

EFFECT OF REALITY THERAPY AND COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY IN MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF SOKOTO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of reality therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy in managing social media addiction among undergraduate students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria. Three objectives, questions and hypotheses guided the study. The study employed a quasi-experimental design involving a pre-test and post-test. The study population comprised 1271 undergraduate students at level 3. Multi-stage sampling was adopted. The 50 highest scorers among the students were purposively selected as the sample of the study. Two research instruments were used: the adapted Sahin (2018) Social Media Addiction Scale-Students Form (SMAS-SF) used to create a baseline and the adapted Shahnawaz and Rehman (2020) Social Media Addiction Questionnaire (SMAQ) used for pre-test and post-test. To ensure face and content validity, both instruments were validated by experts at the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The reliability indices of 0.89 and 0.88 were obtained. The data collected from the study were analyzed using inferential statistical methods. The findings of the study revealed that reality therapy is significantly effective in managing social media addiction with a mean difference of 1.21, ($t(24) = 8.69$; $p < .000$). Secondly, the finding showed significant effect of cognitive behaviour therapy in managing social media addiction with a mean difference of 1.71, ($t(24) = 12.76$; $p < .000$). Thirdly, the study showed that CBT is more effective than RT in managing social media addiction with a mean difference of .360, ($t(24) = 2.31$; $p < 0.03$). It was concluded that both therapies were effective but CBT is more effective than RT. Therefore, it was recommended among others to use both CBT and RT in managing social media addiction among undergraduates.

Keywords: effect, reality therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, social media addiction



Introduction

Social media has come a long way since the early days of the internet. Social media addiction is a subpart of internet addiction in which an individual has an uncontrollable urge to use social media (Ramani & Diwanji, 2022). Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a form of therapy where the patient is helped to recognize patterns of distorted thinking and dysfunctional behaviour. The main goal of therapy is to help the clients bring about desired changes in their lives. The counsellor and counselee work together in which they plan strategies to deal with identified problems.

Reality therapy was developed by Dr. William Glasser in 1965. He used reality therapy in psychiatric hospitals, prisons, and jails. Glasser has written many books on the subject, and the William Glasser Institute still teaches his methods today. Reality therapy is a form of counselling that views behaviours as choices. It states that psychological symptoms occur not because of a mental health condition, but due to people choosing behaviours to fulfil their needs (Nunez, 2021).

Safari, Soleimani and Jajarmi (2021) in their study on the Effectiveness of "Reality Therapy" Training on Internet Addiction and Perceptions of Social Support -Family in Teenage Girls. The statistical population of this study included 220 high school girls in North Khorasan province in Bojnourd in 2020. 30 people were selected by convenience sampling method and randomly (lottery) were placed in an intervention and control group (15 people in each group). It was revealed that, after the intervention, there was a significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in both variables of internet addiction ($F=23/02$ and $P=0/001$) and perceiving the family social support ($F=15/01$ and $P=0/001$). It was concluded that the use of

"Reality Therapy" training is effective in reducing the internet addiction of teenage girls and increasing the perception of social support.

Nikanjam, Azadyekta and Nasrollahi (2022) demonstrated the effectiveness of reality therapy on the life expectancy and psychological well-being of the elderly living in nursing homes. It was a quasi-experimental study with a pretest-posttest design with a control group. The statistical population of the study included all the elderly living in nursing homes in Hamedan, Iran, in the second half of 2022. The sample included 30 people selected using the purposeful sampling method and according to the inclusion criteria of the study. Participants were randomly assigned to two 15-member groups of experimental and control. The experimental group received 10 sessions of reality therapy intervention, and the control group did not receive any intervention at the same time. The measures conducted of Schneider's life expectancy and Ryff's psychological well-being questionnaires. The results illustrated that reality therapy intervention is significantly effective in increasing the life expectancy of the elderly and in increasing their psychological well-being ($P<0.05$). Therefore, the reality therapy protocol can be applied as one of the effective psychological interventions in increasing the life expectancy and psychological well-being of the elderly.

Garba, Sababa and Aji (2023) investigate the effect of Cognitive behavioural therapy on Social Media Addiction among tertiary institution students in Taraba State. They revealed that CBT has a significant effect in reducing the level of social media addiction among tertiary institution students in Taraba State. It also helped in restructuring the students' minds regarding their reasons for excessive use of social media. Based on the findings, it

is evident that CBT is an effective treatment for social media addiction.

Ahmed-Mohamed and Hamdy-Hafez (2021). evaluate the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy to control internet addiction among nursing institute students at Beni-Suef University. The results indicated that after implementing the cognitive behaviour therapy, the mean score of internet addiction among the studied sample was significantly decreased from 6.1 ± 0.8 to 3.1 ± 1.2 ($P = 0.00001$). The results also added that the mean score of negative consequences was significantly decreased ($P < 0.05$). They concluded that cognitive behaviour therapy had a significant impact on reducing the mean score of internet addiction and mean hours of internet use among nursing institute students and was an effective strategy to reduce the negative consequences.

A study was conducted by Asani, Panahali, Abdi, and Badri (2023) to compare the effectiveness of reality therapy and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) in the academic meaning and academic emotions of procrastinating students. The collected data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and SPSS software (version 25). The results of MANCOVA showed that both MBCT and reality therapy had significant effectiveness in increasing positive emotions and academic meaning and reducing negative emotions compared to the control group ($P < 0.01$).

Statement of the Problem

Social media platforms play a significant role in enhancing e-learning and blended learning. Despite all these advantages attached to social media, studies revealed that there are many risk factors attached to social media numerous negative consequences. In Sokoto state, researchers observed that undergraduate

students spent most of their time on social media platforms, neglecting the primary purpose of being in the university, poor concentration to lectures during lectures, poor grades due to lack of concentration, spelling mistakes due to familiarity with short forms of abbreviation while chatting with friends on social media platforms. Jamilu, Sadiq, and Bala (2022) revealed that social media has become a great concern among Sokoto State University undergraduates, whereby they become reluctant readers and addicted to social media because they no longer see reading and writing as a pleasure; they prefer to watch events on the screen rather than read about them on the pages of paper. However, to fill the existing gap, the present study examined the effect of Reality therapy cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) in reducing social media addiction among UG III students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria.

Research Questions

To guide the conduct of this study, the following research questions were raised:

- i. Is Reality Therapy effective in reducing social media addiction among Undergraduate Students exposed to RT?
- ii. Is Cognitive Behaviour Therapy effective in reducing social media addiction among undergraduate students exposed CBT?
- iii. What is the difference between the effect of Reality Therapy and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in reducing social media addiction among Undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria to CBT?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were to examine the:

- i. Effect of Reality Therapy in managing social media addiction among Undergraduate students of



- Sokoto State University, Nigeria, exposed to RT.
- ii. Effect of cognitive behaviour therapy in managing social media addiction among Undergraduate students exposed to CBT.
 - iii. Difference between the effect of Reality Therapy and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in managing social media addiction among Undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria, exposed to CBT.

Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho₁** There is no significant differential effect between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of social media addiction among Undergraduate students exposed to Reality Therapy.
- Ho₂** There is no significant differential effect between the pre-test and

post-test mean scores of social media addiction among Undergraduate students exposed to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

- Ho₃** There is no significant differential effect of Reality Therapy and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in reducing social media addiction level among Undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test. The population of the study comprised 1271 UG III Sokoto State University students. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. At the first stage, a sample of 295 was obtained using research advisors (2006). Secondly, the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Education due to their higher population. Thirdly, the sample of fifty (50) students with high mean scores of social media addiction in the pretest were deliberately assigned to CBT and RT treatment Groups (See Table 1).

Table 1: Sample of social media-addicted students for the study

Name of Faculty	Male	Female	Sample	Group	Treatment
Faculty of Science	10	15	25	X1	RT
Faculty of Education	14	11	25	X2	CBT
Total	25	25	50		

Source: Pre-test scores 2025

Two research instruments were used for this research as follows:

- i. Adapted Sahin (2018) Social Media Addiction Scale-Students Form (SMAS-SF).
The instrument was used as a checklist to create a baseline in measuring the levels of social media addiction.
- ii. Adapted Shahnawaz & Rehman (2020) Social Media Addiction Questionnaire (SMAQ)

It was used in the pre-test and post-test to ascertain the effectiveness of RT and CBT treatments. To ensure the validity of the instruments for the current study, the instruments was revalidated. Thus, the modified instrument, was scrutinized by experts in the Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The 30 items of the instrument were examined in terms of clarity of language usage and proper item construction to ensure that it measures what it is meant to measure. Five items



were removed, while four items were modified, giving rise to a total of 25 items satisfied to were considered adequate for the study.

The researcher subjected the instrument to the test-retest method of obtaining reliability. The instrument was administered twice to undergraduate students at Shehu Shagari University of Education, Sokoto, after three weeks. The two sets of results were correlated using PPMC. A correlation coefficient 'r' of 0.88 and 0.89 were obtained. The coefficient was considered high enough and deemed to be reliable.

Procedures for Treatment:

This study was carried out in three phases. These are the pre-treatment Phases. Treatment Phase Post-Treatment Phase. Pre-treatment phase: The two groups in the study were exposed to a pre-test by administering the social media addiction levels using a social media addiction questionnaire, and the scores were kept for future reference at the end of the study. The participants were assigned to the following groups:

- i. Group One-Reality Therapy (X1).
- ii. Group Two -Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (X2).

Treatment Phase:

Treatments were given to those participants in groups X₁ and X₂. Each group had eight counselling sessions, which lasted for about 40 minutes. There were two sessions a week.

Descriptions of each therapy and the activities of each session for both groups are stated below:

Reality Therapy-Group X₁

Session One: General introductions, orientation, and preliminary activities.

Session Two: Basic terms and concepts, and the nature of social media addiction and its effects.

Session Three: Introduction of basic terms and concepts of Reality Therapy.

Session Four: Principle II- Focus on the present rather than past events

Session Five: Therapeutic Intervention of Reality Therapy.

Session Six: Continuation of the therapeutic intervention of Reality Therapy.

Session Seven: Concretization of the benefits of Reality Therapy for adequate restoration of expected behaviour outcome.

Session Eight: General evaluation of the Reality Therapy skill training. Followed by wrap-up and post-test administration.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy- Group X₂
Session One: General Introductions, orientation and preliminary activities based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

Session Two: Basic terms and concepts and nature of social media addiction and its effects.

Session Three: Basic terms and concepts in cognitive behaviour therapy.

Session Four: Identification of participants' problems and information on the meaning and symptoms of social media addiction.

Session Five: Overcoming social media addiction disorder using principles of Cognitive Behaviour therapy.

Session Six: Continuation of the therapeutic intervention of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Session Seven: Emphasis on the benefits of Behaviour therapy for adequate restoration of expected behaviour outcome.

Session Eight: General evaluation of the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy skills training. Followed by a wrap-up and post-test administration.

Post-treatment phase:

After the completion of the treatment intervention, the post-test was administered to all the participants. The pre-treatment scores and the post-treatment scores obtained here were subjected to appropriate statistical analysis.



Results

The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistical methods, which include paired sample and independent sample T-tests. It was analyzed electronically using SPSS software version 27. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The mean of

acceptance used by the researcher in this study was 2.50 and above.

H₀₁ There is no significant differential effect between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of social media addiction level among Undergraduate students exposed to Reality Therapy.

Table 2: Summary of Paired Samples T-Test on the Effectiveness of RT in Reducing Level Social Media Addiction.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	Df	t-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Pretest Mean Rt	25	3.30	.550		24	8.69		Rejected
Post-Test Mean Rt	25	2.10	.632	1.21			.000	

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Table 2 presents the paired samples t-test statistics used to determine the effect of reality therapy (RT) on social media addiction. The analysis revealed a statistically significant effect of RT in reducing social media addiction among undergraduate students at Sokoto State University, Nigeria. Furthermore, the post-test Reality Therapy mean scores were significantly lower (M = 2.10, SD = .632) than the pre-test means scores of RT (M = 3.30, SD = .550) with a mean difference of 1.21, (t (24) = 8.69; p < .000). Therefore, since the p-Value of .000 is significantly less than the 0.05 level of significant. The null hypothesis, which

states that “There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of social media addiction among Undergraduate students exposed to Reality Therapy”, is rejected. Hence, RT is effective in reducing social media addiction levels among undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria.

H₀₂ There is no significant differential effect between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of social media addiction level among Undergraduate students exposed to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

Table 3: Summary of Paired Samples T-Test on the Effectiveness of CBT in Reducing the Level of Social Media Addiction.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	Df	t-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Pre-test mean CBT	25	3.44	.433		24	12.76	.000	Rejected
Post-test mean CBT	25	1.74	.473	1.71				

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Table 3 shows paired samples t-test statistics conducted to determine the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy on social media addiction. The analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant effect of CBT in reducing social media addiction among

undergraduate students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria. Furthermore, the scores were significantly lower for the post-test mean scores (M = 1.74, SD = .473) than the pre-test mean scores (M = 3.44, SD = .433) with a mean difference of 1.71, (t (24) = 12.76; p < .000).



Therefore, since the p-Value of .000 is significantly less than the 0.05 level of significant. The null hypothesis, which states that “There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of social media addiction among Undergraduate students exposed to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy” is rejected. Hence, CBT is effective in reducing social media addiction levels

among undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria.

H₀₃ There is no significant differential effect of Reality Therapy and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in reducing social media addiction level among Undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University Nigeria.

Table 4: T-test Summary mean scores of Post-test RT with Post-test CBT (Paired) on the differential effect of CBT and RT in reducing the level of social media addiction.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	Df	t-Cal	P-Value	Decision
Post-Test Mean RT	25	2.10	.632		24	2.31	.030	Rejected
Post-Test Mean CBT	25	1.74	.473	.360				

Source: Fieldwork, (2025)

Table 4 shows paired samples t-test statistics conducted to determine the differential effect between cognitive behaviour therapy and reality therapy (RT) in reducing social media addiction level. The analysis revealed that there was a statistically differential effect between CBT and RT in reducing social media addiction level among undergraduate students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria. Furthermore, the post-test CBT mean scores were significantly lower ($M = 1.74 = .473$) than the post-test means scores of RT ($M = 2.10 = .632$) with a mean difference of .360, ($t(24) = 2.31$; $p < 0.03$). Therefore, since the p-value of 0.03 is significantly less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that “There is no significant differential effect of Reality Therapy and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in reducing social media addiction level among Undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University Nigeria.” is rejected. Hence, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is more effective than Reality Therapy in reducing social media addiction levels among Undergraduate

Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria, exposed to treatments.

Summary of Major Findings

The following findings were made based on the outcome of the research hypotheses tested:

- i. Reality therapy (RT) was found to be effective in managing social media addiction among undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria.
- ii. Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) was found to be significantly effective in managing social media addiction among undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria.
- iii. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy was found to be more effective than Reality Therapy in managing social media addiction among Undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria exposed to treatments.



Discussion of Findings

Below is the discussion of major findings of the study:

The first finding revealed that Reality Therapy (RT) was effective in reducing social media addiction among undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria. The findings of the previous research proved this finding for instance, Safari, Soleimani and Jajarmi (2021) in their study on the Effectiveness of "Reality Therapy" Training on Internet Addiction and Perceptions of Social Support -Family in Teenage Girls. Revealed that, after the intervention, there was a significant difference between the intervention group and the control group in both variables of internet addiction and perceiving the family social support. They concluded that the use of "Reality Therapy" training is effective in reducing the internet addiction of teenage girls and increasing the perception of social support.

The second finding revealed that Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) was effective in reducing social media addiction among undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria. To support this finding, Garba, Sababa and Aji (2023) investigate the effect of Cognitive behavioural therapy on Social Media Addiction among tertiary institution students in Taraba State. They revealed that CBT has a significant effect in reducing the level of social media addiction among tertiary institution students in Taraba State. Furthermore, Farjantoky, Sunawan, and Mulawarman, (2020). In their study on the effect of cognitive-behavioural counselling interventions on mobile phone addiction in students of Vocational School 1 Muhammadiyah Semarang. The results showed effects of cognitive-behavioural counselling interventions on mobile phone addiction.

Third finding revealed that Cognitive Behaviour Therapy was found to be more effective than Reality Therapy in reducing social media addiction among Undergraduate Students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria. In support of this finding, Asani, Panahali, Abdi, and Badri (2023) compared the effectiveness of interventions with mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and reality therapy. The results showed that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy was more effective in increasing positive emotions than reality therapy.

Conclusion

The cognitive behaviour therapy and reality therapy employed in this study have been proven to be effective in reducing or managing social media addiction levels among undergraduate students of Sokoto State University, Nigeria. This was evident in the significant difference in the levels of social media addiction of the students before the treatment with CBT and RT treatments and after treatments. The mean scores of the students showed that they had lower levels of social media addiction after the treatments with both CBT and RT counselling approaches. Therefore, both treatments contributed significantly to the reduction of social media addiction.

Recommendations

1. School guidance and counselling officers should employ reality therapy (RT) to manage social media addiction among undergraduate students. Because after Reality Therapy treatment, it was found that post-test mean scores were lower than the pre-test means scores which implies that RT is effective
2. Counsellors should apply Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) counselling techniques on highly complicated issues on social media addiction because it

is more effective than reality therapy. Because after RT and CBT intervention it was found that post-test mean scores of CBT were lower than the post-test means scores of RT which implies that CBT is more effective than RT.

3. Counsellors should liaise with government agencies and non-governmental to organize Seminars and workshops within and outside the school setting on the danger of social media addiction as it affects students' academic activities.

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