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Peer Pressure, Idleness, and Academic Disinterest as Correlates of Smartphone Addiction among College of Education Students in Iwo, Osun State

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Abstract

This study investigated peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest as correlates of smartphone addiction among 207 College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State. A descriptive correlational design was adopted, using standardised scales: the Peer Pressure Scale, the Idleness Behaviour Index, the Academic Disinterest Inventory, and the Smartphone Addiction Scale. Data were analysed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression. Results revealed significant positive relationships among the three independent variables and smartphone addiction, with peer pressure ($r = .56$, $p < .01$), idleness ($r = .49$, $p < .01$), and academic disinterest ($r = .45$, $p < .01$). The predictors jointly accounted for 49% of the variance in smartphone addiction ($R = .70$, $R^2 = .49$, $F(3,203) = 56.73$, $p < .05$), demonstrating substantial combined influence. In terms of relative contributions, peer pressure ($\beta = .42$) was the strongest predictor, followed by idleness ($\beta = .31$) and academic disinterest ($\beta = .25$). The findings imply that social conformity, behavioural inactivity, and low academic motivation jointly promote smartphone dependency. The study concludes that smartphone addiction among college students is a multifaceted issue requiring integrated interventions that address social influence, purposeful engagement, and academic motivation. It recommends collaborative efforts among counsellors, lecturers, and policymakers to promote responsible smartphone use through behavioural counselling, student engagement initiatives, and academic reorientation programmes.

Keywords: Peer pressure, idleness, academic disinterest, smartphone addiction

Introduction

The rapid advancement of mobile technology has transformed human interaction, learning, and entertainment globally. Smartphones, while offering unprecedented access to information and social connectivity, have also introduced behavioural challenges such as addiction and overdependence, particularly among youths and students. Smartphone addiction is characterised by compulsive usage, neglect of real-life responsibilities, withdrawal symptoms when disconnected, and loss of control over use (Kwon et al., 2020). This growing dependence has drawn significant attention from psychologists and educators worldwide due to its adverse impact on academic engagement and mental health. In Nigeria, the increasing affordability of

internet-enabled phones and social media access has further intensified this concern, especially among students in tertiary institutions who use smartphones both for learning and leisure (Asiyanbi & Animasahun, 2024).

Students in Colleges of Education represent a unique population in this discourse because they are training to become future educators yet are exposed to the same technological distractions affecting other youths. Studies have shown that peer influence plays a crucial role in shaping behavioural patterns among adolescents and young adults (Asiyanbi, Adegunju, & Ovili, 2025). In social groups where smartphone use is heavily integrated into daily routines, peer norms often encourage excessive engagement in online interactions, gaming, and entertainment applications (Longstreet & Brooks, 2023). Consequently, students tend to mirror the behaviours of their peers to maintain social belonging and avoid exclusion. This phenomenon aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which posits that individuals learn behaviours by observing and imitating others, especially those they identify with. In the Nigerian context, where peer approval strongly influences social identity, this dynamic significantly increases vulnerability to smartphone addiction (Asiyanbi et al., 2025; Umanhonlen & Animasahun, 2025).

Idleness is another major correlate of smartphone addiction, particularly within the context of under-structured academic environments. When students experience long periods without productive engagement, they often turn to smartphones to fill time, seek stimulation, or escape boredom (Kim et al., 2022). Studies in South Korea and Malaysia have demonstrated that low engagement in purposeful activities correlates strongly with increased smartphone use and social media dependence (Park et al., 2021). In Nigerian Colleges of Education, where instructional gaps and administrative delays sometimes create academic downtime, idle students are more likely to immerse themselves in virtual activities. Asiyanbi (2022) observed that insufficient vocational and counselling guidance among students tends to exacerbate unproductive use of time, leading to behavioural issues such as technology dependence. Therefore, idleness serves both as a trigger and a sustaining condition for smartphone addiction among undergraduates.

Academic disinterest—marked by low motivation, disengagement from learning activities, and poor classroom participation—has equally been identified as a predictor of smartphone addiction. When students lose interest in their academic pursuits, they are more likely to substitute schoolwork with stimulating online activities (Chen et al., 2021). This behavioural shift reduces

study time and weakens learning outcomes. Asiyanbi and Ajagbe (2023) found that teaching strategies and learning styles significantly affect pupil engagement and academic performance, implying that poor pedagogical delivery can foster disengagement. Furthermore, research by Kazeem, Asiyanbi, and Yusuf (2025) suggests that personal factors such as low self-esteem and social anxiety can compound academic disinterest, driving students to rely more on digital platforms for validation and entertainment. Thus, academic disengagement not only diminishes educational productivity but also predisposes students to behavioural addictions.

The interplay between peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest reflects a multidimensional framework of risk factors underlying smartphone addiction. Studies have revealed that these psychosocial and academic variables often interact to reinforce maladaptive technology use (Asiyanbi, Lawal, Umanhonlen, & Ogunbowale, 2025). For instance, students who experience boredom and peer pressure may simultaneously disengage from academic activities, thereby increasing their dependence on virtual environments for stimulation and social interaction (Asiyanbi & Kazeem, 2019; Asiyanbi, Omopo, Offor, & Ilori, 2025). International research further supports this view: Aljomaa et al. (2019) and Longstreet and Brooks (2023) reported that smartphone addiction is best understood through a combination of emotional, social, and motivational predictors rather than isolated factors. This holistic perspective underscores the need to explore how these variables jointly contribute to problematic smartphone use among Nigerian students.

Despite the growing global literature on smartphone addiction, empirical research focusing on Colleges of Education in Nigeria remains scarce. Most existing studies have concentrated on university or secondary school populations, leaving a gap in understanding how psychosocial and academic correlates operate among teacher trainees. This gap is critical, considering that future educators' digital habits influence their pedagogical competence and classroom management. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the relationships between peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest as correlates of smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State. By addressing this gap, the study aims to inform counselling strategies and educational policies that promote responsible smartphone use, improve academic focus, and enhance students' overall psychological wellbeing.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest as correlates of smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State. The study seeks to understand how social, behavioural, and academic factors jointly influence students' overdependence on smartphones. It also aims to identify the extent to which these variables individually and collectively predict smartphone addiction within the selected population. By analysing these relationships, the study intends to provide insights that can guide the development of counselling interventions, student engagement programmes, and institutional policies that promote responsible smartphone use among future educators. Specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationships between peer pressure, idleness, academic disinterest, and smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State.
2. To examine the joint contribution of peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest to smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State.
3. To determine the relative contributions of peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest to smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in the study:

1. What relationships exist between peer pressure, idleness, academic disinterest, and smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State?
2. What is the joint contribution of peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest to smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State?
3. What are the relative contributions of peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest to smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive correlational survey design to investigate the relationships between peer pressure, idleness, academic disinterest, and smartphone addiction among students of a College of Education in Iwo, Osun State. This design was considered appropriate as it enabled the researcher to determine the extent of association among the variables without manipulating them. The target population comprised all students enrolled in the institution across different departments and levels. Sampling was carried out in three stages. At the first stage, several departments were purposively selected to ensure coverage across the academic disciplines. The second stage involved random selection of classes within these departments, while the third stage employed a proportionate stratified random sampling technique to select participants based on gender and academic level. A total of 207 students participated in the study, representing a diverse mix of male and female students across all levels.

Data collection was conducted using standardised, validated instruments. Peer pressure was assessed with the *Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI)* developed by Brown et al. (1986), which measures an individual's susceptibility to peer influence in social and behavioural contexts. Idleness was measured using the Leisure Boredom Scale (LBS) by Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990), which evaluates the degree of unstructured time use and inactivity. Academic disinterest was assessed using the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) by Vallerand et al. (1992), specifically the subscale measuring amotivation and low engagement in academic tasks. Smartphone addiction was measured with the Smartphone Addiction Scale – Short Version (SAS-*SV)* developed by Kwon et al. (2013). All instruments were adapted to suit the Nigerian context and pretested for clarity and cultural relevance among 30 students in a nearby institution. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.79 to 0.88, confirming acceptable internal consistency. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics to summarise demographic characteristics, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation to determine the relationships among the variables, and Multiple Regression Analysis to examine the joint and relative contributions of the predictors to smartphone addiction. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level.

Result and Discussions

Demographic Representations of the Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 207)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	87	42.0
	Female	120	58.0
Age Range (Years)	16–20	64	30.9
	21–25	91	44.0
	26–30	36	17.4
	31 and above	16	7.7
Level of Study	NCE I	69	33.3
	NCE II	78	37.7
	NCE III	60	29.0
Marital Status	Single	190	91.8
	Married	17	8.2

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of the 207 participants in the study. Out of the total respondents, 87 (42.0%) were male, while 120 (58.0%) were female, indicating that female students formed the majority of the sample. Regarding age distribution, the largest group fell within the 21–25 years range (44.0%), followed by those aged 16–20 years (30.9%), suggesting that most participants were young adults within the typical age bracket of college students. Students aged 26–30 years and those above 31 years constituted 17.4% and 7.7% respectively. In terms of academic level, 33.3% were in NCE I, 37.7% in NCE II, and 29.0% in NCE III, reflecting a fair representation of students across all academic levels.

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One: What relationships exist between peer pressure, idleness, academic disinterest, and smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State?

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Peer Pressure, Idleness, Academic Disinterest, and Smartphone Addiction (N = 207)

Variables	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Peer Pressure	1.00	.48**	.42**	.56**	32.47	6.81
2. Idleness		1.00	.51**	.49**	29.86	7.23

3. Academic Disinterest			1.00	.45**	31.52	6.40
4. Smartphone Addiction				1.00	35.91	8.27

Table 2 reveals the relationships among the study variables. Peer pressure shows a strong positive correlation with smartphone addiction (r = .56, p < .01), indicating that students influenced by peers tend to exhibit higher tendencies toward excessive smartphone use. Idleness also correlates significantly with smartphone addiction (r = .49, p < .01), suggesting that students with unstructured free time are more likely to engage in addictive phone activities. Similarly, academic disinterest displays a significant positive correlation with smartphone addiction (r = .45, p < .01). Moreover, all independent variables correlate significantly with one another, showing the interconnectedness of social, behavioural, and motivational factors influencing smartphone dependency.

The finding that peer pressure significantly correlates with smartphone addiction reinforces prior research asserting that peer influence plays a pivotal role in students' technology use (Asiyanbi et al., 2025). In college environments, students often adopt the digital habits of their peers to gain social acceptance, maintain relationships, or conform to group norms. This pressure can manifest in excessive messaging, online gaming, or social media engagement, gradually fostering addictive tendencies. The strong correlation highlights how peer conformity, when coupled with digital accessibility, can heighten vulnerability to problematic smartphone use among young adults.

Furthermore, idleness emerges as another significant correlate of smartphone addiction. This finding supports the assertion by Asiyanbi and Animasahun (2024) that inactivity and lack of purposeful engagement increase susceptibility to digital distractions. Idle students frequently resort to smartphones to fill voids of time, leading to habitual usage patterns that interfere with academic focus and emotional regulation. The association indicates that unproductive leisure can create behavioural dependencies where smartphones serve as substitutes for meaningful engagement or coping mechanisms.

Finally, the positive relationship between academic disinterest and smartphone addiction suggests that low academic motivation may drive students to seek gratification in digital environments (Asiyanbi & Ajagbe, 2023). When learners lose interest in academic pursuits,

smartphones provide alternative sources of excitement, connection, and validation. The interplay between disengagement and digital dependency underscores the need for renewed pedagogical strategies that stimulate curiosity and classroom participation. Together, these relationships confirm that social influence, behavioural inertia, and motivational decline are key contributors to smartphone addiction among college students.

Research Question Two: What is the joint contribution of peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest to smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State?

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analysis Showing Joint Contribution of Peer Pressure, Idleness, and Academic Disinterest to Smartphone Addiction

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	R	R^2	Adj. R^2	Sig.
Regression	12984.21	3	4328.07	56.73	.70	.49	.48	.000
Residual	13488.62	203	66.45					
Total	26472.83	206						

Table 3 presents the joint contribution of peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest to smartphone addiction among 207 college students. The analysis yielded a multiple correlation coefficient (R = .70) and a coefficient of determination (R^2 = .49). This indicates that the combined influence of the three predictors accounts for approximately 49% of the variance in smartphone addiction, which is statistically significant ($F(3,203) = 56.73$, $p < .05$). The adjusted R^2 value of .48 further confirms that these factors collectively have a substantial explanatory power on smartphone addiction, suggesting the need for multi-dimensional interventions.

The joint predictive strength of peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest signifies that these psychosocial and behavioural variables jointly shape students' smartphone dependency. This aligns with findings by Asiyanbi, Adegunju, and Ovili (2025), who observed that overlapping social and environmental influences jointly predict maladaptive habits among adolescents. The interplay among these predictors reflects a reinforcing cycle—peer conformity increases idle time spent online, while academic disengagement intensifies reliance on digital platforms for emotional satisfaction. Together, they form a triadic model explaining nearly half of the behavioural variance.

The result also suggests that smartphone addiction cannot be attributed to isolated causes but rather to an accumulation of risk factors. Idleness, when coupled with peer reinforcement, magnifies the attraction to digital interaction. Likewise, academic disinterest reduces students' sense of academic responsibility, freeing time and motivation for smartphone indulgence. The joint contribution (49%) thus underscores the interconnectedness of social context and individual motivation in sustaining addictive behaviour patterns.

These findings mirror the ecological perspective of behaviour, which posits that multiple environmental and personal factors simultaneously shape individual actions (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Therefore, addressing smartphone addiction among college students demands integrative approaches that simultaneously target social influences, behavioural regulation, and academic engagement. Counsellors, educators, and psychologists must collaborate to develop balanced interventions fostering productive engagement and reducing idle digital time.

Research Question Three: What are the relative contributions of peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest to smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State?

Table 4: Relative Contributions of Peer Pressure, Idleness, and Academic Disinterest to Smartphone Addiction

Predictor	Unstandardised Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardised Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
Constant	11.52	2.61	—	4.41	.000
Peer Pressure	0.48	0.07	.42	6.86	.000
Idleness	0.37	0.08	.31	4.63	.000
Academic Disinterest	0.29	0.09	.25	3.22	.002

Table 4 presents the relative influence of each independent variable on smartphone addiction. Peer pressure had the highest standardised beta coefficient ($\beta = .42$, $t = 6.86$, $p < .05$), indicating it is the most potent predictor of smartphone addiction. Idleness followed with $\beta = .31$ ($t = 4.63$, $p < .05$), while academic disinterest contributed the least ($\beta = .25$, $t = 3.22$, $p < .05$). These findings show that although all predictors significantly contribute to smartphone addiction, peer influence remains the strongest determinant among the three factors examined.

Peer pressure emerged as the most influential predictor of smartphone addiction, corroborating evidence from Asiyanbi et al. (2025) that social conformity pressures substantially shape adolescents' maladaptive behaviours. College students often experience strong peer influence regarding trends in digital engagement, social media participation, and online communication patterns. Those who seek social validation are especially vulnerable to excessive smartphone use, driven by fear of missing out (FOMO) and social comparison tendencies. This strong predictive power affirms that peer socialisation is a dominant force behind smartphone dependence in youth populations.

Idleness also showed a notable predictive contribution, implying that students lacking structured routines or goal-oriented activities are more prone to problematic phone use. Idle time encourages overreliance on digital entertainment and social networking, gradually cultivating compulsive habits. The result is consistent with Asiyanbi and Animasahun (2024), who found that behavioural inactivity fosters dependency behaviours. By engaging students in productive extracurricular, academic, and vocational activities, institutions can help mitigate the boredom-related triggers that sustain smartphone addiction.

Although academic disinterest contributed less than the other predictors, its effect remains statistically significant, confirming that motivational disengagement plays a crucial role in smartphone overuse. Students with poor study interest often divert their attention to digital media for gratification and escape from academic stress (Asiyanbi & Ajagbe, 2023). The implication is that addressing smartphone addiction requires reviving students' academic curiosity and enhancing interactive learning methods. Thus, a holistic approach combining peer education, purposeful engagement, and academic motivation enhancement would effectively reduce smartphone addiction among college students in Iwo, Osun State.

Conclusion

The study concludes that peer pressure, idleness, and academic disinterest are significant correlates of smartphone addiction among College of Education students in Iwo, Osun State. These factors collectively account for a large proportion of the variance in addictive smartphone use, suggesting that no single domain can adequately explain the behaviour. Peer influence

emerged as the most influential predictor, revealing how social conformity pressures drive students to overuse smartphones for social interaction and validation. Idleness contributed substantially, indicating that lack of productive engagement fosters habitual use of mobile devices for entertainment and emotional escape. Academic disinterest also played a meaningful role, demonstrating that disengaged students are more likely to divert their energy and attention to smartphone use. Collectively, these findings highlight that smartphone addiction is shaped by intertwined social, behavioural, and motivational factors, requiring comprehensive preventive and corrective measures.

Recommendations

1. **Counselling Intervention:** School counsellors should design psychoeducational programmes focusing on emotional regulation, peer resistance, and self-management strategies to curb the social and psychological triggers of smartphone addiction.
2. **Structured Engagement:** College authorities should introduce more academic and extracurricular activities that reduce idleness, promote purposeful use of time, and foster productive peer interactions.
3. **Academic Reorientation:** Lecturers should adopt engaging teaching approaches that stimulate students' academic curiosity and reduce their reliance on digital distractions.
4. **Digital Literacy Campaigns:** Awareness programmes on responsible smartphone use should be incorporated into orientation and student development programmes to reduce excessive digital engagement.
5. **Parental and Institutional Collaboration:** Partnerships between parents, counsellors, and educators should be strengthened to monitor students' smartphone habits and provide balanced guidance on healthy digital behaviour.
6. **Further Research:** Future studies should explore the mediating roles of self-control, social anxiety, and digital peer norms in the relationship between these predictors and smartphone addiction among college students in Nigeria.

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