of content that students interact with on social media, including academic materials, entertainment content, and peer-related posts, all of which may influence identity development and academic focus.

Platform Type: The specific social media applications commonly used by students, such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), which facilitate social interaction, content sharing, and information exchange.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of relevant studies and literature that pertain to the current research. The review addresses major variables and interactions as outlined by the research questions and hypotheses guiding this study. To provide a clear and structured analysis, this chapter is organized into the following sections conceptual review, theoretical framework, empirical review, conceptual framework, summary of literature review and the gap identified.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Self-Efficacy

2.1.2 Academic Self-Efficacy

2.1.3 Academic Motivation and Goal Orientation

2.1.4 The Stages of Adolescence

2.1.5 Identity Formation

2.1.6 Social Media

2.1.7 Structure of Senior Secondary Education in Nigeria

2.1.8 Digital Education Initiatives in Secondary Schools

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

2.2.2 Social Identity Theory

2.2.3 Social Learning Theory

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1 Influences of Technology on Academic Self-Efficacy

2.3.2 Social Media and Identity Formation

2.3.3 Social Media as a Platform for Peer Knowledge Sharing

2.3.4 The Role of Social Media Content Type in Shaping Academic Self-Efficacy and Identity Formation

2.3.5 Influences of Technology on Academic Self-Efficacy

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2.3.6 The relationship between identity formation and academic self-efficacy
2.3.7 Relationship between Social Media Use and Academic Self-Efficacy
2.3.8 Adolescent Identity Exploration through Social Media
2.3.9 Digital Peer Interaction with Academic Motivation
2.4 Conceptual Model
2.5 Summary of Literature Reviewed

2.1.1 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a critical aspect of human behaviour and development, representing an individual's belief in their capacity to execute actions required to achieve specific outcomes. This confidence influences the way people approach goals, tasks, and challenges. A person with high self-efficacy is more likely to see difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than avoided, whereas someone with lower self-efficacy may shy away from challenges, believing that their efforts will not lead to success.

The concept of self-efficacy shapes the mindset that drives perseverance and resilience. When an individual believes they are capable of success, they are more likely to exert consistent effort and recover quickly from setbacks. This personal conviction acts as a catalyst for motivation, leading to higher performance levels in academic, professional, or personal pursuits. Self-efficacy is not static; it can grow or diminish over time, influenced by experiences, feedback, and the surrounding environment. Positive experiences, such as overcoming obstacles or achieving small victories, can strengthen a person's self-efficacy, fostering a sense of control over their life outcomes. On the other hand, repeated failure or negative feedback can weaken this belief, leading to self-doubt and decreased motivation.

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The concept of self-efficacy, introduced by Albert Bandura in his work on social learning theory, emphasises that individuals form beliefs about their ability to achieve specific outcomes based on their experiences, observations, and feedback from their environment[1]. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is not merely an innate trait; it develops and evolves through various sources of influence[1]. In various aspects of life, self-efficacy plays a fundamental role in determining how individuals set goals, the efforts they put into achieving them, and their willingness to persist in the face of difficulties. Its impact can be observed in fields such as education, sports, health and personal development, where it often serves as a distinguishing factor between those who succeed and those who failed. Ultimately, self-efficacy fuels the belief that effort and determination can bring about desired results, acting as a powerful internal drive toward personal growth and achievement.

Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in shaping a student's capacity to engage with learning experiences, solve problems, and achieve academic success. It is more than just a belief in one's academic skills; it influences a student's overall approach to schoolwork, challenges, and personal growth. A student with strong self-efficacy tends to view learning not just as a process of absorbing information but as an opportunity to develop their potential. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to take on academic challenges with the right attitude and mindset, seeing difficult subjects or concepts as obstacles to overcome rather than as threats. They have confidence in their ability to work through complex tasks and are more likely to employ strategies like seeking help when needed, reviewing material multiple times, or breaking down larger tasks into smaller, manageable pieces. This perseverance is essential, especially in environments where students are confronted with continuous assessments, varying expectations, and the need to adapt to new educational methods.

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Nevertheless, self-efficacy influences how students react to both success and failure. Those who believe in their ability to succeed are more resilient in the face of setbacks, rather than seeing failure as a reflection of their inadequacy, they view it as a temporary hurdle that can be overcome with additional effort, practice, or a different approach. This mindset promotes a growth-oriented perspective, which is vital for continuous improvement and long-term success. In addition, self-efficacy affects the way students set goals. A student with high self-efficacy is likely to set ambitious but realistic goals, believing in their capacity to achieve them through consistent effort. In the same vein, a student with lower self-efficacy may set smaller, less challenging goals, or avoid setting goals altogether, out of fear of failure. This difference can significantly impact their academic trajectory and the level of success they attain.

Self-efficacy also has a social dimension in the student context. A student's belief in their own capabilities often influences how they interact with peers and their teachers. Those with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in discussions, ask questions, and contribute in group settings, enhancing both their learning experience and that of their peers. In contrast, students who lack confidence may hold back, avoiding situations that could foster their intellectual and personal development. This study approach Self-efficacy as an internal drive and confidence that motivates an individual to take a tasks and persistently pursue their goals, empowering them to achieve set objectives through focused effort and resilience.

Bandura's work highlighted four primary sources from which self-efficacy originates mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional or physiological states[2]. Mastery experiences are the most powerful, referring to the success individuals experience after overcoming difficult situation. When people successfully

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complete a difficult task or solve a problem, they build confidence in their ability to handle similar situations in the future. Study shows that mastery experiences are the most direct way to enhance self-efficacy as repeated successes enhance the belief, creating a strong sense of competence, however failure, particularly when encountered early or repeatedly, can weaken it[3]. Vicarious experiences involve observing others, particularly peers or role models, those that succeed through effort and determination. Bandura explains that watching others achieve their goals can inspire confidence in the observer's own abilities, especially when they see themselves as similar to the individual performing the task[4]. This is evident in educational settings, where students often learn by watching their peers or teachers. The success of others becomes a powerful motivator, sending a message that certain goals are attainable if the right strategies and efforts are applied.

Social persuasion is another crucial source of self-efficacy. Encouragement, positive reinforcement, and constructive feedback from teachers, mentors, or peers can strengthen a person's belief in their capabilities[5]. When others express confidence in their individual's abilities, it can boost their self-confidence, especially if the persuasion comes from a respected source. yet, negative feedback or criticism can weaken self-efficacy, making individuals doubt their abilities, even if they have previously succeeded in similar tasks. Emotional and physiological states play a major role in shaping self-efficacy beliefs.

People often interpret physical symptoms like stress, fatigue, or nervousness as indicators of their likelihood of failure. For instance, a student who feels anxious before a test might interpret that anxiety as a sign of poor preparation, thus lowering their self-efficacy[6]. On the other hand, mindfulness practices have been found to significantly improve self-efficacy by reducing stress and promoting focus.

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The introduction of self-efficacy significantly reshaped the understanding of human motivation and behaviour, highlighting that belief in one's abilities profoundly influences actions, persistence, and resilience. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to embrace challenges and persist through difficulties, which ultimately enhances their performance and overall well-being. This concept is crucial in various fields, particularly education, where self-efficacy affects students' academic motivation and achievement. Counselling psychologists can foster self-efficacy by setting achievable goals, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging self-reflection, which helps students develop confidence in their abilities.

2.1.2 Academic Self-Efficacy

Academic self-efficacy, as an extension of the broader concept of general self-efficacy, refers to a student's belief in their ability to successfully perform specific academic tasks such as completing assignments, understanding complex material, and passing examinations. It reflects a learner's internal sense of competence and is widely regarded in educational psychology as a central construct that shapes academic engagement and success. Conceptually, academic self-efficacy is not just about actual ability, but about perceived ability, how strongly a student believes they can handle academic demands. This belief influences their motivation, choice of academic tasks, persistence in the face of setbacks, and the strategies they employ when learning. Students who hold strong academic self-efficacy are typically more goal-oriented, resilient, and proactive in managing their academic responsibilities. They are more likely to set challenging goals, use effective study strategies, and seek support when necessary. While, those with low or moderate self-efficacy often

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doubt their capacity to succeed, avoid difficult tasks, and are more prone to disengagement and anxiety in academic settings.

Importantly, academic self-efficacy is dynamic, it can be shaped by prior experiences, feedback from teachers and peers, emotional states, and social modelling. These influences can either strengthen or undermine a student's belief in their academic capabilities. For example, a student who consistently experiences academic setbacks without constructive support may internalise a negative self-view and lower expectations for themselves, regardless of their actual potential. As a psychological concept, academic self-efficacy serves as a motivational filter through which students interpret academic challenges and opportunities. It mediates how learners approach learning situations, regulate their effort, and maintain focus. While it is often associated with measurable academic outcomes such as grades and test scores, its primary role is in shaping how students engage with the learning process itself. Understanding academic self-efficacy from a conceptual perspective is essential, especially in studies that examine how internal beliefs interact with external influences such as social media use and identity formation. In this context, academic self-efficacy is considered the main outcome variable, representing students' perceived competence in managing academic tasks amid evolving psychosocial experiences.

Academic Self-Efficacy in Nigeria

In Nigeria, academic self-efficacy is of particular importance due to the significant educational inequalities and challenges. The country's educational system faces disparities in resources such as funding, hard copy textbook, quality of instruction, and infrastructural support. Students in rural or economically disadvantaged areas often face additional hurdles,

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such as inadequate school facilities, a shortage of textbooks, and a lack of qualified teachers[9]. Despite these obstacles, students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to succeed because they have confidence in their ability to persevere and find solutions to the problems they face. Cultural factors in Nigeria, such as the high value many families place on education, can also support the development of academic self-efficacy. Parents and communities that emphasise the importance of academic achievement can foster students' belief in their ability to succeed. Additionally, Nigerian students often look to role models, such as professionals in fields like law, medicine, or engineering, for inspiration, which further bolsters their academic self-efficacy.

The Significance of Academic Self-Efficacy

Studies consistently demonstrate that higher levels of academic self-efficacy are associated with improved academic performance and persistence in facing challenges. Students who believe in their abilities are more likely to engage in effective study habit, go extra mile to have their academic demand met and seek necessary help when the needs arise, they also maintain motivation during setbacks[9]. For instance, students with strong self-efficacy are more likely to adopt proactive approaches to their learning, resulting in better outcomes8. Similarly, studies show that self-efficacy beliefs significantly influence the academic performance of secondary school students, emphasizing its role in educational success within the Nigerian context[10].

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2.1.3 Academic Motivation and Goal Orientation

Academic motivation is a foundational factor in education, especially at the secondary school level where learners are expected to cultivate habits of diligence, perseverance, and goal-directed effort. It denotes the driving forces, whether internal or external, that energises and

sustain students' commitment to their studies. Motivation in this sense is not a transient emotional state but a relatively stable disposition that determines how learners set academic priorities, regulate their behaviour, and respond to obstacles in the learning process[11]. In the context of adolescence, this factor acquires particular importance because this developmental stage is marked by identity exploration, increasing autonomy, and heightened sensitivity to social environments. The way adolescents frame their motivation towards schoolwork often sets a trajectory that shapes not only immediate outcomes but also long-term educational and career prospects[12].

A central aspect of academic motivation is goal orientation. Goal orientation refers to the patterns of beliefs, preferences, and evaluative standards that guide students in their learning activities. It explains why some learners pursue knowledge for its own sake, while others are more concerned with outperforming peers or avoiding failure[13]. Scholars commonly distinguish between mastery orientation and performance orientation. Mastery-oriented students are characterised by their commitment to developing competence, acquiring new knowledge, and improving skills. Their satisfaction lies in the process of learning and in the intrinsic rewards of understanding. Performance-oriented students, by contrast, are primarily concerned with demonstrating ability, gaining recognition, or avoiding negative judgments. While these two orientations appear distinct, adolescents often display both simultaneously, adjusting their emphasis according to classroom climates, teacher expectations, and peer dynamics[14].

Mastery orientation is conceptually linked to deeper engagement, resilience, and persistence in the face of challenges. It enables students to treat mistakes as opportunities for growth and

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to pursue long-term improvement rather than short-term recognition. Performance orientation, while not inherently negative, tends to encourage surface-level strategies such as rote memorisation and strategic comparison. In highly competitive environments, performance orientation may even foster anxiety or discourage collaborative learning[15]. Conceptually, both orientations interact with broader social and institutional contexts, making them fluid rather than fixed dispositions. A student may demonstrate mastery orientation in one subject area where personal interest is strong, while adopting a performance orientation in another where external pressures dominate. Motivation in adolescence is further understood as multidimensional. It is influenced by cognitive, affective, and social factors that interweave to form a coherent motivational disposition. Cognitively, motivation involves the expectations students hold about their competence and the value they attach to academic success. Affectively, it includes emotions such as curiosity, pride, or anxiety, which either fuel or hinder persistence. Socially, motivation is embedded in relationships with teachers, parents, and peers, which provide reinforcement, modelling, and feedback[16]. This multidimensionality highlights the importance of analysing motivation not as a single factor but as an integrative concept shaped by multiple determinants.

Goal orientation adds further complexity because it connects motivation with self-regulation. Students with mastery goals are more likely to engage in self-monitoring, to reflect on their progress, and to adapt strategies when challenges arise. Performance-oriented students, however, are more inclined to seek external validation, which may weaken intrinsic regulation and create dependency on comparison with others[17]. In adolescence, when self-regulatory capacities are still developing, the type of goal orientation adopted can have enduring implications. Mastery orientation strengthens the capacity for autonomous learning,

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while exclusive performance orientation risks reinforcing a fragile sense of self-worth that is contingent on external judgments. The digital environment has introduced additional conceptual layers to academic motivation. Social media and online learning spaces provide adolescents with new avenues for setting goals, seeking recognition, and evaluating their progress. Conceptually, this extends the scope of motivation beyond traditional classrooms into digital domains where visibility, feedback, and peer comparison are amplified[18]. For instance, the public sharing of achievements online creates a hybrid form of goal orientation, where mastery and performance motives intersect. A student may genuinely value learning while also seeking online validation through the display of accomplishments. Such dynamics illustrate how goal orientation is increasingly mediated by digital visibility and social endorsement, complicating the traditional distinction between mastery and performance.

Another aspect of motivation is its interaction with identity. Adolescents often define themselves in relation to their academic achievements and aspirations. Motivation, therefore, is not only a driver of performance but also an element of self-concept. When students internalise mastery goals, they are more likely to view themselves as capable learners and lifelong seekers of knowledge. When they adopt performance goals, their identity may hinge on external recognition, making their self-concept more vulnerable to fluctuations in achievement[19]. This identity dimension of motivation highlights the need to understand academic goals not as isolated behaviours but as integral to the personal and social development of adolescents. Furthermore, motivation is influenced by cultural and institutional values. In collectivist contexts, where group harmony and family honour are emphasised, performance orientation may be reinforced because academic achievement is closely tied to social recognition. In more individualist settings, mastery orientation may be

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privileged because personal growth and self-improvement are celebrated[10]. These cultural distinctions underscore that motivation and goal orientation are not universally expressed but are shaped by the social frameworks within which adolescents are embedded. For Nigerian adolescents, whose academic journeys are situated in a system that combines high-stakes examinations with increasing exposure to digital learning, both mastery and performance orientations are deeply relevant.

Academic motivation also encompasses the capacity to sustain effort over time, which is conceptually connected to perseverance and resilience. Motivation is not merely about initiating learning tasks but about continuing them despite setbacks. This endurance reflects the degree to which learners have internalised their goals and aligned them with personal values. Students who are motivated by mastery are more likely to persevere because their goals are self-referential and not contingent on fluctuating social comparisons. Performance-oriented students may struggle with persistence, especially when faced with repeated failures or when external recognition is absent[20]. Thus, persistence is best understood as a conceptual marker of the strength and quality of motivation rather than as an independent construct. Academic motivation and goal orientation are conceptually linked to broader developmental outcomes. Motivation fosters not only academic achievement but also self-confidence, problem-solving skills, and adaptability. It prepares adolescents to navigate complex environments where success is determined not merely by cognitive ability but by sustained effort and goal management. In a world where digital and academic lives are intertwined, understanding motivation requires attention to both traditional and emerging contexts. Goal orientation provides the framework for interpreting how students organise their motivation,

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balance intrinsic and extrinsic influences, and translate their aspirations into sustained academic engagement[21].

2.1.4 The Stages of Adolescence Development

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage that spans the transition from childhood to adulthood, typically occurring between the ages of 10 and 19, although some extend the range into the early twenties. It is marked by profound physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes[22]. These changes are driven by a combination of biological processes, particularly those associated with puberty, and social and psychological factors[23]. Growing as an adolescent at that time, as part of nature, led to major changes in every aspect of life, physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. Some scholars define Adolescence as the developmental stage between 13 and 19 years old, spanning from infancy to adulthood.[24] However, the physical and psychological changes that occur in adolescence begin considerably earlier, during the pre-teen or teenage, between the ages of nine and thirteen. Adolescence may be a time of confusion and exploration, it may also be both period of disorienting and exploratory[25].

Adolescence is seen as a significant developmental stage marking the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is characterised by an emerging sense of self identity, exploration of personal interests, beliefs, values and goals, increased independence and autonomy beyond the family, growing responsibility, increased engagement in risk behaviours, emerging sexuality, amplified significance of peers, intensification of gender stereotypes, and shifting relationships with parents and caregivers. Adolescence is distinguished by increased exploration, identity creation, and the building of peer interactions[26]. Understanding the distinct obstacles and possibilities that arise during adolescence is critical for initiatives

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aimed at encouraging positive youth development. Adolescents experience physical, behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and social changes during their transition from childhood to young adulthood. It is important to note that such transition does not occur all at once, but rather through some sub stages also. Researchers suggest that adolescents go through three developmental stages early adolescence (10 and 13 years), middle adolescence (14 and 16 years), and late adolescence/young adulthood (15 and 17 years and beyond)[27].

Physical Development in Adolescence

The onset of adolescence is typically signalled by puberty, a period of rapid physical maturation that is initiated by hormonal changes. These hormonal shifts, primarily involving estrogen in females and testosterone in males, bring about a host of bodily changes, including growth spurts, the development of secondary sexual characteristics, and changes in body composition[28]. These physical changes can have a significant impact on adolescents' body image and self-esteem. Adolescents may become more self-conscious about their appearance as they compare themselves to their peers, particularly if they perceive themselves to be developing either earlier or later than others. Body image issues are especially prevalent during this period, and they can contribute to the development of eating disorders, particularly among girls who may feel pressure to conform to societal standards of beauty[29].

Cognitive Development in Adolescence

Cognitively, adolescence is marked by the transition from concrete operational thinking, typical of childhood, to formal operational thinking, as described by Jean Piaget. This means that adolescents develop the ability to think abstractly, reason logically, and engage in hypothetical thinking[30]. They become capable of understanding complex ideas, such as justice, morality, and ethics, and can consider multiple perspectives on an issue. Adolescents

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also develop metacognition, the ability to think about their own thinking. This allows them to reflect on their thoughts and feelings, leading to increased self-awareness and introspection. However, this heightened self-awareness can also contribute to what is refers to as the imaginary audience phenomenon, where adolescents believe that others are constantly observing and judging them. This perception can lead to increased self-consciousness and social anxiety.

Emotional Development in Adolescence

Emotionally, adolescence is a period of heightened sensitivity and volatility. Hormonal changes contribute to increased emotional intensity, and adolescents often experience mood swings. This emotional variability is partly due to the developmental lag between the limbic system, which governs emotions and reward processing, and the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision-making and impulse control[31]. Since the pre-frontal cortex continues to develop into the early twenties, adolescents may struggle to regulate their emotions effectively, leading to impulsive behaviours or emotional outbursts. The emotional experiences of adolescence are also influenced by the increasing complexity of social relationships. During this time, adolescents become more attuned to their peers, and friendships often take on greater significance. Peer relationships are a major source of social support, but they can also be a source of stress, particularly when adolescents feel excluded or judged. Peer pressure can influence adolescents to conform to certain behaviours, whether positive or negative, as the desire for acceptance becomes a powerful motivator[32].

Social Development in Adolescence

The social world of adolescents undergoes significant changes as they move away from the family as their primary source of influence and begin to rely more on their peers for guidance

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and validation[33]. Adolescents seek greater independence from their parents and often challenge authority as they strive to assert their autonomy. This shift can lead to conflicts with parents, as adolescents test boundaries and question family rules and expectations. Although, the family remains an important source of emotional support, peer relationships become increasingly central to an adolescent's social life. Adolescents often form close-knit groups of friends who share similar interests, values, and behaviours. These peer groups play a critical role in shaping their social identity, as they provide a sense of belonging and help adolescents explore different aspects of their identity formation.

However, peer relationships are not always positive. Bullying and social exclusion are significant issues during adolescence, and they can have lasting effects on an individual's mental health and self-development. Adolescents who experience bullying may struggle with anxiety, depression, and a diminished sense of self-worth which will affect the process of their identity formation.

2.1.5 Identity Formation

Identity formation is a fundamental component of adolescent development, particularly among senior secondary school students who are in a formative stage of self-definition. It involves a dynamic process through which individuals develop a coherent sense of self by integrating personal values, beliefs, aspirations, and social roles. This evolving self-concept is shaped by a blend of individual experiences, cultural influences, societal expectations, and increasingly, digital media environment[34]. For senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest, Oyo State, this process is further nuanced by the interplay of traditional values and modern social realities that inform their identity development.

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The conceptual foundation for understanding identity formation is rooted in Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, which posits that the central developmental task during adolescence is resolving the crisis of identity versus role confusion. According to Erikson, adolescents, typically between the ages of 12 and 18, must navigate a period of exploration to arrive at a stable and authentic sense of self[35]. Failure to resolve this psychosocial conflict may result in uncertainty, low self-esteem, and difficulty in establishing meaningful life goals. For students in Ibadan, the pressures of academic performance, cultural expectations, and personal aspirations often intersect with this psychological struggle, intensifying the complexity of identity formation.

Building upon Erikson's framework, James Marcia introduced an identity status model that classifies adolescents into four categories based on their level of exploration and commitment: identity diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement[36]. In identity diffusion, adolescents show little interest in exploring or committing to an identity. Foreclosure occurs when individuals accept imposed identities without personal exploration. Moratorium represents an active phase of identity exploration without commitment, while identity achievement signifies a successful resolution of exploration resulting in a clear and committed sense of self. These identity statuses provide a useful lens for understanding the varied experiences of secondary school students as they confront decisions about their futures, values, and self-perception.

Identity formation among adolescents is closely intertwined with the cultural and social dynamics of their environment. In Ibadan, young people are situated at the crossroads of rich indigenous traditions and the pervasive influence of global culture. This duality often requires adolescents to negotiate a balance between inherited values and emerging

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worldviews, which contributes to the uniqueness and complexity of their identity journeys[37]. Successfully managing this balance enhances their adaptability and personal growth, whereas unresolved tension between these cultural forces may create internal conflicts. More recently, digital environments have become critical spaces where adolescents actively engage in identity construction. The rise of social media has transformed how identity is explored, expressed, and evaluated[38]. Unlike traditional settings, digital platforms provide adolescents with immediate access to peer networks, role models, and societal trends. These platforms allow for visibility and engagement in ways that are both empowering and challenging. While they open up new possibilities for self-definition, they also introduce risks such as unrealistic comparisons, curated self-presentations, and the pressure to meet external validation. However, in this digital context, self-expression, social comparison, and identity experimentation emerge as central behavioural processing of identity formation.

Self-expression as a behaviour involves the active externalisation of one's thoughts, values, and aspirations, often in ways that signal individuality and social belonging. For adolescents, especially those navigating transitional academic environments, self-expression is a powerful identity behaviour enacted through verbal, non-verbal, and digital cues. In contemporary Nigerian contexts, students express themselves through dress, language, affiliations, and increasingly, social media profiles[39]. Digital platforms serve as avenues where adolescents craft their perceived identities and seek feedback that may influence academic motivation. When self-expression is positively reinforced, through peer validation, family support, or academic recognition, it enhances self-belief and academic self-efficacy. While, suppressed or negatively judged self-expression may result in low confidence or disengagement. Recognising self-expression as a behavioural dimension of identity formation is essential for

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understanding its nuanced role in adolescent academic performance and psychosocial stability.

Social comparison is a behavioural tendency where individuals assess their worth or competence in relation to others, often unconsciously[40]. Among adolescents, this behaviour intensifies during identity development, particularly in structured environments like schools where performance metrics and peer interactions are constant. With the rise of digital media, social comparison behaviours extend beyond physical boundaries into curated online spaces, where students are exposed to idealised representations of success, intelligence, and popularity. While moderate comparison may stimulate self-improvement, persistent upward comparisons can undermine students' confidence and distort their academic self-perception. In Nigerian secondary schools, where academic excellence is often socially ranked, such behaviours may affect students' belief in their academic capabilities, especially when their achievements appear inferior to their peers[34]. Understanding social comparison as a patterned behaviour enables teachers and school counsellors to design targeted interventions that nurture realistic self-assessment, resilience, and internal motivation, all crucial for sustained academic efficacy.

Identity experimentation is a core behavioural process during adolescence, characterised by intentional role-shifting and behavioural testing in various social contexts. This behaviour is often exploratory, enabling students to simulate different versions of themselves, academic achievers, social leaders, creatives, or rebels, as they seek congruence between internal values and external expectations. Digital platforms have amplified this process, offering adolescents a relatively safe space to explore multiple identities without immediate consequences. In the Nigerian school context, such experimentation may be visible through

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academic involvement, shifting peer groups, digital expressions, or even fluctuating career interests[41]. While this behaviour is developmentally appropriate and can foster adaptability, overindulgence or lack of direction can fragment self-concept and delay academic focus. When properly guided, identity experimentation supports critical thinking, goal-setting, and ownership of learning. Recognising it as a normal behaviour allows school school counsellors and teachers to support students in finding coherence between their identity trials and academic development.

Understanding these mechanisms is essential to assessing how identity formation influences academic self-efficacy among secondary school students. A coherent and positively constructed identity supports motivation, goal-setting, and resilience, all of which are crucial for academic success. Whereas, fragmented or conflicted identities may hinder confidence and focus, affecting academic engagement. Therefore, identity formation is not only a psychological necessity but a pivotal factor in the educational development and personal growth of adolescents in today's society.

2.1.5.1 Adolescents' Digital Identity and Self-identity

Identity is seen as a pivotal developmental process through which young people negotiate a coherent sense of who they are, who they wish to become, and how they fit into broader social contexts, it has been studied in relation to family, peers, and school settings[42]. However, the proliferation of digital technologies has introduced new dimensions to this process. Adolescents today spend substantial portions of their daily lives interacting online, constructing profiles, curating self-presentations, and responding to the feedback of virtual audiences. The outcome is a digital identity that coexists with, and sometimes conflicts with,

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offline self-identity[43]. Understanding this digital dimension is essential for appreciating the evolving nature of adolescent identity formation.

Digital identity refers to the representations of self that individuals create, maintain, and project through digital platforms. These representations are not static but are continuously shaped by interactions, visibility, and the social architectures of digital spaces[44]. For adolescents, digital identity is closely tied to self-identity, the internalised set of beliefs and evaluations about one's abilities, attributes, and worth. While self-identity has always been socially constructed, the digital era has accelerated and intensified this process by providing constant opportunities for feedback, comparison, and experimentation. Adolescents now operate in a space where their identity is influenced not only by immediate peers and family but also by wider online communities that span geographic and cultural boundaries[45].

One important feature of digital identity is its curated nature. Adolescents are able to selectively present aspects of themselves online, highlighting achievements, interests, or affiliations that they wish others to perceive. This curation enables experimentation with multiple selves, as different platforms may encourage different performances, professional achievements on LinkedIn, social life on Instagram, or humour and creativity on TikTok[46]. The ability to craft identity in this way offers developmental opportunities, allowing adolescents to explore different aspects of self without permanent consequences. However, it also poses risks of dissonance when curated identities diverge significantly from offline realities, creating pressures to maintain appearances or conform to perceived expectations. Another dimension of digital identity relates to visibility and audience. Online platforms amplify the social audience to which adolescents are accountable. Whereas identity work in

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previous generations was largely confined to local peer groups, adolescents today negotiate their identity before audiences that may include distant acquaintances, strangers, and global networks[47]. This expanded visibility raises questions about authenticity, privacy, and vulnerability. The desire for social validation through likes, shares, and comments can tie self-worth to external feedback, reinforcing performance-driven aspects of identity rather than internal coherence. At the same time, positive feedback can bolster confidence and contribute to the consolidation of identity.

Digital identity also intersects with belonging and group membership. Adolescents use online communities to connect with like-minded peers, express affiliations, and gain a sense of inclusion. These digital communities serve as important arenas for identity exploration, where adolescents test values, exchange ideas, and form friendships across geographical divides[48]. Belonging to such communities can enrich self-concept by providing affirmation and support. However, exclusion, cyberbullying, or negative comparisons can damage self-esteem and disrupt identity development. The dual potential of digital belonging underscores the complexity of how online environments shape adolescent identity. Identity in the digital age is further influenced by comparison processes. Adolescents frequently evaluate themselves against curated images and achievements of others online. These comparisons are often upward, involving peers who appear more successful, attractive, or socially connected. Such dynamics may create pressures that weaken self-concept or foster unrealistic aspirations[49]. At the same time, exposure to diverse identities can broaden perspectives and encourage adolescents to reimagine possibilities for their own futures. Thus, digital comparison processes are not inherently detrimental; their impact depends on how adolescents interpret and integrate them into their sense of self.

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The dynamic and fluid nature of digital identity raises conceptual questions about coherence. Adolescents often maintain multiple online profiles, each tailored to different audiences. While this multiplicity can be a healthy form of exploration, it may also create tensions when adolescents struggle to integrate fragmented identities into a coherent self-concept[50]. Navigating these tensions requires reflexivity, the ability to critically evaluate one's digital persona and align it with core values and aspirations. Reflexivity in digital identity formation is emerging as a vital skill for adolescents who wish to maintain authenticity while engaging with diverse audiences. Digital identity is also entwined with academic aspirations. Adolescents increasingly use digital spaces to signal educational achievements, share learning resources, or express career goals. These activities link self-concept to academic domains, reinforcing the idea that success in school and learning is part of who they are[51]. While, lack of academic visibility online or exposure to peers' superior achievements can produce feelings of inadequacy. This dynamic demonstrates how digital identity extends beyond personal and social domains into educational life, shaping adolescents' motivation, confidence, and aspirations.

The cultural context adds another layer to understanding digital identity. In many societies, including Nigeria, adolescents negotiate dual pressures: traditional expectations from family and community alongside globalised norms encountered online[52]. Digital identity thus becomes a site of negotiation between local cultural values and transnational influences. This negotiation can enrich self-identity by allowing adolescents to synthesise multiple cultural elements, but it can also create conflicts when expectations clash. For instance, traditional norms around modesty or respect for elders may conflict with the assertive self-presentation often rewarded online. Digital identity raises ethical and developmental concerns about

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permanence. Unlike face-to-face interactions, digital traces are often durable, archived, and searchable. Adolescents may not fully appreciate the long-term consequences of digital disclosures, yet these disclosures form part of their enduring identity footprint[53]. The awareness that digital identity has lasting visibility shapes how adolescents construct their self-concept, influencing their risk-taking, experimentation, and openness. Educational stakeholders therefore have a responsibility to support adolescents in cultivating digital literacy that includes awareness of identity implications.

Adolescents' digital identity and self-identity are complex, fluid, and deeply intertwined. Digital platforms provide opportunities for experimentation, affirmation, and connection, but they also present risks of fragmentation, comparison, and external dependency. Conceptually, digital identity is not separate from offline self-concept but forms a mutually influential relationship in which each shapes the other. For adolescents in contemporary societies, including Nigeria, identity formation increasingly takes place at the intersection of offline and online worlds. Understanding this dynamic is indispensable for analysing how young people develop confidence, aspirations, and resilience in both personal and academic domains.

2.1.6 Social Media

The journey from early Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to today's social media platforms can be seen as a progressive transformation shaped by pivotal technological and cultural shifts. The first noteworthy milestone occurred in the 1970s and 1980s with dial-up services like CompuServe and Bulletin Board Systems, which allowed remote individuals to exchange messages, rudimentary precursors to today's digital communities[55]. As internet

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infrastructure expanded in the 1990s, email, Listservs, and early web forums enabled broader participation in online dialogue. A second turning point was the launch of Web 2.0 in the early 2000s, whereby internet users moved from passive consumption to active content creation and interaction[38]. This transition brought about platforms like MySpace, Facebook, and YouTube, which facilitated user-generated content and emerging digital identities. By the 2010s, the advent of smartphones accelerated global ICT access, particularly in developing nations. Mobile internet penetration transformed online engagement into a daily practice, notably in Africa and Nigeria, where WhatsApp and Facebook became integral in messaging, business communication, and social mobilisation[56].

Concurrently, social media platforms began to harness algorithms and machine learning, which shaped personalised content and maximised engagement, giving rise to "filter bubbles" and attention-driven design[40]. This technological sophistication also paved the way for commercial integration: in-app purchases, advertising, influencer marketing, and embedded shops turned social media into viable e-commerce ecosystems[57]. Studies emphasises social media's dual role in development and education, especially across the Global South. Studies highlight its power to enhance learning and digital literacies, while also spotlighting associated risks to mental health and misinformation[58]. Social media refers to digital communication channels that facilitate extensive interactions among users[59]. These interactions can take various forms, including voice and video calls, text messages, photos, and videos. "Social media is an interactive digital environment where individuals and groups create, share, and engage with content, forming networks that reshape social interactions, cultural expression, and information exchange".

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What began as simple chat websites have expanded into diverse platforms that cater to various needs and interests. Users can now share photos and videos, participate in live broadcasts, build confidence, and even earn financial rewards. Social media encompasses a range of digital platforms that allow users to create, share, and engage with content within a virtual community[60]. These platforms enable communication across vast distances, facilitate the exchange of ideas, and foster networks that transcend geographical boundaries. Unlike traditional media, social media is interactive and participatory, with users generating much of the content[45]. Popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube offer distinct avenues for self-expression, discussion, and content sharing.

This evolution has significantly transformed how people communicate and connect, providing individuals with unprecedented control over the content they produce and consume[46]. Through these platforms, users can instantly share updates, photos, videos, and opinions, creating real-time global conversations. The interactive nature of social media sets it apart from traditional media like television and newspapers, which typically deliver information in a one-way format without immediate audience feedback. With its widespread reach, social media has become a central part of daily life, influencing everything from personal communication to business, entertainment, and education. It enables real-time sharing of information, fostering social connections and access to a wide range of perspectives and resources globally[61].

Main Features of Social Media

Social media is characterized by several unique features that shape user interactions and experiences. These features, including user-generated content, interactivity, networking, and

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accessibility**,** define how individuals engage with digital platforms and influence identity formation and academic self-efficacy.

User-Generated Content

A defining feature of social media is user-generated content (UGC), which empowers individuals to create and disseminate their material: text, images, videos, or audio. This democratization of content creation allows diverse perspectives and voices to emerge, contributing to a pluralistic media landscape. The role of UGC in providing a platform for marginalized voices to be heard, particularly in a context where traditional media may be limited[62].

Interactivity

Social media platforms encourage interaction through comments, likes, shares, and direct messaging. This interactivity fosters community engagement, allowing users to participate in real-time conversations. The interactive aspect of social media is crucial for building social networks among adolescents, enabling them to form friendships and share experiences.

Networking

Social media facilitates the creation and maintenance of personal and professional networks. Users can connect with friends, family, colleagues, and even strangers who share similar interests. Several platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp have become essential for maintaining family ties and friendships, especially in a society that values communal relationships.

Accessibility

The widespread availability of the internet and mobile devices has made social media accessible to a broad audience. Individuals can engage with social media platforms anytime

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and anywhere, enhancing their role in daily communication and information sharing. Studies indicate that social media is increasingly utilised in educational contexts, providing students with access to resources and support.

Diverse Content Formats

Social media encompasses various content formats, including text posts, images, videos, live streams, and stories. This diversity allows users to express themselves creatively and engage with others in various ways. There is an emphasises that the variety of content formats enables users to share their cultural heritage and personal stories, enriching the social media experience.

Types of Social Media Platforms

Social media encompasses a wide spectrum of platforms, each serving distinct functions and audiences[63].

1. Social Networking Sites

Platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn enable users to create profiles and share content within their networks. These sites focus on personal relationships and professional networking.

2. Microblogging Platforms

X (Twitter) exemplifies microblogging, allowing users to share short messages or updates. This platform facilitates rapid information dissemination and engagement in topical discussions.

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4. Photo and Video Sharing Platforms

Instagram and TikTok prioritize visual content, allowing users to upload, share, and engage with images and videos. These platforms are popular among younger audiences for their emphasis on creativity and entertainment. Research indicates that Nigerian youth use these platforms to express their creativity and connect with peers.

4. Messaging Applications

Apps like WhatsApp and Messenger facilitate private messaging and group chats, providing users with a means of direct communication that complements social media interactions. WhatsApp is widely used for personal communication and group collaborations, especially among secondary school students

5. Discussion Forums and Communities

Platforms such as Reddit and Quora focus on discussions and knowledge sharing. These sites allow users to engage in conversations on specific topics, ask questions, and share expertise. Nigerian scholars have pointed out the potential of discussion forums to foster learning and collaboration among students.

2.1.6.1 The Psychology of Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement is a multifaceted concept that captures the ways individuals interact with, contribute to, and consume content across digital platforms. For adolescents, engagement goes beyond casual usage; it involves psychological processes that shape attention, emotion, motivation, and behaviour[64]. Unlike traditional media, where audiences were primarily passive consumers, social media fosters interactive participation, enabling

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users to co-create content, respond to peers, and build networks of belonging. Understanding the psychology of social media engagement is therefore essential for analysing its implications for adolescent development, particularly in relation to self-concept, wellbeing, and academic outcomes.

Engagement can be seen as the depth and quality of users' involvement with digital platforms. It encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. Cognitively, engagement requires attention, processing, and memory, as adolescents absorb and evaluate the constant flow of online information[65]. Affective engagement reflects emotional responses, such as enjoyment, pride, envy, or frustration, elicited by interactions with digital content. Behavioural engagement is visible in activities such as posting, commenting, sharing, or liking. These dimensions are not independent but mutually reinforcing: cognitive focus is often sustained by emotional investment, while behavioural participation feeds back into both cognitive and affective experiences[66]. One distinction in social media engagement is between active and passive forms. Active engagement refers to content creation, interactive dialogue, and deliberate participation in online communities. Passive engagement involves scrolling, viewing, or consuming content without direct contribution. Studies consistently suggests that active engagement is more likely to foster positive outcomes, including social connectedness and self-expression, while passive use often correlates with negative emotions such as envy or loneliness[67]. This distinction highlights that engagement is not defined simply by time spent online but by the quality and intentionality of interaction. For adolescents, learning to balance active and passive modes is critical to maintaining healthy psychological outcomes.

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Social media engagement also operates as a feedback-driven process. Adolescents create content, observe the responses of others, and adjust their behaviour accordingly. This cycle of feedback fosters a heightened awareness of audience reactions and can amplify the role of external validation in shaping self-perceptions. Positive reinforcement, such as likes or supportive comments, can boost confidence and encourage further engagement. Conversely, lack of feedback or negative responses may diminish self-worth or contribute to withdrawal[68]. Conceptually, this feedback loop explains why adolescents may become deeply invested in digital interactions and why engagement often takes on compulsive qualities. Another psychological dimension of engagement is the role of social comparison. Digital platforms provide adolescents with constant opportunities to evaluate themselves against peers. Unlike offline comparisons, which are limited by time and context, online comparisons are immediate, continuous, and global. Adolescents may compare their appearance, achievements, or social popularity with those of peers or influencers who present idealised versions of themselves[69]. Such comparisons can foster feelings of inadequacy but may also serve as sources of inspiration. The psychological effect depends on how comparisons are interpreted and whether adolescents have the resilience to integrate them constructively into their self-concept.

Attention is another critical factor in understanding engagement. Social media platforms are designed to capture and sustain user attention through notifications, personalised feeds, and algorithmically curated content. Adolescents, whose attentional control is still developing, are particularly susceptible to these mechanisms[70]. Conceptually, this raises concerns about the fragmentation of attention and its implications for sustained focus on academic tasks. Engagement, in this sense, is not simply voluntary but shaped by design features that

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capitalise on psychological vulnerabilities. Recognising the role of attention capture helps to explain why disengagement from social media can be difficult, even when adolescents are aware of potential downsides. Emotional regulation is closely tied to engagement. Adolescents often turn to social media to manage emotions, whether to seek comfort during stress, distraction during boredom, or affirmation during moments of self-doubt[71]. This use of digital platforms as emotional regulators underscores the psychological centrality of engagement in daily life. However, overreliance on social media for mood management may weaken adolescents' ability to develop independent coping strategies. Conceptually, this positions engagement not only as a means of communication but as a mechanism of emotional adjustment, with both adaptive and maladaptive potential.

Identity expression is another vital element of social media engagement. Platforms allow adolescents to present curated aspects of themselves, experiment with identities, and gain feedback on self-representation. Engagement here functions as both a mirror and a stage: adolescents reflect on who they are while simultaneously performing identities for their audiences[9]. The psychological significance lies in the iterative process of posting, receiving feedback, and revising self-presentation. Engagement thus contributes directly to identity exploration, making social media a site of developmental significance rather than merely a tool for entertainment. Social belonging is a further conceptual pillar. Adolescents often engage with social media to maintain friendships, strengthen bonds, and participate in communities of interest. The sense of belonging derived from online interactions satisfies fundamental human needs for connection and acceptance[10]. Engagement in this context is less about information consumption and more about relational maintenance. However, belonging in digital communities is contingent on continued participation, and exclusion can

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be acutely felt. The psychological stakes of engagement are therefore high, as adolescents may equate digital presence with social relevance.

Another aspect is the link between autonomy and compulsion. While adolescents engage with social media by choice, the persuasive design of platforms creates conditions where choice is subtly undermined. Features such as infinite scroll, streaks, and variable reward schedules are intentionally designed to sustain engagement beyond users' original intentions[72]. This complicates the notion of free agency in digital engagement, suggesting that adolescents' choices are co-constructed by technological environments. This recognition calls for a nuanced understanding of engagement as both voluntary and engineered. In addition, social media engagement interacts with wellbeing. Positive engagement, such as supportive communication, creative expression, or academic collaboration, can enhance psychological wellbeing. Negative engagement, including exposure to cyberbullying, misinformation, or toxic comparisons, can undermine it[73]. The conceptual challenge lies in the dual nature of engagement, which can simultaneously enrich and erode wellbeing depending on context, content, and interpretation. Adolescents' ability to critically evaluate digital interactions is therefore crucial in determining whether engagement serves as a resource or a risk.

Social media engagement has implications for academic self-concept and learning. Adolescents often use platforms to access educational resources, collaborate on assignments, or seek clarification from peers. These forms of engagement can reinforce motivation and confidence in academic abilities. While, excessive or poorly managed engagement may fragment attention and reduce time available for sustained study[74]. The conceptual linkage

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between engagement and learning underscores the need to view social media not as peripheral to academic life but as an integral part of the environments where adolescents construct their educational experiences. The psychology of social media engagement is characterised by its multidimensional nature, encompassing cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and relational processes. Engagement is shaped not only by adolescents' choices but also by platform design and social dynamics. It functions as a site for identity expression, emotional regulation, and social belonging, while simultaneously posing challenges related to attention, comparison, and compulsion. Engagement must be understood as a double-edged phenomenon: it offers opportunities for growth, connection, and learning, yet it also carries risks of distraction, dependence, and diminished wellbeing. Recognising this complexity is essential for appreciating the place of social media in adolescent development and for framing its role in shaping self-concept and academic orientation.

2.1.7 Structure of Senior Secondary Education in Nigeria

Nigeria's formal education system follows the 6-3-3-4 structure, comprising six years of primary education, three years each of junior and senior secondary education, and four years of tertiary education. The senior secondary education phase, panning Senior Secondary School One (SSS1) to Senior Secondary School Three (SSS3), serves as a transitional stage for students preparing for university, polytechnic, or vocational pathways[75]. According to the National Policy on Education, the core subjects at this level include English Language, Mathematics, Civic Education, and one major Nigerian language. Students also select elective subjects based on individual interests and intended career paths across science, arts, commercial, or technical disciplines[76]. The curriculum is broad-based and aims to equip learners with cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills required for national development.

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Despite the curriculum's ambition, several systemic challenges impact the delivery of quality education, especially in public schools. These include overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching resources, low teacher-student ratios, and limited access to instructional materials. In contrast, private schools, though less accessible due to higher tuition, tend to be better equipped, offering enhanced academic learning environments and more individualised support for students[77].

2.1.8 Digital Education Initiatives in Secondary School

Digital education programs targeting secondary school students are progressively being implemented through both state-led and national initiatives. One prominent project is the Oyo State Internet for Schools Initiative, which offers free high-speed internet to selected schools such as Government College Ibadan and Bishop Phillips Academy in Ibadan Southwest, Oyo State. This initiative forms part of a broader strategy to expand internet access to other public schools in the state. The goal is to enhance the digital learning environment and equip students with the tools necessary to participate in e-learning, ultimately improving their digital literacy[77].

Additionally, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has enrolled several secondary schools in Oyo State, including Government College Ibadan, in its programme. This initiative provides schools with digital infrastructure and aims to introduce students to early computer usage and digital skills. The DAP program supports the national vision of increasing digital literacy among students, ensuring they are better prepared for the growing demands of Nigeria's digital economy. These programs are directly available within the participating schools, providing significant resources to boost digital education, though they are not mandatory for all students[78]. They are complementary initiatives that provide

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essential digital skills and infrastructure, which are expected to inform future decisions regarding the integration of digital literacy into the regular school curriculum.

Academic Performance and Influencing Factors

Several factors influence the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Socio-economic status is one of the most significant factors. Students from wealthy families often have access to better educational resources, private tutoring, and more conducive learning environments. On the other hand, students from poorer backgrounds may struggle due to a lack of access to learning materials, internet connectivity for research, or even basic school supplies. Study shows that the socio-economic background of students plays a significant role in their academic achievement[79].

Teacher quality is another critical factor. Well-trained and motivated teachers tend to inspire better academic outcomes in students. However, in many public schools, teachers face challenges such as delayed salaries, poor working conditions, and a lack of professional development opportunities. This has been corroborated by studies showing a direct correlation between teacher quality and student performance[80]. Poor student-teacher ratios further exacerbate these issues, making it difficult for teachers to offer individual attention to students in overcrowded classrooms.

Parental involvement also plays a role in shaping students' academic success, students whose parents are actively involved in their education tend to perform better academically. This involvement can take various forms, such as monitoring homework, attending school meetings, or providing moral and emotional support. Unfortunately, many parents, especially in rural areas, are not actively involved in their children's education due to work commitments or low literacy levels.

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2.2 Theoretical Framework

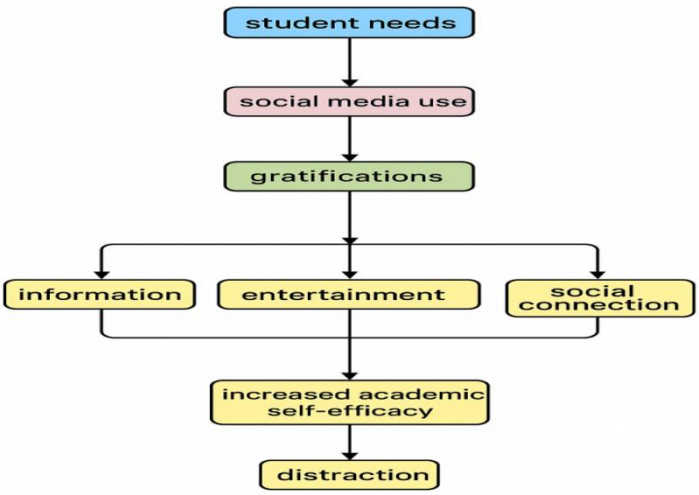
This study is anchored in three interrelated theories that help explain the mechanisms through which social media use**,** identity formation, and academic self-efficacy interact during adolescence. These are: Social Identity Theory**,** Uses and Gratifications Theory and Social Learning Theory**.** Each of these theories provides a unique perspective to interpret how digital behaviours and self-concepts evolve among students in the Nigerian context and how these ultimately influence academic engagement and outcomes. Together, these theories offer a multidimensional understanding of how young people construct self-belief in a hyper-connected world, especially within secondary school settings where peer influence, digital media, and personal identity converge.

2.2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a foundational communication theory that explains why individuals actively seek out particular media platforms to fulfil specific psychological and social needs. It was first introduced in its formal form by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1973[81]. Their work represented a significant shift from earlier media theories that viewed audiences as passive recipients of media messages. Instead, UGT presents media users as active, rational, and selective participants in the communication process[82]. Media consumption is motivated by what users expect to gain from that experience, whether it is information, emotional comfort, identity reinforcement, social interaction, or simple entertainment. The theory posits that individuals use media deliberately to satisfy particular needs, and the same content may serve different purposes for different people. For instance, a secondary school student may use WhatsApp to receive academic updates, while

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another may use the same platform to feel socially connected to friends. Both are gratified, but for different reasons.



Users and Gratification theory of 1973 by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch[81]

Fig 2.1: Conceptual diagram of uses and gratification theory

The Core Idea of the Theory is Expressed in its Central Question:

"What do people do with media?" rather than "What does media do to people?"

Katz and his colleagues argued that people are goal-oriented in their media choices. The media are not all-powerful forces shaping people's behaviour; instead, audiences use media to serve their own goals, making conscious decisions based on their own experiences, desires, and social environments[83].

Five main categories of media gratifications were identified in their original work:

1. Information: learning about the world, people, and events;
2. Personal Identity: reinforcing one's values, self-understanding, and role in society;
3. Integration and Social Interaction: connecting with others, feeling part of a group;
4. Entertainment: escape, relaxation, or emotional release;

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5. Escapism: temporary withdrawal from reality to manage stress or dissatisfaction.

In the digital era, particularly with the rise of social media, UGT has proven adaptable. Researchers have extended its application to interactive platforms where users are not only consumers but also content creators. Adolescents, for instance, use Instagram and TikTok to construct digital identities, seek feedback, and engage in peer comparisons, activities that fulfil both social and personal gratifications.

In this study, UGT provides a theoretical foundation for understanding why adolescents choose specific platforms and how these choices reflect their underlying needs. It supports the idea that the use of social media is an intentional activity shaped by the desire for recognition, academic affirmation, identity exploration, and social belonging.

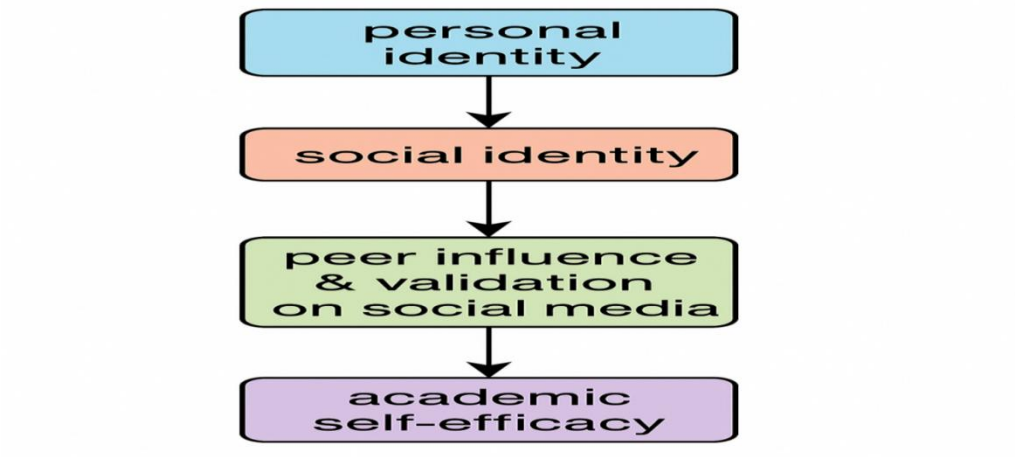
2.2.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1979, offers a psychological framework for understanding how individuals define themselves in relation to groups[84]. According to this theory, people categorise themselves and others into social groups (such as gender, ethnicity, religion, academic level, or digital communities) and derive part of their self-concept from the perceived status and norms of these groups. This group identification serves both psychological and behavioural functions: it provides a sense of belonging and also shapes attitudes, aspirations, and behaviours in ways that align with group expectations.

Three main processes underline Social Identity Theory: social categorisation, social identification, and social comparison. In the first, individuals assign themselves to a group (e.g., “I am a science student” or “I belong to this study group”). In the second, they

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internalise the values and norms of the group. In the third, they compare their group with others, often in ways that reinforce in-group pride or out-group bias[85]. For adolescents, these processes are heightened due to their developmental need for belonging and recognition. Group membership, whether offline (classmates, family) or online (followers, online study communities), significantly influences how they view their academic capabilities and aspirations. The theory is particularly relevant in this study, as it explains how peer influence, digital affiliation, and social roles impact adolescents' academic self-efficacy. For instance, when students belong to groups that value academic achievement, such as honour clubs, science teams, or online learning circles, they are more likely to internalise these values and strive to meet group standards. Conversely, association with groups that devalue schooling or promote anti-academic norms may reduce motivation and erode confidence[86]



Social Identity Theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1979[84]

Figure 2.2: Conceptual diagram of Social Identity Theory

In Nigeria, adolescents frequently navigate intersecting group identities that carry cultural, academic, and religious connotations. A student may simultaneously identify as a Yoruba

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teenager, a Christian, a tech enthusiast, and a member of a digital peer group that follows motivational speakers or content creators. Each of these identities contributes to how the student interprets success, failure, and effort. Where there is alignment between group values and academic goals, self-efficacy is reinforced. Where there is tension, for example, if cultural expectations clash with modern academic pursuits, the adolescent may struggle with internal dissonance that affects academic confidence[87]. Additionally, Social Identity Theory explains how stereotypes and stigma influence self-efficacy. Students from marginalised backgrounds, underperforming schools, or low-income families may internalise negative stereotypes about their academic potential.

This process, known as stereotype threat, can diminish performance and reinforce self-doubt, even among high-ability students. Conversely, when students see successful individuals who share their identity background, it can counteract negative narratives and boost self-belief[88]. Social Identity Theory thus offers a powerful framework for understanding how group affiliation shapes students' academic choices, emotional investment in learning, and belief in personal ability. It is particularly relevant for Nigerian adolescents, who must construct their identity in a society marked by diversity, inequality, and changing norms. Recognising the power of group belonging. both physical and digital, is essential for building educational environments that support rather than suppress self-efficacy.

2.2.3 Social Learning Theory

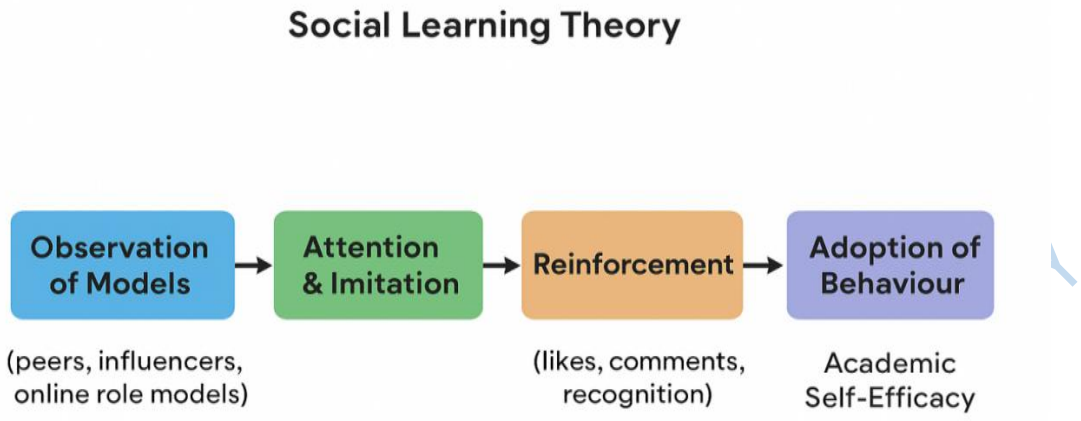
Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura,in 1977, serves as the primary theoretical underpinning for this study. It posits that learning occurs not only through direct instruction or personal experience but also by observing others and modelling their

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behaviours[89]. This observational learning is mediated by cognitive processes such as attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. In simpler terms, people learn by watching others, remembering what they saw, trying it themselves, and being motivated by expected outcomes. A central concept in Social Learning Theory is reciprocal determinism, which describes the dynamic interaction between personal factors (such as beliefs and emotions), behavioural patterns (such as habits or skills), and environmental influences (such as peer culture or digital media). In this model, human behaviour is not shaped by the environment alone; rather, individuals actively interpret and influence their surroundings[90]. For adolescents, this means that their self-efficacy beliefs are both a product of and a contributor to their academic and social experiences.

Bandura's concept of self-efficacy emerges directly from this theory and is crucial for understanding academic behaviour. Students who observe peers succeeding at tasks are more likely to believe they too can succeed, especially if they perceive those peers as similar to themselves. This vicarious experience, when reinforced by encouragement and supported by positive emotional states, builds the belief that success is attainable through effort and strategy[91].

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Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura 1977[89]

Figure 2.3: Conceptual diagram of social learning theory

Social Learning Theory has particular relevance in the digital age, where adolescents are constantly exposed to online role models, influencers, teachers, peers, whose behaviours and attitudes are on public display. A student watching a tutorial video by a relatable peer, for instance, may be inspired to tackle similar academic tasks. Similarly, seeing positive feedback on a peer's educational post can prompt efforts to engage academically and post their own progress[92]. The digital environment therefore becomes a powerful space for vicarious learning, but it also introduces new risks. If adolescents consistently observe negative behaviours being rewarded, such as academic shortcuts, performative learning, or social popularity without effort, these too may be internalised as models for success.

In the Nigerian context, Social Learning Theory underscores the importance of role models, particularly in under-resourced educational settings. Where students lack access to physical

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mentors or supportive teachers, digital spaces often fill the void. This makes it critical to guide students toward credible academic content and promote positive peer interactions online. Furthermore, the role of teachers as "significant others" in the learning process remains essential. When teachers exhibit patience, model problem-solving skills, and provide constructive feedback, they reinforce the message that learning is possible and worthwhile[93].

Social Learning Theory challenges the traditional top-down model of education, advocating for more interactive, collaborative, and learner-centred approaches. Adolescents are not empty vessels waiting to be filled but active participants in constructing meaning from their environment. Their beliefs about academic success are shaped by the examples they observe, the responses they receive, and the emotional climate in which they learn. This theory provides a powerful bridge between the digital world, identity formation, and academic belief systems. It affirms that interventions designed to strengthen self-efficacy must include not only cognitive and instructional components but also relational and emotional elements, both offline and online.

Research Advisory Model

Building on the preceding conceptual and theoretical sections, this study adopts a Research Advisory Model to guide the selection of social media platforms and main variables[94]. The model was developed to ensure that platform choices and analytical focus are not arbitrary but rooted in adolescent usage patterns, identity formation tendencies, and educational relevance. The model draws from the integrated insights of above three theories: Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Identity Theory and Social Learning Theory. Together, these theories explain how adolescents select media platforms to satisfy identity-related needs,

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observe social behaviours, and engage academically and socially online. This model informed the inclusion of platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter (X), based on their affordances for self-presentation, peer engagement, and information sharing. It also shaped the development of the research instrument and variable indicators (e.g., screen time, peer interaction, academic-related content).

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

This section presents selected empirical studies related to social media use, identity formation, and academic self-efficacy. It offers insights into how these variables have been previously examined, highlights major findings, and identifies gaps that this study seeks to address.

2.3.1 Influence of Social Media on Academic Self-Efficacy

Social media can positively influence academic self-efficacy by providing students with access to educational resources, peer support, and exposure to success stories. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram are no longer just spaces for social interaction, they have evolved into educational hubs where students can watch tutorials, attend virtual study groups, and share study tips[69]. YouTube, in particular, has an abundance of content, from in-depth subject explanations to motivational study routines, which can help students build their academic competence. Research shows that students who engage with educational content on social media report higher confidence in tackling academic tasks[94].

In addition to offering resources, social media fosters a sense of community. Peer-to-peer interaction in academic-focused groups or forums, such as WhatsApp study groups or educational communities on Reddit, allows students to learn from each other and develop collaborative skills. This cooperative learning can boost students' belief in their ability to

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understand difficult material, as they receive encouragement and feedback from their peers. Social media also provides exposure to academic role models, which can be highly motivational. Students can follow successful individuals or peers who share their academic journeys and achievements, reinforcing the belief that success is attainable with effort. This exposure can inspire students to persevere in the face of academic challenges, enhancing their self-efficacy by seeing that their peers have succeeded under similar conditions[95].

However, social media can also have a detrimental effect on academic self-efficacy. The most significant issue is distraction. Many students find themselves spending excessive time on social media for non-academic purposes, which can lead to procrastination and reduced academic performance. Studies suggest that students who spend more time browsing entertainment content on platforms like Instagram and TikTok are more likely to experience lower academic self-efficacy due to a lack of focus on their studies. The constant distractions of social media often result in poor time management, leading to a backlog of school work and a sense of inadequacy[96]. Moreover, the culture of social comparison that social media fosters can weaken academic self-efficacy. Students frequently compare their achievements with those of their peers, especially when success stories are posted publicly. When students encounter the academic accomplishments of others on social media, such as high exam scores or prestigious scholarship announcements, they may feel inferior, particularly if they are struggling academically. This comparison can lower their belief in their own academic abilities, making them more likely to disengage from challenging tasks.

2.3.2 Role of Social Media in Identity Formation

Social media allows individuals, especially young people, to experiment with different aspects of their identity in a relatively safe environment. Adolescents often use platforms like

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Instagram and TikTok to explore who they are, sharing posts that reflect their interests, hobbies, and social circles[97]. This process of digital self-expression enables young people to test out different identities and social roles, receiving feedback from peers, which can validate or reshape their self-perceptions.

Moreover, social media provides access to diverse perspectives and lifestyles. This exposure allows individuals to learn about different cultures, ideologies, and ways of life, which can influence their own identity formation. For example, adolescents may follow influencers or social media personalities who advocate for certain causes or lifestyles, which could inspire them to adopt new values or behaviours. Research suggests that adolescents who use social media to engage with diverse communities are more likely to develop a stronger sense of self and a broader worldview[98].

Challenges in Identity Formation

While social media offers opportunities for identity exploration, it also presents challenges. One major concern is the pressure to conform to idealised or curated versions of identity seen online. The tendency to present a "perfect" version of oneself on social media can lead to feelings of inadequacy and confusion about one's authentic identity. This curated self-presentation often involves editing photos, selecting only positive life moments, or following popular trends, all of which can obscure one's true self[99]. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to these pressures, as they are at a stage of life when they are highly concerned with peer approval and fitting in.

Additionally, social media can exacerbate issues related to self-esteem. Adolescents who do not receive positive feedback on their posts or who are subjected to cyberbullying may experience identity crises. The pressure to maintain a certain image on social media can lead

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to stress, anxiety, and even depression, as individuals may feel that their online persona does not align with their offline identity[100]. Social media can also limit identity exploration by exposing individuals to echo chambers, online environments where only similar viewpoints are shared and reinforced. In such spaces, individuals may be discouraged from developing a unique identity, as they feel pressured to conform to the dominant opinions and behaviours within their social media circle. This restriction can stunt the development of a well-rounded and authentic sense of self.

2.3.3 Social Media as a Platform for Peer Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing refers to the exchange of information, skills, or expertise among individuals or groups. Social media platforms have emerged as critical tools for facilitating knowledge sharing, enabling users to create, disseminate, and exchange knowledge across various domains[78]. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in today's digital age, where information is abundant, and the rapid spread of knowledge can drive innovation, collaboration, and social change.

The Role of Social Media in Knowledge Sharing

1. Facilitating Access to Information

Social media platforms act as repositories of information, making knowledge accessible to a wide audience. Users can share articles, videos, infographics, and other resources, allowing for a diverse range of knowledge to be disseminated[101]. For instance, Nigerian academic platforms utilise social media to share research findings, making them accessible to both scholars and the general public.

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2. Encouraging Collaboration

Social media fosters collaboration among individuals and groups, allowing them to work together on projects, share insights, and provide feedback. Tools like Facebook Groups and LinkedIn facilitate collaboration by creating spaces where users can discuss ideas, share expertise, and build professional networks. In Nigeria, platforms like WhatsApp are increasingly used for collaborative academic projects among students.

3. Enhancing Learning Opportunities

Social media serves as a valuable resource for learning, offering users opportunities to engage with experts and gain insights into various fields. Educational institutions and organisations often use social media to host webinars, workshops, and discussions, thereby enhancing learning opportunities for participants. Research in Nigeria shows that social media is becoming an essential part of educational practices, allowing students to connect with Teachers and industry professionals.

4. Fostering Communities of Practice

Social media helps form communities of practice, where individuals with shared interests or expertise can come together to exchange knowledge and experiences. These communities enable users to learn from one another, share best practices, and develop their skills[81]. For example, Nigerian entrepreneurs often form online communities to share business strategies and resources, facilitating knowledge sharing within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

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5. Encouraging User-Generated Content

The participatory nature of social media encourages users to generate and share their content, contributing to the collective knowledge pool. Blogs, vlogs, and podcasts produced by users can provide unique insights and perspectives, enriching the overall knowledge landscape. Nigerian content creators on platforms like YouTube share valuable knowledge about various topics, from technology to culture, thereby contributing to knowledge sharing.

Challenges of Knowledge Sharing on Social Media

Although, social media provides numerous benefits for knowledge sharing, it also presents several challenges such as:

1. Information Overload

The sheer volume of information available on social media can lead to information overload, making it challenging for users to filter and discern valuable knowledge[102]. Users may struggle to identify credible sources in between a sea of content, potentially leading to misinformation.

2. Quality Control

The open nature of social media allows anyone to share information, which can result in the dissemination of low-quality or inaccurate knowledge. Ensuring the reliability and validity of shared content becomes crucial, particularly in academic and professional contexts.

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3. Privacy Concerns

Users may hesitate to share knowledge due to concerns about privacy and the potential misuse of their information. This apprehension can limit the extent of knowledge sharing, particularly in sensitive fields or among vulnerable populations.

4. Digital Divide

Not all individuals have equal access to social media platforms or the internet, leading to disparities in knowledge sharing[102]. The digital divide can hinder opportunities for those who lack access to technology or digital literacy, limiting their ability to participate in knowledge sharing initiatives.

5. Cultural Differences

Social media operates within diverse cultural contexts, and norms regarding knowledge sharing may vary across different communities. Understanding these cultural differences is essential for fostering effective knowledge sharing practices, particularly in a multicultural society like Nigeria. Social media plays a crucial role in facilitating knowledge sharing, enabling individuals to access information, collaborate, and engage in learning[84]. However, challenges such as information overload, quality control, and privacy concerns must be addressed to maximize the potential of social media as a tool for knowledge sharing.

Uses of Educational Platforms among Senior Secondary School Students in Nigeria

The Integration of digital educational platforms into Nigeria's secondary school system has been transformative, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, which compelled both government and private actors to embrace remote learning solutions. Among senior secondary school students, especially in public schools, the uptake of online and mobile-

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based educational platforms has grown considerably due to increased access to smartphones, reduced data costs, and state-supported e-learning initiatives[103]. In the Nigerian context, several platforms have gained significant popularity for their ability to support examination preparation, offer subject-specific tutorials, and facilitate learner engagement. These include Roducate, uLesson, Pass.ng, and EduPadi, among others.

Roducate stands out as a government-endorsed educational platform designed in collaboration with state education ministries. According to BusinessDay Nigeria and Pulse Nigeria, Roducate offers curriculum-aligned materials from primary to tertiary levels, including video tutorials, audio podcasts, lecture notes, and mock exams[86]. The platform is notable for its offline capabilities, making it accessible even in areas with limited internet infrastructure. During the COVID-19 lockdown, Roducate was adopted as part of Oyo State's distance learning strategy, accessible via radio, television, mobile apps, and USSD codes. Surveys indicated that over 60% of senior students in Oyo State were aware of Roducate, and more than 62% engaged with it during school closures, highlighting its integration into public education delivery[104].

uLesson, founded by Nigerian tech entrepreneur Sim Shagaya, has evolved into one of the country's most recognised private EdTech platforms[88]. Originally distributed through USB drives and SD cards, uLesson now operates primarily as a mobile app providing animated lessons, live tutoring, practice quizzes, and performance analytics. Its user-friendly interface and curriculum-focused design have made it especially popular among students in urban areas like Ibadan, where access to Android devices is higher[105]. As reported by Techpoint Africa and The Guardian Nigeria, a large percentage of users rely on uLesson for academic revision, with many spending over four hours weekly engaging with its content[90].

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Pass.ng is widely utilised by students preparing for standardised assessments such as WAEC, NECO, and JAMB. This platform simulates the Computer-Based Test (CBT) environment, helping students develop exam strategies, manage time effectively, and assess their academic readiness. Research affirmed the platform's credibility in aiding cognitive preparation and anxiety reduction during high-stakes examinations. Though less integrated with formal school curricula, its utility in independent learning remains noteworthy[91].

EduPadi, although less publicised in academic circles, serves as a lightweight alternative for students in rural and under-resourced areas. It provides mobile-friendly access to past questions, revision tips, and subject-specific resources without requiring high-speed internet or advanced devices. According to anecdotal data and user reviews on educational blogs, EduPadi has helped bridge learning gaps in areas where digital penetration remains low[106].

In addition to these four, platforms such as MySchool.ng and the WAEC e-Learning Portal provide free, exam-focused content aimed at democratising access to study materials. These platforms enable students to engage in self-paced learning, reducing dependence on traditional classroom instruction[93]. Their accessibility is particularly beneficial in a socio-economic context where many families cannot afford private lessons or data-heavy applications. In Oyo State, the relationship between government initiatives and private EdTech solutions has enabled a blended learning environment. Roducate, backed by the State Ministry of Education, complements more individualised tools like uLesson and Pass.ng. Together, these platforms have not only improved academic preparedness but also contributed to digital literacy and self-directed learning among adolescents.

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Benefits of Free Platforms

Accessibility: These platforms ensure that all students, regardless of financial background, have access to quality educational content. Exam Preparation Free platforms like MySchool.ng, Pass.ng, and WAEC e-Learning focus heavily on helping students prepare for major exams like WAEC, NECO, and JAMB. Self-paced Learning Students can learn at their own pace, accessing resources when they have time, which is especially helpful in regions with limited access to formal education. These free platforms provide essential educational resources that can help Nigerian students enhance their academic performance without financial barriers. By leveraging these tools, students can gain access to the knowledge and skills they need to excel in their studies.

2.3.4 The Role of Social Media Content in Shaping Academic Self-Efficacy and Identity Formation

Content consumption is the active or passive engagement with information, media, and digital resources, which shapes an individual's knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes through continuous exposure to diverse viewpoints and content formats.

The type of content accessed by adolescents on social media significantly influences their academic self-efficacy and identity development. Content types vary broadly, from academic resources and informational content to entertainment and social interaction, each affecting students' beliefs and behaviours differently[94]. Exposure to educational content, such as online tutorials, study groups, and subject-specific discussions, has been shown to positively impact students' academic self-efficacy by providing knowledge reinforcement and practical problem-solving strategies. For example, platforms like YouTube and LinkedIn offer

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abundant educational resources that boost students' confidence in their academic abilities through self-directed learning and peer engagement.

On the other hand, entertainment-focused content on platforms like Instagram and TikTok often emphasises lifestyle comparisons, which can induce negative social comparison among adolescents. Such content has been associated with decreased self-esteem and academic disengagement due to the pressure to conform to perceived standards of success and popularity[105]. Adolescents who regularly consume entertainment content may experience fluctuations in self-concept as they try to balance their authentic identities with societal expectations presented online. Exploring content type thus provides insights into how different kinds of digital engagement influence academic self-efficacy and personal identity, underscoring the need for balanced content consumption in fostering positive academic and personal growth.

2.3.5 Influences of Technology on Academic Self-Efficacy

The shift towards online and hybrid learning environments, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has introduced both challenges and opportunities for academic self-efficacy. Studies indicate that while some students may experience declines in their academic self-efficacy due to a lack of traditional support systems, others benefit from the flexibility of online learning, allowing them to engage with materials at their own pace[106]. In Nigeria, studies show that students adapting to e-learning platforms have reported varying levels of self-efficacy, highlighting the need for tailored interventions to support diverse learning needs[61]. Digital tools and platforms have the potential to enhance academic self-efficacy. With interactive learning environments and gratification strategies engagement, students were provided immediate feedback, allowing them to recognise their progress and adjust

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their strategies accordingly. Therefore, integrating technology into classrooms has shown a promising improvement in students' confidence and motivation towards their studies.

However, academic self-efficacy is a crucial determinant of students' academic success and overall well-being. By promoting mastery experiences, fostering vicarious learning, providing constructive social persuasion, and addressing emotional states, school counsellors can create supportive environments that nurture strong self-efficacy beliefs. As educational contexts continue to evolve, particularly with the increased reliance on technology, understanding and enhancing academic self-efficacy of senior secondary school student is very important because these students are at the pivotal stage of human development, the stage of adolescence development remains vital for various stakeholders.

Addressing Gender Gaps in Digital Learning

To mitigate these gendered disparities, teachers and policymakers must implement digital literacy programs that teach students to critically engage with online content. Initiatives such as mentorship programs, gender-inclusive academic communities, and exposure to diverse role models can empower both male and female students to navigate social media constructively[97]. Encouraging self-reflection exercises on how digital experiences shape academic identity can further help students build resilience against negative social comparisons. Gender differences in identity formation and academic self-efficacy are significant in understanding students' experiences with social media[107]. While digital platforms offer opportunities for learning and personal growth, they also present unique challenges that must be addressed through inclusive educational strategies. By fostering critical engagement with online content and promoting gender-balanced academic role

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models, stakeholders can help all students, regardless of gender, develop the confidence to succeed in their academic pursuits.

Identity Formation and Social Media Influence

Identity formation in this digital age is very crucial, as social media is influencing the way senior secondary school students develop their self-concept. Adolescents are at a critical stage of life where they explore and define their identity through self-expression, social comparison, and identity experimentation with others. Social media platforms provide spaces for adolescents to experiment with their identity and receive real-time feedback from peers, playing a significant role in their self-presentation and self-perception[100,101]. This feedback often reinforces or alters the adolescent's self-concept, influencing how they commit to different aspects of their identity.

Identity experimentation refers to adolescents' exploration of various roles, behaviours, and affiliations as they attempt to discover who they are. Social media offers an ideal, low-risk space for such exploration. Through diverse online personas, usernames, and interests, students try out different academic identities, such as joining science-focused WhatsApp groups, following motivational education influencers on TikTok, or posting study tips on Instagram stories[102]. In these acts, they test their comfort with being seen as "serious students," "future leaders," or "academic achievers." These role plays may become internalised over time, especially when met with positive reinforcement from peers. For instance, a student posting JAMB exam tips or WAEC success stories may receive encouragement that bolsters belief in their academic potential. In a context like Nigeria, where success in education is culturally valorised, these small affirmations can significantly shape confidence and goal orientation.

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Social comparison, on the other hand, occurs when students measure their worth or abilities against the curated achievements of their peers online. While this behaviour is natural during adolescence, social media intensifies it by constantly exposing students to peers who appear more academically successful, confident, or popular. Students in Ibadan Southwest LGA often compare their academic performance, school choices, or future aspirations with others based on what they see shared online. For example, a student may feel inadequate when seeing a classmate's post about gaining admission to a prestigious school or winning a scholarship[108]. This can negatively impact their academic self-efficacy by creating feelings of inferiority or academic anxiety. However, when students engage in upward comparison with constructive motivation, such as using others' achievements to set goals, it can enhance self-efficacy by prompting them to work harder and believe in their own capabilities. The Nigerian school culture, which emphasises competition and social recognition, can therefore make social comparison a double-edged sword.

Self-expression encompasses how students project their identities online, through profile pictures, bios, shared content, and interactions. It is the outward portrayal of the internal identity they are shaping. In Nigeria, where communal validation holds cultural significance, adolescents often seek digital approval for academic pursuits. For instance, a student may post about their exam preparations, share motivational quotes, or celebrate academic successes to show they are goal-oriented[104]. Such acts can lead to positive self-perception and reinforce academic self-efficacy, especially when peers and family members engage supportively with this content. In this way, self-expression does not merely reflect identity; it solidifies it.

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Furthermore, the feedback loops generated by these platforms, such as likes, comments, and re-posts, have an enormous influence on how identity is confirmed or contested. When students receive validation for educational posts, they are more likely to embrace academic success as part of their identity. In contrast, being ignored or ridiculed can result in withdrawal or disinterest in academic efforts. Teachers and parents in Ibadan Southwest LGA may underestimate this psychological interplay, yet it significantly informs adolescents' belief in their own academic abilities. However, when these digital identity processes become inconsistent, overwhelming, or externally driven, students may experience identity diffusion or fragmentation[109], where conflicting online personas and expectations lead to confusion, emotional fatigue, or a weakened sense of academic direction.

Identity Diffusion and Fragmentation

Identity diffusion occurs when individuals fail to make firm commitments to an identity, often leaving them direction-less or uncertain about who they are. In the context of social media, identity diffusion is exacerbated by constant exposure to diverse and conflicting social ideals, making it difficult for adolescents to settle on a consistent identity[110]. The overwhelming nature of social media can lead to confusion about self-identity, contributing to identity diffusion among Nigerian adolescents.

Closely related is the concept of identity fragmentation, where adolescents present different versions of themselves across various social media platforms. This fragmented identity can lead to inconsistencies between personal values and public identities. Although social media allows for flexible self-expression, it can complicate the development of a unified identity[111]. The pressure to conform to societal expectations and online trends often results in a fragmented sense of self among adolescents.

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2.3.6 The relationship between identity formation and academic self-efficacy

The relationship between identity formation and academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest, Oyo state, is a complex process shaped by various social, cultural, and educational factors. At this critical stage of adolescence, students are not only grappling with the challenge of succeeding academically but also figuring out who they are in relation to their peers, family, and the society at large[112]. This interplay between identity formation and academic self-efficacy greatly influences how students engage with their academic pursuits.

In the context of Ibadan, where education is seen as a pathway to social mobility, the expectations placed on students by their families and communities can significantly shape their academic identities. Many students are expected to excel academically as a way to secure better future opportunities, often motivated by family aspirations for upward social mobility. When students internalize these aspirations and align them with their personal goals, their academic self-efficacy tends to improve. This sense of purpose and belonging drives them to work harder, persevere in the face of academic challenges, and believe in their ability to succeed[114]. The alignment between personal identity and academic expectations thus fosters a sense of confidence that enhances academic performance.

In the same vein, when students experience disconnects between their academic pursuits and their emerging sense of self, it can lead to a decrease in academic self-efficacy. For instance, students who feel pressured to pursue specific career paths, such as medicine or law, that do not resonate with their personal interests may experience self-doubt and lack motivation. In such cases, the students' academic self-efficacy diminishes because they do not see

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themselves thriving in the paths laid out for them. This disconnection can lead to disengagement from academic tasks and a lack of belief in their ability to succeed in school.

Peer influence is also a significant factor in shaping both identity formation and academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students[115]. Adolescents often look to their peers for validation and a sense of belonging, and this social environment plays a major role in shaping their academic behaviours. In peer groups where academic achievement is valued, students are more likely to have higher academic self-efficacy. They see their peers' success and feel motivated to achieve similar results, reinforcing their belief in their ability to excel academically[116]. On the other hand, in peer environments where academics are not prioritized, students may distance themselves from their academic identity, leading to lower self-efficacy. The pressure to conform to group norms may cause students to downplay their academic abilities, thus weakening their confidence in their ability to succeed. The role of teachers in fostering both identity and academic self-efficacy is equally critical. Teachers who provide a supportive and encouraging learning environment can significantly boost students' belief in their academic abilities[117]. When students receive positive feedback, guidance, and recognition for their efforts, they are more likely to see themselves as capable learners, which strengthens their academic self-efficacy. Nonetheless, students who perceive their teachers as indifferent or overly critical may experience a decline in self-efficacy[118]. The teacher-student relationship is essential for creating a classroom environment where students feel capable and supported, which is crucial for fostering both identity formation and academic success.

In the cultural context of Ibadan, where family and community expectations are often central to a student's sense of purpose, the pressure to meet these expectations can be both motivating and overwhelming. Many students view academic success as a way to give back

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to their families or fulfill long-standing cultural and familial aspirations. This can bolster self-efficacy[119], as students feel that their success has a broader meaning beyond personal achievement. However, when these expectations become overwhelming or misaligned with the student's interests, they may experience a decline in their belief in their ability to meet those goals, leading to academic disengagement.

Identity formation and academic self-efficacy are deeply connected among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest. Students who are able to align their emerging personal identities with academic expectations tend to exhibit higher academic self-efficacy, which enhances their motivation and success[120]. On the other hand, students who experience conflict between their sense of self and external academic pressures may struggle with lower self-efficacy, potentially hindering their academic performance. A supportive environment, including positive peer interactions, teacher encouragement, and culturally sensitive family expectations, can help students integrate their personal identities with their academic goals, fostering both personal growth and academic success.

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2.3.7 Relationship between Social Media Use and Academic Self-Efficacy

The relationship between adolescents' use of social media and their academic self-efficacy is a prominent focus in contemporary educational psychology, largely because online engagement now constitutes a major part of young people's daily learning and identity formation. Academic self-efficacy as the students' belief in their ability to plan, organise, and achieve learning outcomes, and studies have noted that digital environments exert both enabling and constraining influences on this belief system[121]. A study examined the mediating influence of peer interaction on the relationship between goal orientation and learning anxiety in a large sample of secondary school students[122]. It revealed that social

media platforms sustained peer support networks which helped reduce learning anxiety and fostered stronger efficacy in academic tasks. Learners with a mastery goal orientation, reinforced through online discussions, reported higher levels of confidence in handling schoolwork, suggesting that social media can indirectly enhance academic self-efficacy when interactions are supportive and academically oriented[123].

Another study of adolescents in the United Kingdom measured perceived peer support and motivational self-regulation against academic engagement. Using structural equation modelling, the researchers demonstrated that supportive interactions in online spaces enhanced regulatory behaviours, which translated into higher academic self-efficacy[124]. Further evidence emerged from Nigeria, where a survey of senior secondary students investigated whether achievement goals orient students' engagement with school tasks in the context of social media use. It was shown that those who pursued mastery goals, and who engaged in subject-related online discussions, exhibited stronger academic self-efficacy than those whose digital activity was predominantly entertainment-driven[125].

Complementary findings came from an investigation into how future orientation and academic anxiety interacted with adolescents' online habits. The study identified that individuals who engaged in reflective identity exploration through social media reported reduced academic anxiety and stronger self-efficacy compared to those who used social media mainly for passive consumption. Importantly, behaviours oriented towards self-improvement explained a significant proportion of the variance in academic self-efficacy scores, underscoring the predictive role of purposeful digital engagement[126]. Longitudinal perspectives have added depth to this discussion. One study followed adolescents over two

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academic years, examining how exposure to online stressors and motivational resources influenced efficacy beliefs. It concluded that while excessive exposure to social comparison heightened school-related stress, constructive online study groups significantly buffered this effect and sustained moderate to high levels of academic self-efficacy[127].

Research conducted in Germany investigated the developmental relations of achievement goals and affect in secondary school students, with specific implications extending beyond the subject of physical education. Findings indicated that positive affect, often bolstered by encouraging online peer commentary, was closely related to stronger mastery goals and higher self-efficacy[128]. These studies demonstrate that social media's influence on academic self-efficacy is contingent on the type of engagement. Supportive peer interaction, mastery-oriented goals, and constructive online communities are positively correlated with stronger efficacy beliefs, while unstructured or entertainment-centred usage may not provide such benefits. The evidence suggests that adolescents derive the greatest academic confidence when their digital practices are consciously tied to goal setting, peer collaboration, and future orientation. For the present study, these findings underscore the importance of examining both the risks and the affordances of social media, with a particular focus on how Nigerian adolescents navigate their digital spaces in relation to their academic self-beliefs.

2.3.8 Adolescent Identity Exploration through Social Media

Identity exploration is a central developmental task of adolescence, and social media has become one of the most influential contexts for this process. Unlike earlier generations who relied primarily on face-to-face peer interactions, today's adolescents have access to a wide range of digital platforms that allow for continuous experimentation with self-presentation,

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validation, and group belonging. The empirical literature in recent years provides valuable insights into how adolescents negotiate these digital environments and how identity formation is both enhanced and complicated by their online practices. One recent investigation demonstrated that adolescents employ digital platforms to experiment with different facets of their self-concept in ways that would be more restricted offline. The researchers found that adolescents frequently constructed alternative personas online and used feedback from peers to refine or reinforce aspects of identity they were uncertain about. This study highlighted that adolescents who actively engaged in such identity play reported stronger levels of self-concept clarity and confidence in offline interactions, suggesting that digital identity exploration can be developmental rather than destabilising[129].

Another study focused on cross-cultural dimensions of digital identity construction, with a sample drawn from multiple European countries. The findings indicated that cultural background significantly shaped the strategies adolescents used when curating their online profiles[130]. For instance, adolescents in collectivist cultures tended to align their digital identities more closely with family or community values, while those from individualist cultures expressed more personal uniqueness and autonomy online. This comparative research underscored the role of culture in shaping both the opportunities and challenges of adolescent digital identity development[131]. Further studies emphasised the role of self-presentation strategies on popular image-based platforms. Adolescents reported that they carefully selected visual content and captions to project preferred identities, and peer feedback on these presentations strongly influenced subsequent self-concept evaluations. Those who received consistent validation from peers tended to report higher levels of self-esteem and identity coherence. While, adolescents who experienced negative or absent

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feedback were more likely to display fragmented or unstable self-concepts, highlighting the double-edged nature of digital environments[132].

A separate line of research investigated authenticity in digital identity construction. Results suggested that adolescents who perceived their online selves as congruent with their offline identities exhibited healthier psychosocial outcomes, including greater self-concept clarity and lower levels of anxiety. By contrast, those who maintained highly discrepant online identities reported higher stress and feelings of disconnection from their true selves. This demonstrates that while identity experimentation is common, perceived authenticity remains an important factor in promoting positive development[135]. Additional empirical work highlighted the significance of belonging in adolescents' identity processes. Online communities were found to provide spaces where marginalised adolescents could explore aspects of identity that might not be socially accepted offline. These supportive digital networks enabled adolescents to experiment with and eventually consolidate identities that aligned more closely with their personal values. Such findings illustrate the potential of social media to broaden horizons for identity exploration, especially for adolescents negotiating multiple cultural or social expectations[134].

Longitudinal research provided evidence that digital identity exploration is not a temporary phase but an evolving process with long-term consequences. Over a three-year period, adolescents who engaged in consistent online self-expression demonstrated greater stability in their sense of self and increased ability to integrate multiple aspects of their identity. This suggests that digital environments not only facilitate short-term experimentation but also support the consolidation of identity over time, provided that engagement is reflective and

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socially supported[136]. These empirical studies reveal that social media serves as a critical arena for adolescent identity exploration, offering opportunities for experimentation, self-presentation, and social validation. However, the outcomes are highly contingent on the quality of engagement and the alignment between online and offline selves. For the present study, these insights underscore the importance of recognising the dual potential of social media: it can both foster identity clarity and contribute to fragmentation, depending on how adolescents use these digital spaces.

2.3.9 Digital Peer Interaction with Academic Motivation

Peer interaction is one of the most critical influences on adolescent development, shaping both social identity and academic behaviours. With the expansion of digital platforms, these interactions increasingly take place in online environments such as WhatsApp groups, Instagram communities, and collaborative learning forums[137]. The role of such digital peer engagement in influencing academic motivation has received growing empirical attention in recent years, with findings underscoring both the positive and negative consequences of online peer dynamics.

One recent study conducted among secondary school students revealed that participation in peer-led online study groups was strongly associated with higher intrinsic academic motivation. The results showed that when adolescents engaged in collaborative discussions with their peers in digital spaces, they reported greater persistence in completing academic tasks and demonstrated higher levels of satisfaction with their schoolwork. This suggests that the sense of belonging fostered by peer interaction online contributes directly to sustained academic drive[138].

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A complementary investigation focused on adolescents' perceptions of peer support in digital learning environments. Using structural modelling with a sample of over 500 participants, the study established that supportive digital peer interaction enhanced motivational self-regulation, which in turn predicted stronger academic outcomes. Importantly, it was found that peer affirmation and encouragement within online groups acted as protective factors against declining motivation, especially during periods of academic stress[139]. Another line of evidence has emerged from a large-scale survey of adolescents in Asia, which examined how digital peer engagement moderates the link between self-efficacy and academic achievement. Results indicated that students who actively interacted with peers through social media study groups translated their self-efficacy beliefs into actual performance more effectively than those who engaged passively or not at all. The findings suggested that digital peer networks operate as motivational catalysts, converting beliefs about competence into tangible academic actions[140].

Another study analysed the negative aspects of digital peer interaction, highlighting how excessive dependence on peer feedback online can undermine autonomous motivation. Adolescents who reported high levels of reliance on online peer validation demonstrated greater vulnerability to motivational decline when excluded or criticised. The study showed that, while peer interaction is generally supportive, the quality of feedback and inclusivity of digital spaces play a decisive role in whether motivation is reinforced or eroded[131]. Longitudinal data has also shed light on the sustained effects of digital peer engagement. Tracking adolescents over two academic years, one study revealed that those consistently engaged in positive peer interactions through moderated online groups maintained higher levels of academic motivation compared to their peers with minimal or negative digital

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engagement. The results emphasised that motivation is not only situational but can be sustained over time through continued reinforcement from supportive online networks[141].

A cross-cultural evidence has indicated that digital peer interaction can reduce motivational disparities across socio-economic backgrounds. Adolescents from less privileged contexts who had access to peer learning groups online reported motivational levels similar to those from higher socio-economic backgrounds. This suggests that digital peer engagement has the potential to act as an equaliser, mitigating structural disadvantages in access to educational support[142]. Empirical studies demonstrate that digital peer interaction exerts a significant influence on adolescents' academic motivation. While positive interactions foster persistence, self-regulation, and long-term drive, negative or exclusionary dynamics can undermine motivation. For the present study, these findings are highly relevant, as they point to the need to consider not only the presence of social media but also the quality of peer relationships it enables.

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2.4 Conceptual Model

The conceptual model for this study shows the relationships between independent variables (social media use and identity formation) and dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) as illustrated in figure 2.1.

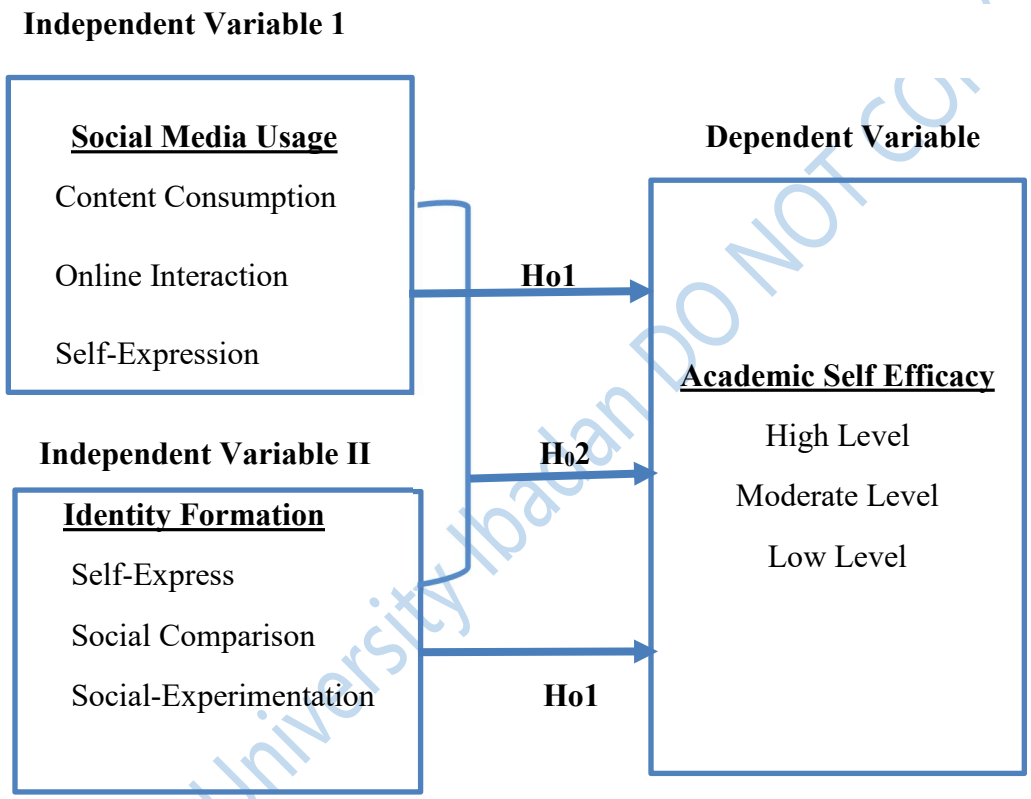


Fig. 2.4: Conceptual Model for the Study

Source: Researcher`s Fieldwork, 2025

The above figure 2.1 shows the joint and relative influence of the independent variables (social media use and identity formation) on the dependent variable (students' academic self-efficacy). In this model, social media use (IV1) is examined through screen time, content exposure, and platform type, dimensions that capture both the quality and intensity of students' digital participation. Identity formation (IV2) is represented by self-expression, social comparison, and identity experimentation, behaviours that illustrate how adolescents

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define and refine their sense of self. The outcome variable, academic self-efficacy (DV), is viewed in terms of low, moderate, and high levels, reflecting students' belief in their ability to manage academic demands. The arrows in the model indicate the hypothesis directions of influence, showing how IV1 and IV2 jointly and relatively contribute to the DV. By integrating these concepts, the model provides a framework for understanding how adolescents' digital interactions and identity behaviours intersect to influence their academic self-belief within the Nigerian secondary school context.

2.5 Summary of Literature Reviewed

The review of existing literature has shown that social media plays a significant role in shaping the behaviour and development of adolescents, especially in the areas of identity formation and academic self-efficacy. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook are now widely used by students to interact with peers, share personal experiences, and access academic content. These online platforms serve as both social and learning environments where young people connect, learn, and express themselves[126]. However, the same platforms have also been linked with distractions, stress from comparison with others, and a decline in academic seriousness. These findings point to the need for careful guidance and proper orientation for students on the healthy use of social media.

Social media provides a space for adolescents to experiment with different aspects of themselves. Through regular interactions and feedback from friends and followers, they begin to shape and define who they are. While this may help them to better understand themselves, it can also create confusion when they feel pressure to fit into certain online standards. Some students may even develop unstable identities or struggle with emotional

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issues due to the kind of content they are exposed to. The issue of social comparison is also common, where students measure their worth based on what they see others post online. Although this can sometimes motivate them to do better, it may also lead to low self-esteem and unnecessary pressure. In Nigeria, many adolescents are caught between upholding family values and adapting to modern trends they see online[112]. This conflict often affects their behaviour both in and out of school. It becomes important to help them find a healthy balance through counselling support and value-based guidance.

Academic self-efficacy, which is the belief students have in their ability to perform well in school, has been widely recognised as a strong factor in student achievement. Social media can help build this confidence when used for academic purposes such as joining study groups, watching tutorial videos, or sharing learning materials. Students who believe in their academic ability are more likely to face their studies with seriousness, make efforts to understand what is taught, and remain focused. On the other hand, if students spend too much time on social media for entertainment or chatting, it may reduce the time they dedicate to studying, which can affect their academic performance negatively. Studies in Nigeria have shown that how students use social media, whether for learning or leisure, affects their academic performance. It is therefore necessary for teachers and parents to provide proper monitoring and guidance.

The literature also indicates that there are differences in how male and female students use social media. Female students are more likely to use social media to seek emotional support and explore personal identity, making them more exposed to social pressure and emotional issues. Male students tend to use social media for academic interaction and group work,

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which boosts their academic confidence[143]. Furthermore, students from homes or schools with better access to digital tools tend to benefit more than those in under-resourced areas. These differences highlight the need for improved access to digital learning tools and training for both students and teachers[144]. Overall, the reviewed studies clearly show that there is a strong relationship between social media use, identity development, and academic self-efficacy. However, most of these studies either focused on one aspect or were carried out in different parts of the country. None was found that directly studied the joint effect of social media use and identity formation on the academic self-efficacy of senior secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. This is the gap that this present research intends to address.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter discussed the methodology and procedures adopted to investigate the influence of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy among selected senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest, Oyo State. It outlined the research design, target population, sample and sampling technique, sample size, description of research instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations for the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted ex-post-facto, cross-sectional descriptive survey design, which was considered suitable for investigating the relationship between variables without manipulating them[1]. Since the study sought to examine how social media usage and identity formation influence academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students based on their natural behaviours and experiences, the design enabled data collection in a real-life setting without altering the variables involved[2]. A cross-sectional approach was appropriate because data were gathered at a single point in time, allowing for efficient analysis of existing conditions across a representative population[1].

Four distinct instruments were used in the study to capture data related to the variables under investigation apart from demographic details of the respondents:

Social Media Usage Tool (SMUT)
Identity Formation Scale (IFS)
Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES)
Reflective Assessment Tool on Identity and Self-Efficacy (RATISE)

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These instruments provided both quantitative and qualitative data, thereby enriching the study's findings through triangulation.

3.2 Population of the Study

Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, Oyo State as of 2025, has the third-highest number of schools and student enrolment in public secondary schools within Oyo State, with a total of 27 registered senior secondary schools and 9 Junior secondary schools[3]. However, since the study required the participation of both male and female students, only co-educational schools were considered. Out of the 27 schools, twelve (12) co-educational public schools that met this requirement were purposively selected. These twelve schools constituted the accessible population for the study, and their student population served as the base for sampling. Table 3.1 shows 27 registered public secondary schools with senior secondary schools in operation within the Ibadan Southwest local government Area of Oyo State.

Table 3.1: Population Distribution of Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan Southwest LGA

S/N	Name of School	SS1 Total	SS2 Total	Total Population
1	Oluyole High	56	58	114
2	Oluyole Extension	93	74	167
3	African Church	178	184	362
4	Community Grammar Elewura	75	98	173
5	Apata Community Grammar	106	168	274
6	Oluyole Estate	65	101	166
7	Ibadan Municipal Government High School	163	189	352
8	Baptist Grammar Idi-Ishin	300	329	629
9	Apata Grammar Logudu	143	170	313

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10	Adifase High School	208	123	331
11	Ansar-U-Deen (AUD) High School	94	73	167
12	Ansar-Deen Secondary School	85	71	156
13	Baptist Secondary School	51	75	126
14	Basorun Ogunmola High School	193	172	365
15	Celestial Church High School	75	115	190
16	Government College	165	131	296
17	IMG Grammar School	123	129	252
18	Odo Ona Girls Grammar School	107	129	236
19	Oke Ado High School	123	140	263
20	Oke Bola Comprehensive High School	118	123	241
21	Our Lady of Apostles	126	98	224
22	Ibadan Boys High School	93	84	177
23	People Girls Grammar School	88	67	155
24	St. Teresa's College	106	118	224
25	Urban Day Grammar School	81	79	160
26	Oladipo Alayande School of Science	103	129	232
27	Community Grammar School	110	139	249
	Grand Total	3,341	3,253	6,594

Source: Oyo State Ministry of Education

Data obtained from the school department of Ministry of Education, Oyo State indicate that the total number of SS1 and SS2 students across 27 public schools in the Ibadan Southwest local government area is 6,594. This figure comprises 3,253 SS1 students and 3,341 SS2 students, reflecting a relatively balanced distribution[3].

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

A multistage sampling technique was employed in the selection of schools for this study. This method was adopted to enhance representativeness across the diverse geographical areas

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within Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, where the study was conducted. The entire sampling process involved four systematic stages, namely: zoning of the study area, identification of eligible schools, proportional allocation of the sample, and random selection of schools[5].

Stage One: Zoning of the Study Area

Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area is administratively divided for educational purposes into three inspectorate zones: Apata Zone, Oluyole Zone, and Oke-Ado/Ring Road Zone. These zones are recognised by the Oyo State Ministry of Education and the local education authority. The zoning system formed the basis for the initial stratification of the schools, allowing for equitable representation across the different parts of the local government area.

Stage Two: Identification of Eligible Schools

At this stage, the study focused on identifying schools that met the established inclusion criteria. Given that the research targeted both male and female students, only co-educational public secondary schools were considered suitable. From the list of twenty-seven (27) public senior secondary schools in the LGA, a total of nineteen (19) schools were identified as co-educational. Schools that operated on a single-sex basis, such as Ibadan Boys' High School, People Girls' Grammar School, Our Lady of Apostles, and St. Teresa's College, were excluded from the sample. This ensured gender balance in data collection and alignment with the research objectives.

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Stage Three: Proportional Allocation of Sampled Schools Across Zones

Following the identification of eligible schools, twelve (12) schools were selected for the study and were proportionally allocated across the three zones. This was done based on the number of eligible co-educational schools in each zone. Apata Zone had five (5) co-educational schools, Oluyole Zone had seven (7), and Oke-Ado/Ring Road Zone also had seven (7). Accordingly, the schools were allocated as follows:

Three (3) schools from Apata Zone,

Four (4) schools from Oluyole Zone, and

Five (5) schools from Oke-Ado/Ring Road Zone.

This proportional allocation ensured a balanced geographical spread and improved the generalisability of the findings across the local government area.

Stage Four: Random Selection of Schools

Within each zone, simple random sampling was used to select the specific schools. This was done using the balloting technique, wherein the names of all eligible schools in each zone were written on slips of paper, folded, and thoroughly mixed. The required number of schools was then randomly picked from each set without replacement. This method was chosen to avoid bias and ensure that each school had an equal chance of being selected.

Given the total population of 6,594 SS1 and SS2 students in Ibadan Southwest LGA, a representative sample was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size calculation at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error[6].

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The formula is stated as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where: n = required sample size

N = total population

e = margin of error (5%)

Given: Population size, N = 6594

Margin of error, e = 0.05

$$n = \frac{6594}{(1 + 6594(0.05)^2)}$$

$(0.05)^2 = 0.0025$

$6594 \times 0.0025 = 16.485$

$1 + 16.485 = 17.485$

$$n = \frac{6594}{17.485} = 377.2$$

Therefore, the sample size for a population of 6,594 at a 5% margin of error is approximately 377. However, to account for potential participant attrition or missing data, an expected occurrence in survey-based research, a 2% adjustment was scientifically applied using the below formula:

$$n^{adjusted} = \frac{n}{1\text{- attrition rate}}$$

$$n = \frac{377}{1 - 0.02} = 0.98$$

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$$n = \frac{6594}{0.98} = 384.69$$

The adjusted sample size was therefore set at 385, ensuring that the final valid sample remains statistically representative even if up to 2% of the respondents are lost due to unforeseen circumstances. This proactive adjustment supports the robustness and integrity of the research findings. Table 3.3.1 shows the final sample size distribution for this study.

Table 3.2: Final Sample Size Distribution Table.

Zone	Name Of School	Total Population	Proportional Sample Size
Apata Zone	Adifase High School	331	38
Apata Zone	Apata Grammar School Logudu	313	36
Apata Zone	Community Grammar School	249	28
Oluyole Zone	Oluyole Extension	167	19
Oluyole Zone	Community Grammar Elewura	173	20
Oluyole Zone	Ansar-Deen Secondary School	156	18
Oluyole Zone	Urban Day Grammar School	160	18
Oke-Ado Zone	African Church Grammar School	362	41
Oke-Ado Zone	Img High School, Apata	352	40
Oke-Ado Zone	Baptist Grammar School Idi-Ishin	629	71
Oke-Ado Zone	Img Grammar School, Apata	252	29
Oke-Ado Zone	Oke Bola Comp. High School	241	27
Grand total			**385**

Source: Researcher`s fieldwork 2025

A total sample size of 385 students was derived and proportionally allocated across 12 public senior secondary schools using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. This ensured that schools with larger populations contributed more respondents while maintaining representativeness. The stratification was based on the total student enrolment per school in SS1 and SS2, after which simple random sampling was used to select respondents from

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within each school. This approach maintained both inclusivity and randomness, reducing sampling bias and enhancing generalisability.

3.3.2 Justification for Social Media Platform Selection

The selection of social media platforms for this study was guided by both theoretical and contextual considerations, ensuring alignment with students' actual usage patterns and the three concepts in this study, which are the social media, identity formation and academic self-efficacy. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Uses and Gratifications Theory, platforms were selected based on their perceived usefulness, ease of use, and the extent to which they fulfil adolescents' needs for communication, identity expression, social validation, and academic engagement. WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, X (Twitter), and TikTok were selected due to their widespread adoption among Nigerian secondary school students. WhatsApp, in particular, remains the most widely used platform for messaging in Nigeria, offering easy access to academic group chats, peer support, and timely communication[6]. Its integration into daily academic life, through class-based discussion groups and teacher-student exchanges, makes it highly relevant for examining how social interaction supports academic self-belief.

Instagram and TikTok were chosen for their emphasis on visual content and self-presentation, which strongly influence identity formation and social comparison. Facebook remains important for academic content sharing and participation in school-related communities. X (formerly Twitter) provides a space for brief, reflective communication and access to educational threads, often shaping students' thoughts and self-perceptions[7]. These platforms also reflect the diversity of gratifications sought by adolescents, ranging from emotional

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support and entertainment to academic motivation and social bonding. Their inclusion supports a robust and context-sensitive investigation of how digital environments influence students' sense of identity and academic confidence[8].

Table 3.3: Social Medial Platform Table

S/N	Platform	Justification for Inclusion
1	WhatsApp	Most widely used messaging platform among Nigerian adolescents; facilitates academic group discussions and peer interaction.
2	Instagram	Popular for visual self-expression and identity experimentation; used heavily by adolescents for social comparison.
3	Facebook	Older adolescents use it for academic groups, shared study materials, and motivational posts.
4	TikTok	Engaging and influential in identity performance; allows creative and interactive content, influencing self-perception.
5	X	Platform for digital opinions, public discourse, and identity positioning; encourages awareness of social trends.

Source: Researcher Field work 2025

3.4 Description of the Research Instruments

A validated self-designed questionnaire was used for data collection in this study, comprising four structured instruments and one semi-structured open-ended response tool. The structured instruments included the Social Media Usage Tool (SMUT), Identity Formation Scale (IFS), and Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES). Each instrument was carefully developed by the researcher, based on relevant literature, theoretical constructs, and the study objectives. The fourth instrument, is the Reflective Assessment Tool on Identity and Self-Efficacy (RATISE),

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contained open-ended items designed to elicit reflective responses that offered deeper insight into students' academic identity and sense of competence.

The Social Media Usage Tool (SMUT) measured students' level, frequency, and purpose of social media use. It explored the behavioural and experiential dimensions of social media engagement in academic and personal life.

The Identity Formation Scale (IFS) assessed aspects of students' emerging self-concept, including self-perception, peer influence, emotional response, and personal values.

The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) focused on students' confidence in their ability to carry out academic tasks such as reading, planning, concentrating, and completing schoolwork.

The Reflective Assessment Tool on Identity and Self-Efficacy (RATISE) consisted of open-ended questions that encouraged selected participants to provide narrative responses. These responses gave context to the structured data and revealed underlying beliefs and lived experiences that shaped their identity and academic motivation.

3.5 Validity of the Research Instruments

To ensure the instruments measured what they were intended to measure, the four instruments (SMUT, IFS, ASES, and RATISE) were subjected to content and face validation by researcher`s supervisor and other experts in Educational Psychology, Test and Measurement, and Adolescent Development. Their feedback focused on the relevance, clarity, language simplicity, and alignment of items with the study objectives. Based on their suggestions, ambiguous questions were reworded, context-specific adjustments were made to improve cultural relevance, and redundant items were removed. This rigorous validation

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process enhanced the credibility and appropriateness of the Instruments for the intended population.

3.6. Reliability of the Research Instrument

To determine the reliability of the quantitative instruments used in this study (SMUT, IFS, and ASES), a pilot test was conducted using a sample of 40 students from a public secondary school outside the selected study area. These students possessed similar characteristics to the main study participants in terms of age, class level, and digital exposure. The data collected from the pilot test were analysed using the Cronbach Alpha statistical method to estimate internal consistency.

Table 3.4 Reliability of the Research Instrument (ASES)

	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES)	0.720	13

Source: Researcher's Pilot Study

Table 3.4.1 Reliability of the Research Instrument (IFS)

	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
The Identity Formation Scale (IFS)	0.779	15

Source**:** Researcher's Pilot Study

Table 3.4.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument (SMUT)

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
The Social Media Usage Tool (SMUT)	0.796	13

Source**:** Researcher's Pilot Study

Aside from the Demographic section that contains 7 items. All the coefficients were above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating **a** high degree of internal consistency among the items within each instrument. This confirmed that the instruments were dependable for use in the main study. Since the Student Information Form (SIF) consisted of factual demographic items, it was not subjected to reliability testing. Similarly, the Reflective Assessment Tool on Identity and Self-Efficacy (RATISE), being qualitative in nature, was not analysed using statistical reliability measures. However, the tool's credibility was enhanced through expert review and alignment with the study concepts, which yielded overall 85% reliability.

3.7 Administration of Research Instrument

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the department of Art & Social Science Education to the management of the selected public secondary schools in Ibadan South-west from which respondents was sampled. The Permission was thereafter sought from the Principals of the selected schools before proceeding to administer the questionnaires and open-ended interview. The researcher engaged the services of two trained research assistants to support the administration of instruments across the selected public secondary schools. Prior to fieldwork, the assistants were thoroughly briefed on the purpose of the study, ethical

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procedures, and the proper handling of each research instrument. This was done to ensure standardisation and maintain the integrity of data collection.

With the cooperation of school authorities and class teachers, the instruments were distributed during appropriate school hours. Respondents were given clear instructions and adequate time to complete the instruments independently. All completed copies were retrieved immediately to ensure a high return rate and prevent data loss. The administration process was smooth, and the cooperation of school authorities and students contributed to the success of the exercise.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

The data for the study were collected through both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality. The quantitative data were obtained using the *Social Media Usage Test (SMUT)*, *Identity Formation Scale (IFS)*, and *Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES)*, which were completed and collected on the spot. The qualitative data were gathered using the *Reflective Assessment Tool on Identity and Self-Efficacy (RATISE)*, administered to a smaller purposively selected group of students. All data collection activities were conducted within a conducive school environment, ensuring ethical standards were maintained throughout the process.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analysed using frequency tables, simple percentages, Pearson Correlation, and multiple Linear regression analysis. These tools were applied to investigate the relationships between variables and to determine the extent to which selected factors predicted academic self-efficacy among the participants. All statistical tests were

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carried out at the 0.05 level of significance, and results were presented in tables to enhance clarity. In addition to the structured instruments, written responses obtained through the Reflective Assessment Tool on Identity and Self-Efficacy were analysed using thematic analysis. The responses were carefully reviewed, and recurring expressions, patterns, and ideas were identified and organised into thematic categories. These themes were interpreted in relation to the concepts of identity and academic self-efficacy. The qualitative findings served to complement the results from the statistical analysis, providing deeper insight into the experiences and perspectives of the students.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The study ensured that informed consent was obtained from all participants, with the purpose and scope of the research clearly explained to them in language they could understand. Students were assured of their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Privacy and confidentiality were strictly maintained by anonymising responses, handling data securely, and ensuring that information was used solely for academic purposes. In addition, due sensitivity was observed in administering instruments within the school setting to avoid disruption and minimise any form of discomfort. These measures ensured compliance with recognised ethical standards for educational research.

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Chapter Four

Results and Discussion on Findings

This chapter presents the results of the data collected from respondents using the validated self-designed questionnaire and reflective tool. The analysis is organised according to the research objectives, questions, and hypotheses earlier stated in the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages are used to summarised demographic information, while inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation and multiple Linear regression are applied to test the hypotheses.

The results are presented in five sections:

- Section A: Demographic profile of the respondents
- Section B: Descriptive analysis of research questions
- Section C: Inferential analysis of hypotheses
- Section D: Summary of major findings
- Section E: Discussion of findings

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents a detailed analysis of the demographic variables of the respondents involved in the study. The demographic data were gathered to provide context for interpreting the relationships among social media usage, identity formation, and academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area. The variables analysed include sex, age, class level, and perceived family financial background. Understanding the distribution of these variables is essential as they

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provide background insights that may significantly influence adolescents' digital behaviour, identity development processes, and academic confidence.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	13–14 years	181	48.3%
	15–16 years	118	31.4%
	17–18 years	76	20.3%
Class	SS1	191	50.9%
	SS2	184	49.1%
Gender	Male	168	44.7%
	Female	207	55.3%
Most Frequently Used Social Media	WhatsApp	127	33.8%
	Facebook	102	27.3%
	Instagram	59	15.6%
	TikTok	88	23.4%
Average Daily Time on Social Media	1 hour	146	39.0%
	2 hours	107	28.6%
	3 hours	99	26.5%
	4 hours or more	23	6.0%
Perceived Family Financial Background	Low Income	151	40.3%
	Middle Income	178	47.5%
	High Income	46	12.2%
Educational Platform Used	Roducate	102	27.3%
	ULesson	87	23.1%
	Pass.ng	93	24.7%
	EduPadi	93	24.9%

Source: Researcher Fieldwork 2025

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The above table 4.1 shows the demographic profile of the senior secondary school students sampled in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area of Oyo State offers critical context for understanding the influence of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy.

In terms of age distribution, nearly half of the respondents (48.3%) were between 13 and 14 years, marking early adolescence, a period when identity formation and peer influence are at their peak. Students aged 15–16 years accounted for 31.4%, while the older adolescents (17–18 years) constituted 20.3%. This age distribution suggests a diverse range of developmental stages, which is crucial when considering variations in self-perception and identity exploration. The class distribution between SS1 (50.9%) and SS2 (49.1%) was nearly equal, allowing for a balanced analysis across two senior secondary school levels. This reflects the inclusiveness of the sampling and ensures that the findings are not skewed toward one academic level. With regard to gender, females (55.3%) slightly outnumbered males (44.7%). This slight female majority may influence the expression of identity behaviours and academic self-efficacy patterns, as studies have shown that gender may impact how adolescents engage with social media and view their academic competence.

On social media usage, WhatsApp emerged as the most frequently used platform (33.8%), followed by Facebook (27.3%), TikTok (23.4%), and Instagram (15.6%). These patterns reflect the popularity and accessibility of messaging and entertainment apps among adolescents in urban Nigeria. Notably, the dominance of WhatsApp could suggest a preference for peer communication and informal learning, while platforms like TikTok and Instagram may be more related to identity experimentation and self-presentation.

Time spent on social media shows that a significant number of respondents (39%) spend 1 hour daily, while 28.6% and 26.5% spend 2 and 3 hours, respectively. Only 6% spend over 4

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hours. The moderate usage time suggests that while social media is integrated into their daily lives, most students may still have time to focus on academic tasks. However, the cumulative effect of even moderate usage on self-efficacy must not be underestimated, especially during peak academic periods. The perceived family financial background distribution revealed that 47.5% came from middle-income households, 40.3% from low-income, and only 12.2% from high-income families. This indicates that the majority of the participants may be navigating financial limitations, which could influence access to digital devices, stable internet, and academic resources, all of which relate to both identity development and academic confidence.

Lastly, on educational platforms use for School work, this was fairly spread across the four options, with Roducate (27.3%), EduPadi (24.9%), Pass.ng (24.7%), and uLesson (23.1%) showing a relatively even distribution. This suggests that students in this area are aware of and engaging with diverse digital learning tools. These platforms potentially enhance academic self-efficacy by offering supplementary materials and self-paced learning experiences.

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4.2 Presentation of Data

4.2.1 Research Question One

What is the perceived level of senior secondary school students` academic self-efficacy in Ibadan Southwest LGA, Oyo State?

Table 4.2: Perceived Level of Academic Self-Efficacy

Items	SD	D	A	SA	X	SD	Decision
I feel confident that I can do well in my schoolwork	1 (0.3%)	11 (2.9%)	215 (57.3) %	146 (38.9%)	3.36	0.553	High
Seeing good students on social media motivates me to study	19 (5.1%)	39 (10.4%)	169 (45.1%)	144 (38.4%)	3.18	0.817	Moderate
I did well in my last school exams	12 (3.2%)	69 (18.4%)	154 (41.1%)	134 (35.7%)	3.11	0.818	Moderate
I am good at balancing schoolwork and social media	35 (9.3%)	81 (21.6%)	152 (40.5%)	103 (27.5%)	2.87	0.927	Moderate
Seeing other students' academic success motivates me	25 (6.7%)	46 (12.3%)	158 (42.1%)	136 (36.3%)	3.11	0.873	Moderate
I compare my grades with my classmates on social media	27 (7.2%)	89 (23.7%)	185 (49.3%)	66 (17.6%)	2.79	0.821	Moderate
I feel bad when I see my classmates getting bettere grades than me	39 (10.4%)	74 (19.7%)	135 (36.0%)	118 (31.5%)	2.09	0.972	Low
Weighted Mean					2.93		Moderate

Source: Researcher`s Field work, 2025

Threshold: 3.25 – 4.00 = High (H); 2.50 – 3.24 = Moderate (M); 1.75 – 2.49 = Low (L); 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Low (VL)
Rating Scale used: Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree(A)=3 Strongly Disagree (SD)=2, Disagree(D)=1, Mean(x), Standard Deviation (SD). * = was reverse coded.

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The weighted mean score of 2.93 indicates a moderate overall level of academic self-efficacy among the senior secondary students surveyed. This composite measure reveals several important patterns in students' academic confidence and its relationship with social media use. Students demonstrate strongest confidence in their fundamental academic capabilities, with the highest mean score (3.36) appearing for the statement "I feel confident that I can do well in my schoolwork." This item shows remarkable consensus, as 96.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, suggesting most students possess a solid foundation of academic self-belief. The low standard deviation (0.553) further confirms this as a widely shared perception across the sample.

Social media-related items cluster in the moderate range (means between 2.79-3.18), revealing more varied responses. While 83.5% report motivation from viewing peers' academic success online (mean=3.18), only 68% believe they effectively balance schoolwork with social media use (mean=2.87). This discrepancy suggests students recognize social media's motivational potential while acknowledging its challenges to academic focus.

Notably, comparative behaviours on social media yield mixed effects. While 66.9% compare grades with classmates (mean=2.79), only 31.5% report significant distress from seeing better grades (mean=2.09). This pattern implies that academic comparisons on social media may be common but not necessarily detrimental to most students' self-efficacy.

The standard deviations (ranging 0.55-0.97) reveal varying degrees of consensus, with fundamental academic confidence showing most agreement and social media balance/emotional impact items showing greater response variation. This suggests that while core academic self-beliefs are widely shared, students differ more in how they manage and emotionally respond to academic content on social media.

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These findings collectively portray a student population with generally healthy academic self-efficacy that thoughtfully negotiates social media's dual roles as both academic motivator and potential distraction. The moderate overall weighted mean reflects this balance between strong foundational confidence and more variable experiences with digitally-mediated academic comparisons. Therefore, the answer to research question one (RQ1) shows that the perceived level of academic self-efficacy of senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest LGA is moderate.

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4.2.2 Research Question Two:

What is the most exhibited identity formation behaviour among senior secondary school students in public schools in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, Oyo State.

Table 4.3: The Frequency of the most exhibited identity formation behaviour among senior secondary school students in public schools in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, Oyo State?

Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
I feel free to express my thoughts and opinions in class.	44 (11.4%)	96 (24.9%)	155 (40.3%)	90 (23.4%)	2.76	0.94	Moderate
I dress in a way that reflects who I truly am.	36 (9.4%)	95 (24.7%)	153 (39.7%)	101 (26.2%)	2.83	0.93	Moderate
I enjoy sharing my ideas and feelings with others.	39 (10.1%)	100 (26.0%)	166 (43.1%)	80 (20.8%)	2.75	0.90	Moderate
I can express my personality through my hobbies or interests.	35 (9.1%)	101 (26.2%)	146 (37.9%)	103 (26.8%)	2.82	0.93	Moderate
I often feel misunderstood when I try to express myself.	49 (12.7%)	75 (19.5%)	143 (37.1%)	118 (30.6%)	2.86	0.99	Moderate

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I enjoy trying out new roles or interests to see what fits me best.	36 (9.4%)	102 (26.5%)	149 (38.7%)	98 (25.5%)	2.80	0.93	Moderate
I am still exploring what kind of person I want to become.	32 (8.3%)	99 (25.7%)	160 (41.6%)	94 (24.4%)	2.82	0.90	Moderate
I like experimenting with different hairstyles, fashion, or music.	115 (29.9%)	136 (35.3%)	102 (26.5%)	32 (8.3%)	2.13	0.94	Moderate
I feel confused sometimes because I am trying to figure out who I am.	38 (9.9%)	106 (27.5%)	132 (34.3%)	109 (28.3%)	2.81	0.96	Moderate
I often reflect on how my choices shape who I become.	32 (8.3%)	113 (29.4%)	140 (36.4%)	100 (26.0%)	2.80	0.92	Moderate
I often compare myself to my friends to know if I'm doing well.	36 (9.4%)	90 (23.4%)	168 (43.6%)	91 (23.6%)	2.82	0.90	Moderate
I feel pressured to behave like my peers to be accepted.	117 (30.4%)	125 (32.5%)	105 (27.3%)	38 (9.9%)	2.17	0.97	Moderate
I sometimes change my opinions to match those of	41 (10.6%)	96 (24.9%)	155 (40.3%)	93 (24.2%)	2.78	0.93	Moderate

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my friends.

I feel confident about myself even when I'm different from others.	39 (10.1%)	109 (28.3%)	154 (40.0%)	83 (21.6%)	2.73	0.91	Moderate
I worry about not being as successful as my classmates.	40 (10.4%)	85 (22.1%)	140 (36.4%)	120 (31.2%)	2.88	0.97	Moderate
Weighted Mean	-	-	-	-	2.74	-	Moderate

Source: Field Work, 2025

Threshold: 3.25 – 4.00 = High (H); 2.50 – 3.24 = Moderate (M); 1.75 – 2.49 = Low (L); 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Low (VL)
Rating Scale used: Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree(A)=3 Strongly Disagree (SD)=2, Disagree(D)=1, Mean(x), Standard Deviation (SD).

Table 4.2.2 shows, the investigation of the identity formation behaviour among students. Items were grouped into three dimensions: self-expression, social comparison and identity experimentation. The interpretation is presented according to these categories.

This category assessed how freely and authentically students express who they are, both emotionally and socially, within their school environment. The highest scoring item in this group was "I dress in a way that reflects who I truly am" with a mean of 2.83. This suggests that students often use personal appearance, within the limitations of public-school uniform policy, as a subtle form of self-expression. The expression may take the form of hairstyles, minor accessories, or grooming styles permitted within school rules.

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Closely following was “I can express my personality through my hobbies or interests” (mean = 2.82), indicating that students value individual interests, such as music, sports, drawing, or reading, as valid outlets for expressing their true selves. “I enjoy sharing my ideas and feelings with others” and “I feel free to express my thoughts and opinions in class” had slightly lower means of 2.75 and 2.76, respectively. These results suggest that while students desire to express themselves intellectually and socially, not all feel confident doing so in the classroom environment. It may be linked to the disciplinary tone often found in public schools, which may not always encourage open dialogue or alternative viewpoints.

The Item “I often feel misunderstood when I try to express myself” recorded a mean of 2.86, reflecting the emotional frustration students face when their self-expression is not recognised or validated by others, especially teachers or peers. This could point to a gap between intention and interpretation in student communication, a common tension during adolescence. The average mean score for Identity expression is 2.80, which reflects a moderate degree of expressed identity among students, but with some limitations tied to school culture and peer perceptions.

This dimension measured the extent to which students form their sense of self by comparing themselves with others or relying on peers for affirmation. The highest scoring item in this group was “I worry about not being as successful as my classmates” with a mean of 2.88. This indicates that academic comparison is highly active in students’ identity development. It suggests that students frequently assess their worth or progress relative to the perceived success of others, which can heighten both motivation and anxiety. Following closely were “I often compare myself to my friends to know if I’m doing well” (mean = 2.82) and “I often reflect on how my choices shape who I become” (mean = 2.80), both of which show that

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students are not only comparing themselves but are also becoming more reflective about who they are becoming through everyday decisions.

The item “I am still exploring what kind of person I want to become” also scored 2.82, further underscoring this reflective pattern. These results suggest that students are at a phase of identity negotiation, where their choices, peer feedback, and life direction are being weighed together in real time. Interestingly, “I feel pressured to behave like my peers to be accepted” recorded the lowest score in this group, with a mean of 2.17, suggesting that while social comparison is common, it does not necessarily translate into overt peer pressure. Many students still retain a degree of autonomy in their behaviour, even as they assess themselves against others. The average mean score for social comparison is 2.70, indicating that students moderately engage in this behaviour, often reflecting deeply on their academic standing and future direction in comparison with peers.

This category captured the behavioural tendencies of students to explore different identities through appearance, values, attitudes, and social roles. The highest scoring item in this group was “I sometimes change my opinions to match those of my friends” with a mean of 2.78, showing a tendency to adopt group perspectives, possibly as a way to fit in or test alternative views. Adolescents often engage in this kind of identity shifting as part of navigating their social environment. The Item “I enjoy trying out new roles or interests to see what fits me best” recorded a mean of 2.80, reinforcing the notion that students are actively exploring different aspects of who they could be, whether through leadership roles, academic pursuits, or hobbies. This is typical of the moratorium phase of identity development, where exploration is present but commitment is still forming.

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However, “I like experimenting with different hairstyles, fashion, or music to understand myself” had a significantly lower mean of 2.13, likely due to the uniform regulations and economic limitations prevalent in public schools. Access to expressive clothing, personal devices, or media is often restricted, thus limiting students’ capacity to freely experiment with outward identity forms. Other items such as “I feel confident about myself even when I’m different from others” (mean = 2.73) and “I feel pressured to behave like my peers to be accepted” (repeated here at 2.17) suggest that while students explore, they do so cautiously and within accepted social boundaries. The average mean score for identity experimentation is 2.52, which indicates a lower, though still moderate, level of behavioural experimentation. Constraints may include school rules, cultural expectations, and economic realities that narrow the range of exploration available to students. Therefore, to answer Research Question Two (RQ2), the findings reveal that the most exhibited identity formation behaviour among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest LGA is Self-expression,

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4.2.3 Research Question Three: How does social media influence students` academic self-efficacy?

Table 4.4: Pearson Correlation between Social Media and Academic Self-Efficacy Correlations

		ase_mean
smu_mean	Pearson Correlation	0.297**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	373

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researcher`s Field work, 2025

Table 4.2.3 showing Pearson correlation analyses which revealed a statistically significant, positive relationship between social media usage and academic self-efficacy ($r = .297$, $p < .001$, $N = 373$). This correlation suggests that increased engagement with social media is associated with higher levels of academic self-efficacy among senior secondary students. The positive direction of this relationship implies that, on average, students who use social media more frequently tend to report greater confidence in their academic abilities. This finding aligns with the earlier descriptive results showing that many students actively utilize social media for learning purposes. The significant correlation persists even after accounting for social media's distracting potential, as reflected in the earlier finding that 54.9% of students acknowledge difficulties focusing on their studies due to these platforms. However, the moderate strength of the correlation ($r = .297$) indicates that social media usage explains only a portion (approximately 8.8% when squared) of the variance in academic self-efficacy. This suggests that while social media may serve as one influential factor, academic

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confidence is likely shaped by multiple other variables beyond digital engagement. Therefore, the Pearson correlation analyses revealed a statistically significant, positive influence of social media usage on academic self-efficacy.

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Hypothesis Testing

This section presents the statistical analysis used to test the two null hypotheses of the study. Multiple Linear regression analysis was applied to examine the relative influence and joint contribution of social media use and identity formation on academic self-efficacy. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

4.2.4 Ho1: **There will be no significant relative influence of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students.**

This analysis sought to determine the extent to which each independent variable independently predicts the dependent variable, academic self-efficacy, while controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model.

Table 4.5: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on the Relative influence of Social Media and Identity Formation on Academic Self-Efficacy

Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.205	0.214		10.322	<.001
	smu_mean	0.278	0.046	0.306	6.026	<.001
	idf_mean	-0.025	0.076	-0.017	-0.333	0.739

a. Dependent Variable: ase_mean

Source: Researcher`s Field work, 2025

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The first hypothesis (Ho1) posited that neither social media usage nor identity formation would have a significant relative influence on academic self-efficacy. However, the regression coefficients demonstrate a clear distinction between these two predictors. This hypothesis was tested using multiple linear regression analysis. The aim was to assess the relative influence of each independent variable, social media usage and identity formation, on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students.

The regression output shows that social media usage had a statistically significant positive influence on academic self-efficacy ($\beta = .306$, $p < .001$). This implies that students who utilise social media, especially for academic purposes such as online research, collaborative study groups, and educational content access, tend to have stronger academic confidence. The standardised beta coefficient shows a moderate predictive strength. In contrast, identity formation had no significant predictive value on academic self-efficacy ($\beta = -.017$, $p = .739$). This suggests that behaviours linked to identity expression or social validation on digital platforms, such as seeking likes or followers, do not substantially shape students' belief in their academic abilities. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) is partially rejected. Social media usage has a significant relative influence on academic self-efficacy, whereas identity formation does not.

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4.2.5 Ho2. There will be no significant joint contribution of social media and Identity Formation on Academic Self-Efficacy

Table 4.6: Regression Analysis on joint Influence of social media and Identity Formation on Academic Self-Efficacy

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.303a	0.092	0.087	0.29901

a. Predictors: (Constant), idf_mean, smu_mean

ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.311	2	1.655	18.515	<.001b
	Residual	32.813	367	0.089		
	Total	36.123	369			

a. Dependent Variable: ase_mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), idf_mean, smu_mean

Source: Researcher's Field work, 2025

In testing the second hypothesis, a multiple linear regression analysis was also conducted to examine the joint effect of social media usage and identity formation on academic self-efficacy. The model summary shows an R value of 0.303 and an R^2 value of 0.092, indicating that approximately 9.2% of the total variance in students' academic self-efficacy can be explained by the joint effect of the social media usage and identity formation. The adjusted R^2 of 0.087 further supports the modest yet statistically meaningful contribution of the model.

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The ANOVA result [F (2, 367) = 18.515, p < .001] confirms that the model is statistically significant, demonstrating that social media usage and identity formation jointly predict academic self-efficacy at a level better than random chance. While the explanatory power of the model is relatively limited, the statistical significance indicates that these two variables, taken together, do influence how students perceive their academic abilities. Notably, this finding reinforces the earlier result from Hypothesis One, which showed that social media usage had a more substantial individual impact.

The practical implication is that social media platforms, when utilised constructively, offer students positive reinforcement and access to peer learning communities that enhance their academic confidence. On the other hand, identity formation, although intertwined with online behaviour, appears to play a less pronounced role in shaping students' academic self-efficacy in this context. It is concluded that social media and identity formation jointly have a statistically significant effect on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) is rejected.

4.3 Thematic Analysis of the Reflective Assessment Tool

The study incorporated a semi-structured written interview, providing participants with an opportunity to articulate their experiences regarding identity formation and its influence on academic self-efficacy. The Reflective Assessment Tool on Identity and Self-Efficacy (RATISE), contains ten questions which was administered to twenty students, of which nineteen were completed and returned. The responses were analysed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis[1]. This analytical approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of patterns within participants' narratives, leading to the identification of major

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themes: self-concept, aspirations, emotional regulation, peer comparisons, academic self-perception, external feedback, and personal growth.

Firstly, the manner in which participants described themselves revealed four distinct patterns. A substantial majority, comprising 16 out of 19 respondents, identified themselves solely by stating their name, which may indicate a foundational yet potentially underdeveloped self-concept. On the other hand, ten participants provided descriptions based on personal attributes such as honesty, independence, or resilience, demonstrating a more articulated sense of self-awareness. Two respondents framed their identity around their origin or background, while one participant defined themselves in terms of personality traits, such as being naturally reserved. Notably, one individual identified themselves as "a loner," presenting a unique outlier in the data set. The predominance of name-based identification suggests a possible cultural inclination towards modesty or a reluctance to engage in self-promotion.

Secondly, participants' future aspirations varied considerably, with career ambitions predominantly concentrated in the fields of medicine, engineering, law, and business. Eight respondents expressed a desire to pursue medical professions, including roles as doctors, surgeons, nurses, and veterinarians. Engineering was the second most popular career path, with six participants expressing interest in disciplines such as mechanical and civil engineering. Two respondents aspired to become lawyers, while smaller subset articulated aspirations in fields such as education and agriculture. One particularly distinctive response came from a participant who stated their ambition simply as "to be a great person," without specifying a professional trajectory. A notable gendered pattern emerged, wherein nursing

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aspirations were more prevalent among those who described themselves using traditionally feminine attributes, while engineering ambitions were more commonly associated with participants exhibiting traits aligned with conventional masculinity.

Thirdly, when asked whether they felt they were evolving into the person they aspired to be, 17 out of 19 participants responded affirmatively, using statements such as "Yes, I am." However, two individuals expressed uncertainty, providing deeper insights into their struggles. One respondent explicitly stated that they felt sadness regarding their progress, indicating an underlying sense of self-doubt. Participants also detailed their approaches to overcoming challenges. Seven respondents emphasised self-reliance, often stating, "I encourage myself" or "I believe in myself." Six participants relied on spirituality, frequently mentioning prayer as a source of strength. Two sought external guidance from others, while another two engaged in cognitive reframing by interpreting difficulties in a more positive light. Other participants simply stated that they controlled their emotions rather than addressing them explicitly. A discernible pattern emerged linking medical career aspirations with self-encouragement strategies, whereas engineering students exhibited a balance between internal motivation and external struggles.

The fourth theme discovered that participants' reactions to their classmates' success varied significantly. Ten individuals expressed happiness upon witnessing their peers excel, while four found their classmates' achievements motivational and inspiring. Three participants reported neutral feelings, stating they felt "comfortable" or indifferent, while two admitted experiencing negative emotions such as jealousy or sadness. Although 24 respondents claimed they did not actively compare themselves to others, deeper analysis revealed subtle

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social comparisons embedded within their responses. Seven participants admitted to selectively comparing themselves to high-achieving classmates, particularly in academic settings. Engineering students exhibited the highest instances of social comparison, often using it as a benchmark for self-improvement and goal-setting.

The fifth theme discovered, was about how academic self-efficacy was explored through participants' experiences of responding to questions in class. The majority, comprising seven individuals, reported feeling happy or excited when they answered correctly, indicating a positive academic self-concept. However, four respondents admitted to experiencing shyness, while one participant explicitly stated that they felt sadness in such situations. Many students expressed pride in their academic capabilities, with eleven respondents describing themselves as "brilliant" or excelling in their studies. Seven participants highlighted their strengths in specific subjects such as physics or chemistry, while three emphasised their fluency in English as an academic advantage. One particularly noteworthy response came from a participant who identified as both "brilliant" and a footballer, suggesting an integrated self-concept that balanced both academic and athletic identity.

On the sixth theme social feedback and external perceptions played a crucial role in shaping participants' self-image. When asked how they were perceived by their parents and peers, the majority reported receiving positive reinforcement. Eight respondents stated that they were generally praised, while six mentioned receiving specific compliments about their intelligence or kindness. Three respondents reported experiencing mixed feedback, encompassing both encouragement and criticism. However, two participants explicitly stated that they were insulted or "abused" by their peers. Engineering students reported the highest

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instances of negative social feedback, suggesting that they might encounter greater social scrutiny or criticism compared to their counterparts in other academic fields.

When reflecting on what made them unique, participants highlighted various aspects of their identity. Seven respondents identified their cognitive abilities as their distinguishing feature, emphasising intelligence and reasoning skills. Six participants attributed their uniqueness to personality traits such as kindness, humour, or strong character. Four respondents pointed to specific skills and talents, including dancing, sports, and artistic abilities, while two credited their spirituality, attributing their distinctiveness to divine influence. A compelling pattern emerged, wherein those who identified intelligence as their defining trait were also the most likely to engage in social comparisons, reinforcing the link between self-evaluation and competitive academic environments.

Finally, participants reflected on aspects of themselves they wished to change, with the most common responses centering on emotional regulation. Seven individuals expressed a desire to manage their anger or sadness more effectively, while six sought behavioural changes, such as reducing playfulness or improving sleeping habits. Three respondents wished to enhance their social interactions, either by becoming less talkative or more sociable, while three aimed to strengthen their academic motivation and study habits. Notably, one participant explicitly stated that they wished to change nothing about themselves, exhibiting high self-confidence across multiple responses. This suggests a strong sense of self-acceptance among this subset of respondents.

In summary, the thematic analysis of the interview responses offers valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of identity formation and academic self-efficacy among participants. The

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findings highlight main patterns in self-concept, aspirations, emotional regulation, social comparison, academic engagement, external feedback, personal distinctiveness, and areas for growth. The relationship between these factors underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of adolescent identity within an academic context.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the influence of social media and identity formation on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, Oyo State. Drawing from quantitative and qualitative data, the findings offer insights into how adolescent learners engage with digital and psychosocial influences in relation to their academic self-efficacy.

The findings revealed that students exhibit a moderate level of academic self-efficacy, with a weighted mean of 2.93 on a 4-point Likert scale. This suggests a fair level of confidence in their academic abilities, though not yet fully consolidated. Notably, students expressed the highest confidence in internalised beliefs such as "I feel confident that I can do well in my schoolwork" (mean = 3.36). This aligns with Social Learning Theory, which posits that self-efficacy is primarily developed through mastery experiences and reinforced through social persuasion and internal reflection[1]. The statistically significant positive correlation between social media usage and academic self-efficacy ($r = .297$, $p < .001$) supports earlier findings that purposeful digital engagement can enhance students' learning self-beliefs[2]. Likewise, the study affirms the notion that adolescents in Nigeria are increasingly leveraging educational platforms such as Pass.ng and EduPadi to improve academic preparedness and boost self-confidence. These platforms serve not only informational purposes but also act as

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motivational tools, consistent with the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which holds that individuals actively select media to fulfil specific psychological or educational needs[3].

Interview responses further revealed that students derive motivation from exposure to peers' academic achievements on social platforms. One student mentioned, "Seeing someone post about high grade makes me feel like I can too." This supports the principle of vicarious learning in Social Learning Theory, where observation of others' successes strengthens one's belief in personal competence[4]. Similarly, exposure to academic models on digital media can be directly linked to improved academic resilience. Nonetheless, a recurring theme among students was the distraction potential of non-educational content, especially short-form entertainment on TikTok and Instagram. Over 47% of respondents acknowledged reduced academic focus due to extended social media use. This dual impact of social media aligns with findings cautioning that while digital tools can enhance access to information, they may also promote procrastination and cognitive overload when unregulated[5].

In terms of identity formation, the behavioural components investigated, which are,self-expression, social comparison, and identity experimentation, were expressed at varying intensities. Self-expression emerged as the most prominent, with a mean score of 2.80. Students reported expressing their personality, values, and aspirations through fashion, hobbies, academic attitudes, and curated online profiles. This behaviour reflects the gratification of emotional and expressive needs through digital means, as outlined in Uses and Gratifications Theory[5]. Social comparison, with a mean of 2.70, was also a common behaviour among students. While upward comparison had both positive and negative effects, the majority of students used comparison as a motivational benchmark rather than a source of anxiety. This finding resonates with Social Identity Theory, which suggests that individuals

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derive self-worth through comparisons within their social group. Moderate social comparison is often linked to goal orientation and academic drive[6].

However, identity experimentation scored lowest (mean = 2.52), indicating limited behavioural expression in this dimension. In a school environment shaped by cultural conservatism and academic discipline, adolescents may feel constrained in exploring alternative roles or affiliations. This cautious behaviour reflects evidence that Nigerian students often suppress identity exploration due to fear of social judgement or institutional reprisal[7]. However, where permitted, identity experimentation may support critical thinking, adaptability, and long-term goal-setting. Despite the moderate prevalence of these behaviours, regression analysis indicated that identity formation, taken as a whole, did not significantly predict academic self-efficacy ($\beta = -.017$, $p = .739$). This contrasts with findings that identify identity clarity as a major antecedent of academic persistence among adolescents[8]. The divergence may stem from developmental factors; identity formation is a fluid process during adolescence, and its stabilising effect on academic self-belief may only emerge later in life or under different socioeducational conditions.

Notably, social media usage emerged as a significant predictor of academic self-efficacy ($\beta = .306$, $p < .001$), contributing to 9.2% of the variance explained. Although this figure appears modest, it underlines the growing influence of digital media on cognitive outcomes. Structured and intentional media use fosters academic engagement, especially when supported by peers or mentors online Thematic data further enriched these interpretations. Students described social media as both a motivator and a distraction, depending on usage patterns. One participant noted, “If I follow the right pages, I get tips for my WAEC. But if I’m just scrolling, I forget time.” This supports the claim that digital environments mirror

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students' existing motivations and amplify their consequences, whether positive or negative[9]. Additionally, self-expression and social comparison on digital platforms often intersect with peer validation, influencing both identity consolidation and academic disposition.

In alignment with Social Identity Theory, these peer dynamics shape not only students' social affiliation but also their perception of academic norms and possibilities. When learners view academic achievement as a status-enhancing behaviour within their peer group, they are more likely to internalise performance goals and strive toward academic success[10]. The findings in this study shows the integrates theoretical and empirical perspectives to affirm that social media, when used purposefully, supports academic self-efficacy among adolescents. Identity formation behaviours, while behaviourally expressed, appear to have a more delayed or contextualised influence on academic self-efficacy. These findings highlight the need for teachers, parents, and counsellors to foster guided digital engagement and safe identity exploration. Schools should consider implementing digital literacy programmes that not only regulate screen time but also promote intentional academic use of media. Moreover, students should be supported in navigating identity-related challenges in ways that reinforce resilience, goal clarity, and academic confidence in a rapidly digitising world.

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study investigates the influence of social media usage and identity formation on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Ibadan Southwest Local Government Area, Oyo State. The analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. Guided by five specific research objectives. These included assessing students' perceived level of academic self-efficacy, identifying the most exhibited identity formation behaviour, determining the influence of social media on academic self-efficacy, analysing the relative contributions of social media and identity formation, and exploring their joint effect on students' academic self-belief. Descriptive statistics revealed that students generally possess a \moderate level of academic self-efficacy, as evidenced by a weighted mean of 2.93. This suggests that while students are reasonably confident in their academic capabilities, there remains room for improvement. Students showed the highest confidence in their ability to complete schoolwork and meet academic demands, particularly tasks within their immediate control.

Among the three dimensions of identity formation, self-expression, social comparison, and experimentation, self-expression was the most frequently observed behaviour. This reflects students' growing comfort with articulating their personalities, values, and aspirations, especially through verbal communication, social interactions, and digital platforms. However, the data also showed that identity exploration among many remains surface-level, with few expressing a well-integrated or critically reflective sense of self.

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Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between social media use and academic self-efficacy ($r = .297$, $p < .001$). This suggests that digital engagement, particularly when students are exposed to academic inspiration, motivational content, and peer success, can reinforce their belief in their ability to succeed. Regression analysis confirmed that social media significantly predicts academic self-efficacy ($\beta = .306$), while identity formation did not independently have a significant predictive effect ($\beta = –.017$, $p = .739$). Nonetheless, when both social media and identity formation were considered together in a joint model, they explained 9.2% of the variance in academic self-efficacy. This joint contribution, although modest, demonstrates that identity development, in combination with digital influences, can play a supporting role in shaping students' academic confidence.

Qualitative insights from interviews further reinforced these findings. Students reported using social media not only for academic purposes but also as a platform for personal reflection and self-regulation. Some described being inspired by the achievements of others, while others mentioned their use of prayer, self-encouragement, and digital platforms to manage academic anxiety. These responses provide valuable context, suggesting that students are navigating the challenges of adolescence through a blend of external influence and internal coping strategies. The findings depict a transitional adolescent population, digitally connected, moderately confident in academics, and still forming their identities, whose learning outcomes are significantly shaped by the nature and quality of their social media engagement.

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5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that social media is a critical, albeit complex, influence on academic self-efficacy among senior secondary school students. As digital platforms become increasingly embedded in adolescent life, their power to shape educational motivation, confidence, and self-perception has become undeniable. This study confirmed that students often turn to social media for educational content, peer role models, and encouragement, all of which positively contribute to how they view their academic potential.

The statistically significant relationship between social media use and academic self-efficacy confirms that students are not merely passive users but active consumers of content that can support their learning goals. When appropriately harnessed, social media offers students access to inspiration, information, and communal reinforcement—all essential for building academic confidence in environments where classroom resources may be limited or stretched. On the other hand, identity formation, while theoretically central to adolescent development, was not found to independently influence academic self-efficacy in this study. This finding does not undermine the importance of identity development but rather reflects its complexity. Adolescents, especially in structured school settings, may still be in the early stages of understanding themselves. The lack of statistical significance may also result from institutional and cultural norms that constrain identity expression and exploration within the school environment.

Nevertheless, when identity formation is examined in conjunction with social media use, a meaningful contribution emerges. This underscores the potential of integrated interventions, programmes that allow students to express their developing identities while engaging in

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academic-related digital activities. Platforms such as digital storytelling, academic blogging, or collaborative online projects can serve the dual purpose of enhancing both identity clarity and academic motivation. The study revealed that academic self-efficacy among students is not merely a function of traditional classroom teaching but is increasingly shaped by external digital environments and internal developmental processes. The findings of this study suggest that educational stakeholders must acknowledge and incorporate the positive aspects of digital culture into their support strategies. At the same time, schools should provide safe, structured opportunities for identity exploration that affirm students' uniqueness and goals. A balanced approach that nurtures both the digital and personal dimensions of student life will be important to fostering long-term academic success.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to support the academic development of senior secondary school students and enhance the effective use of social media and identity development in shaping academic self-efficacy:

1. Perceived Level of Academic Self-Efficacy: Given that students demonstrated a moderate level of academic self-efficacy, schools should prioritise structured interventions aimed at strengthening students' belief in their academic competence. These may include regular academic counselling, motivational seminars, mentorship programmes with successful alumni, and peer-led study groups. Teachers should be trained to provide affirming feedback that encourages effort and progress rather than only focusing on grades.
2. Most Exhibited Identity Formation Behaviour: Since self-expression was identified as the most exhibited form of identity formation, schools should provide platforms that

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allow students to safely explore and express their developing identities. These may include debate clubs, creative writing groups, school magazines, drama and arts programmes, and leadership opportunities. Counselling services should integrate identity-focused sessions where students can reflect on values, career interests, and personal strengths in a supportive environment.

3. Influence of Social Media on Academic Self-Efficacy: Social media was found to significantly influence academic self-efficacy. Therefore, schools and education stakeholders should embrace social media as a legitimate learning tool. Digital literacy should be embedded into the curriculum, educating students on how to curate and interact with academic content online, balance entertainment and education, and critically assess information. Teachers should consider creating academic content on platforms already familiar to students, such as WhatsApp, YouTube, or TikTok, to extend learning beyond the classroom.
4. Relative Influence of Social Media and Identity Formation: Since social media emerged as a stronger independent predictor of academic self-efficacy compared to identity formation, it is essential to leverage its influence more strategically. Schools can establish partnerships with content creators or educational influencers to engage students digitally. Simultaneously, identity development activities should be embedded into digital spaces, such as personal learning blogs, goal-tracking apps, or student-led online journals, to give students the opportunity to reflect on who they are and how it relates to their academic journeys.
5. Joint Contribution of Social Media and Identity Formation: The joint contribution of social media and identity formation suggests the need for integrative interventions.

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Schools should consider introducing initiatives such as digital storytelling projects, virtual mentorship platforms, or "my academic journey" video diaries, where students can use social media tools to articulate their goals and self-concept. Such activities allow students to synchronise academic ambition with self-expression, thereby reinforcing both self-efficacy and identity clarity.

In conclusion, a deliberate and coordinated approach involving teachers, school counsellors, parents, and policy makers is necessary to harness the dual power of social media engagement and identity formation. When appropriately guided, students can draw strength from both their online experiences and personal growth processes to thrive academically.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

In a time where students are increasingly exposed to digital platforms, this research helps to explain how their academic confidence is shaped by what they see and do online, as well as how they are coming to understand themselves. One of the major findings from this research is that social media, when used constructively, can support students' belief in their academic abilities. The result showed a significant positive influence of social media on academic self-efficacy. This is important because many people assume that social media only distracts students. The study, however, shows that students are also using it to get motivated, learn from others, and access helpful content that boosts their confidence in schoolwork.

Although identity formation did not independently predict academic self-efficacy, its joint contribution with social media still had a statistically meaningful effect. This suggests that identity development, while still ongoing in most students, can interact with online experiences to support how they feel about their academic potential. It helps to understand that students may not yet have a strong sense of who they are, but the ways they express

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themselves, especially through digital means, still influence how they view their ability to succeed in school. Overall, this study offers useful knowledge for teachers, school counsellors, and policymakers on how to support students better. It shows that paying attention to students' social media use and helping them understand themselves can go a long way in building their academic confidence.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Future research should investigate intervention-based studies that evaluate the effectiveness of school-implemented digital literacy and emotional regulation programmes on enhancing students' academic self-efficacy. Such empirical investigations would offer actionable insights for evidence-informed educational policy and guide school counsellors in designing targeted support strategies, thereby enriching both pedagogical practice and psychosocial development among adolescents in the digital age.

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Appendix I

Lead City University (LCU)

Motto: Knowledge for Self-reliance

Admin strative Building, Lagos - Ibadan Expressway, Toll Gate Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria Tel: 08033794249 Email: asse@lcu.edu.ng

Dr. Oluyomi Susan Pitan
B.Sc. (Ed.), Ife; M.Ed., Ph.D. Ibadan
Head, Department of Arts & Social Science Education

Department of Arts & Social Science Education

www.lcu.edu.ng

3th March, 2025

The Principal/Head,
Vice Principal (Academics.

Dear Sir/Ma,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR FIELD WORK

The Bearer of this letter, **Esther EMMA-JIMO** is a Postgraduate student (M.Ed) of Guidance and Counselling in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, with Matric Number: **LCU/PG/005601**

She is currently carrying out a research on "**Influence of Social Media and Identity Formation on Academic Self-Efficacy of Senior Secondary School students in Ibadan Southwest Oyo State.**" To achieve this, she needs to administer Questionnaire to the Senior Secondary School (SS1&SS2) Students.

I, therefore write on her behalf that you kindly accord her all the necessary support that she needs in the collection of data for her research.

We promise that all information given will be used solely for research purpose.

Thank you

Yours Faithfully,

03/02/25

Dr. Oluyomi Susan Pitan

Appendix II

Questionnaire

Please indicate your response to each statement below by selecting the option that best represents your opinion.

SECTION A: Demography Information

S/N	Items	OPTIONS
1	What is your age?	☐13-14 ☐ 15-16 years ☐ 17-18 years
2	Whats your Class?	☐ SSI ☐ SS2
3	What is your gender?	☐ Male ☐ Female
4	Which social media platforms do you use most frequently?	☐ WhatsApp ☐ Facebook ☐ Instagram ☐ TikTok
5	On average, how many hours per day do you spend on social media?	☐1hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 3hours ☐4 hours
6	How would you describe your family's financial background?	☐ Low-income ☐ Middle-income ☐ High-income
7	Which Educational platform do you use for schoolwork	☐Roducate ☐uLesson ☐Pass.ng ☐ EduPadi

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SETION B: **Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES)**

Please tick the option that best describes your opinion.

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	I feel confident that I can do well in my schoolwork.				
9	Social media makes it harder for me to focus on my studies.				
10	When I see people doing well in school on social media, I feel motivated to study harder.				
11	I use social media to learn new things or join study groups.				
12	I did well in my last school exams.				
13	I believe I would do better in school if I spent less time on social media.				
14	Social media makes studying more interesting for me.				
15	I am good at balancing my schoolwork and social media.				
16	I often find it hard to concentrate on schoolwork because I check my phone a lot.				
17	Seeing other students post about their academic success makes me want to work harder.				
18	I compare my school grades with my classmates' results on social media.				
19	My teachers encourage me to use social media for learning.				
20	I do not have any academic platform on social media				

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SECTION C: Social Media Usage Tool (SMUT)

Please tick the option that best describes your opinion.

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20	Social media helps me show my real self.				
21	I compare myself to people I see on social media.				
22	Getting likes and comments on social media makes me feel good about myself.				
23	When I see successful people on social media, I think about my own life differently.				
24	Social media makes me feel I must look or act a certain way.				
25	I feel happy with the way I look in real life.				
26	I wish I looked like people I see on social media.				
27	Social media has helped me know what I want to do in the future.				
28	I feel I need to succeed as much as people I see on social media.				
29	I have changed my dreams or goals because of what I see on social media.				
30	The way I act on social media is different from who I really am.				
31	If I could change something about myself, it would be because of what I see online.				
32	What type of post(s) do you like on social media				
33	How many followers do you have on social media				

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SECTION D: Identity Formation Scale (IFS)

Please tick the option that best describes your opinion.

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
34	I feel free to express my thoughts and opinions in class.				
35	I dress in a way that reflects who I truly am.				
36	I enjoy sharing my ideas and feelings with others.				
37	I can express my personality through my hobbies or interests.				
38	I often feel misunderstood when I try to express myself.				
39	I enjoy trying out new roles or interests to see what fits me best.				
40	I am still exploring what kind of person I want to become.				
41	I like experimenting with different hairstyles, fashion, or music to understand myself.				
42	I feel confused sometimes because I am trying to figure out who I am.				
43	I often reflect on how my choices shape who I become.				
44	I often compare myself to my friends to know if I'm doing well.				
45	I feel pressured to behave like my peers to be accepted.				
46	I sometimes change my opinions to match those of my friends.				
47	I feel confident about myself even when I'm different from others.				
48	I worry about not being as successful as my classmates.				

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Appendix III

Reflective Assessment Tool on Identity and Self-Efficacy (RATISE)

Please answer freely and honestly.

1. How would you describe yourself to someone who does not know you? ……..……
……..……

2. What do you think you want to become in the future? ……..……..…
……..……

3. Do you feel like you are becoming who you actually want to be?
……..……
……..……

4. How do you feel when you see your classmates doing well in school?

……..……
……..……

5. Express what you feel when you answer questions in class?

……
……..……

6. What do your parents and your friends say about you?

……..……
……..……

7. How do you encourage yourself when things are hard? ……..……
……..……

8. Do you compare yourself to people in your class? If yes, how and why? ……..……
……..……

9.What do you feel makes you different from other people? ……..……
……..……

10.What is one thing about yourself that you would like to change?

...……..……
….……..……

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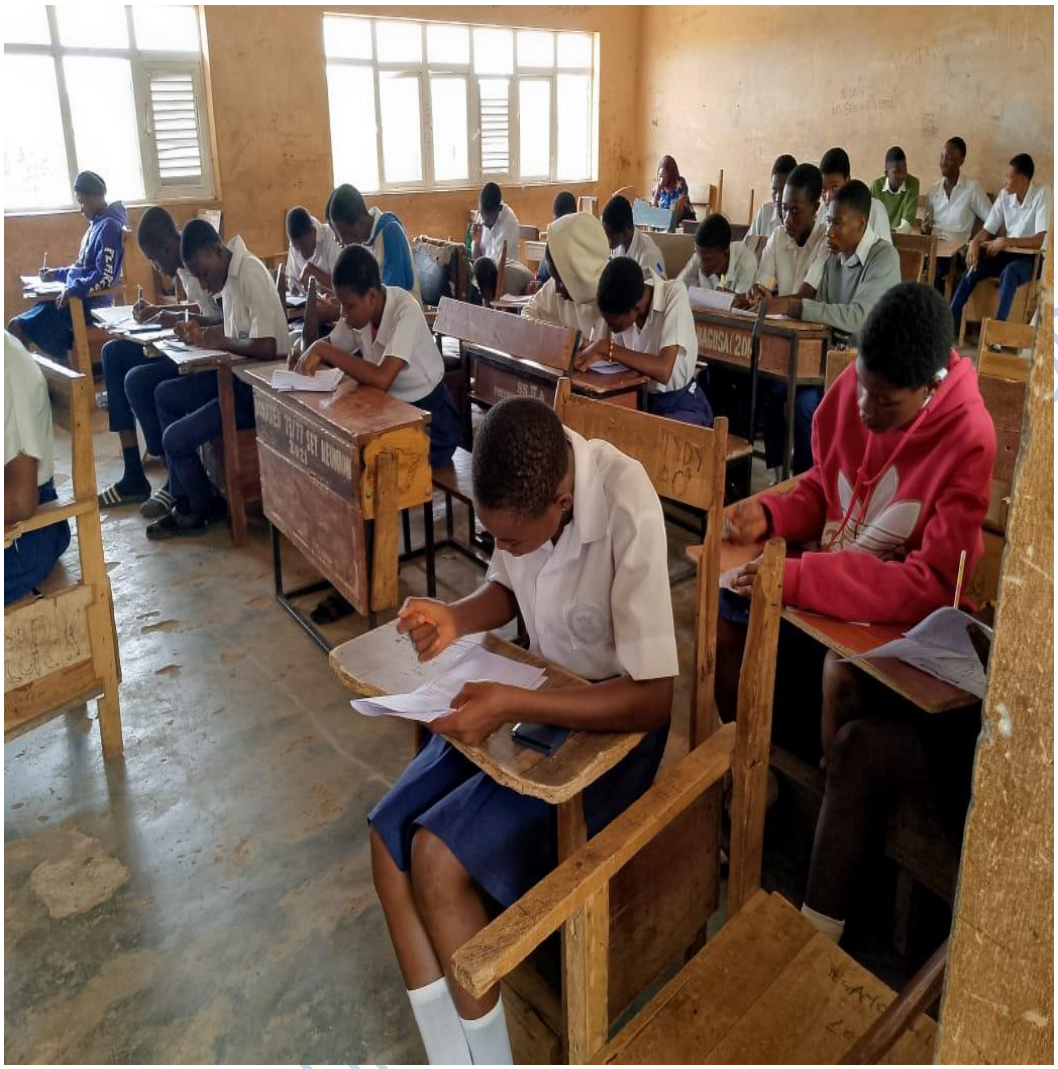
Appendix IV



Pictures of Research assistants on the field during data collection exercise.

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Appendix V



Research assistants at the end of the class watching the students attempting the instruments on the field.

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Appendix VI



Cross-sectional picture of SS2 students during the data collection exercise

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Bio-data

A. Personal Data

Full Name:	Esther Emma-Jimo
Address:	27, Peace Estate,1st Power Line Eruwa Road, Ibadan
Email Address:	eemmajimo39@gmail.com
Phone Number:	0806872660
Date of Birth:	21st April,1974
Nationality:	Nigerian
Marital Status:	Married
Name of Next of Kin:	Dr. Emma Jimo
Address of Next of Kin:	27, Peace Estate,1st Power Line Eruwa Road, Ibadan 07032306834 saintlyemmajimo@gmail.com

B. Educational Background with Dates

School Attended	Date	Qualifications
• St. James Primary School, Sabo-Oke, Ilorin	1981-1987	Sch. Leaving Cert.
• Kwara State Polytechnic Sec. Sch. Ilorin	1987-1993	SSCE
• Kwara Polytechnic, Ilorin	1993-1994	IJMB A-Levels
• University of Ilorin, Kwara State	1998–2001	B.Sc. (Ed) Economics
• The Redeemed Christian Bible College	Aug. 2009	Certificate in Theology
• Christ the Redeemer`s Ministries School of Disciples	Dec. 2011	Graduate Cert. SOD
• National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja	2015-2017	MBA
• Lead City University, Ibadan	2024 – Present	M.Ed in view

C. Work Experience with Date

- Branch Service Manager — April 2017 – July 2020

Polaris Bank Limited, Lister Branch, Ring Road, Ibadan

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- Head, Transaction Service Skye Bank PLC August 2011-March 2017

Oba-Adebimpe Branch,Ibadan

- Cash Officer Skye Bank PLC Dec. 2006- Jan. 2011

Jericho/Challenge Branch, Ibadan

- Banking Training Officer Cooperative Bank PLC, Ibadan Dec. 2003 – Dec. 2005

Fund transfer section.

D. Awards Nil

E. Membership

i.Counselling Association of Nigeria(CASSON)

ii.Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria(TRCN)

F. Publication

I. EMMA-JIMO, E., & ODELEYE, D. A.(2025). Spiritual Impact of AI-Powered Analytics on Evangelism in Nigeria. The Pastoral school counsellors: Journal of Nigerian Association of Pastoral school counsellors, 4,21-28. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14591702

ii. KILLIAN, O. T. P., & EMMA-JIMO, E. (2025). Building Lasting Relationships, Stronger Families and Peaceful Societies: Counselling for Effective Communication. International Journal of Religions and Peacebuilding, 1(1), 177–190. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15053198

Authored Books: 'A Virtuous Girl'

Other Publications:

i. Empowering the Future: Vocational Guidance Programmes and Interventions as Catalysts for Youth Employability and Economic Development in view

ii. Adolescent Cybercrime in Nigeria: Socio-Cultural Drivers, Ethical Challenges, and Counselling-Based Interventions for Sustainable Reform. In view

iii. A Framework for Holistic Well-Being: Resilience Counselling and Retirement Challenges in Nigeria in view

iv. Beyond Education: The Psychology of Lifelong Learning as a Catalyst for Resilience, Innovation, and Global Adaptability for individuals. In view

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G. Major Conference Attended with Dates

i. Effective Communication Skill Training

ii. Accounts Reconciliation Software Solution Training

iii. Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combating Financing of Terrorism

iv. Participant @ Faculty o Education, Lead City 2nd Public Lecture:

Theme: Mental Wellness: Cure for Nigeria`s challenges

v. Participant@1st Faculty Symposium, Faculty of Education:

Theme: Dynamics of a Research Problem Statement and Plausible Recommendations for New Knowledge.

H. References

- Dr. (Mrs) Modupe Ala

Department of Sociology/Psychology & Criminology

Lead City University, Ibadan

0817 684 6769

- Dr. (Mrs) Modupe Albert

Department of Politics & International Relations.

Lead City University. Ibadan.

- High Chief Samuel A. Oni

Independent Non-Executive Director, UBA

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Signature _____ Date _____

The University Compliance Certification

This is to certify that the thesis by Esther EMMA-JIMO with matric number LCU/PG/005601 in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State is in full compliance with the approved University Format and Style.

_____ _____

Signature Date

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