

SOCIAL MEDIA LIFESTYLE AMONG IGBO YOUTHS - USAGE, AND EXPOSURE: THE ADDICTION, DEPRESSION AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORRELATES

Ifeoma Mercy Anolefo
Graduate Researcher,
Phone: +2347014840729,
Email: anolefoifeoma@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: *This study investigated social media lifestyle among Igbo youths - usage, and exposure - and relationships between addiction, depression and emotional development. A total of 100 participants were used in the study. Cluster and incidental sampling methods were employed. The instruments for the study were “social media addiction scale” by Copez-Lonzoy (2023), “beck depression inventory” by Beck (1921-2021), and “emotional development scale” by Hart (2019). The response period was between 20 to 30 minutes. Informed consent and confidentiality were observed as ethical issues. The design of the study was correlational design. The statistics was Pearson Moment Correlation. Data attained interval measurement. Analyses of data were done with version 25 of the SPSS. Findings (results) show as follows: Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant and low positive relationship with social media addiction among Igbo youths; Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant negative low relationship with depression among Igbo youths; Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant and low positive relationship with depression among Igbo youths; Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has significant and positive low relationship with social media addiction among Igbo youths; Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has non-significant and negative low relationship with depression among Igbo youths; and Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has non-significant and positive low relationship with emotional development among Igbo youths. It is recommended that Igbo youths should sustain their seemly healthy access to social media. Again, it is recommended for sense of industry to be used to engage the youths meaningfully thereby reducing their unproductive addiction to social media.*

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Lifestyle, Usage, Exposure, Addiction, Emotional Development, Depression, Nigerian Youths

INTRODUCTION

Social media in Igboland is reshaping how young people connect, express themselves, and process emotions — offering both emotional support and risks such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Igbo youths use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and many more for self-expression, networking, and access to mental health resources. Online communities provide emotional support, belonging, and opportunities to share experiences with peers who have similar interests or challenges.

However, excessive or unregulated use is linked to social comparison, cyberbullying, addiction, and sleep disruption, which can harm emotional health. Social media can reduce face-to-face interaction and contribute to emotional distress, lowered self-esteem, and heightened anxiety. The

discrimination, abuse of human rights, extra-judicial torture/killings, terrorism, tribalism, unemployment, and survival stress/pressure Igbo youths experience in Nigeria, makes Igbo youths more vulnerable to the effects of social media. It is therefore the goal of this study to empirically examine Igbo youths’ social media lifestyle perspectives of usage, and exposure, as they correlate with addiction, depression and emotional development.

Purpose/Objectives of Study

The objectives of the study were to examine:

1. Whether social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will significantly correlate with social media addiction among Igbo youths.
2. If social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will significantly correlate with depression among Igbo youths.

3. How social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will correlate with emotional development among Igbo youths.
4. The way social media exposure (time spent on social media) will correlate with social media addiction among Igbo youths.
5. The extent social media exposure (time spent on social media) will correlate with depression among Igbo youths.
6. If social media exposure (time spent on social media) will significantly correlate with emotional development among Igbo youths.

Research Questions:

The study sought to provide answer to the following questions:

1. In what way will social media usage (number of social media platforms used) correlate with social media addiction among Igbo youths.
2. To what degree will social media usage (number of social media platforms used) correlate with depression among Igbo youths.
3. How will social media usage (number of social media platforms used) correlate with emotional development among Igbo youths.
4. In what way will social media exposure (time spent on social media) correlate with social media addiction among Igbo youths.
5. To what degree will social media exposure (time spent on social media) correlate with depression among Igbo youths.
6. How will social media exposure (time spent on social media) correlate with emotional development among Igbo youths.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were investigated in the study.

1. Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will not significantly

correlate with social media addiction among Igbo youths.

2. Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will not significantly correlate with depression among Igbo youths.
3. Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will not significantly correlate with emotional development among Igbo youths.
4. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) will not significantly correlate with social media addiction among Igbo youths.
5. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) will not significantly correlate with depression among Igbo youths.
6. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) will not significantly correlate with emotional development among Igbo youths.

Operational Definition of Measured Variables

1. Social Media Usage: This is the number of social media platforms used.
2. Social Media Exposure: This is the time spent on social media.
3. Social Media Addiction: This is the compulsion and irresistible urge to use social media, measured with Social Media Addiction Scale by Copez-Lonzoy (2023).
4. Depression: This is serious sadness or unhappiness with oneself or one's life, measured with Beck Depression Inventory by Beck (1921-2021).
5. Emotional Development: This is a person's expression of feelings and response patterns to life experiences, as measured with Emotional Development Scale by Hart (2019).

METHOD

Participants: The participants' distributions are as given in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

Sample Category	Sample Cluster	N
GENDER	Male	28
	Female	72
	TOTAL	100
EDUCATION ATTAINMENT	Primary Education	4
	Secondary Education	66
	Tertiary Education	30
	TOTAL	100
OCCUPATION	Student	97
	Artisan	3
	TOTAL	100
STATE OF ORIGIN	Ebonyi	3
	Anambra	77
	Imo	9
	Ogun	1
	Cross River	1
	Enugu	7
	Abia	2
	TOTAL	100
RELIGION	Christianity	98
	Traditional	1
	None	1
	TOTAL	100

SOURCE: Questionnaire Primary Data

A total of 100 participants were used in the study. The participants were of the following clusters: Gender (male = 22, female = 75); Educational Attainment (primary education = 4, secondary education = 66, tertiary = 30); Occupation (student = 97, artisan = 3); and State of Origin (Ebonyi = 3, Anambra = 77, Imo = 9, Ogun = 1, Cross River = 1, Enugu = 7, Abia = 2); and Religion (Christianity = 98, Traditional = 1, none = 1). Again, the participants had the mean age of 20.01, and age SD of 2.63. Cluster and incidental sampling methods were employed. The cluster sampling was done based on the participants' clusters and sampling distributions of table 1. The incidental sampling was based on the participants' availability and willingness to participant in the study.

Instrument: The instruments for the study were "social media addiction scale", "beck depression inventory", and "emotional development scale". The "social media addiction scale" by Copez-Lonzoy (2023) was measured on 5-point Likert (1932) format of Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Sometimes (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). It attained convergent validity of 0.87, and reliability of $r = 0.73$. The "beck depression inventory" by Beck

(1921-2021) is measured on 5-point rating format of Not at all true = 1, Hardly true = 2, I don't know = 3, Rather true = 4, and Absolutely = 5. It attained convergent validity of 0.77, and reliability of $r = 0.75$. The "emotional development scale" was development by Hart (2019). The instrument attained convergent validity of 0.81, and reliability of $r = 0.79$. The instrument Not at all true = 1, Hardly true = 2, I don't know = 3, Rather true = 4, and Absolutely = 5.

Procedure: The study was carried out among educated youths in Igboland. The essence of using educated youths was to reduce literacy bias. By this, the participants could read and understand the questionnaire with little or no interpretations. The administration of the instrument happened either in group process or separately. The response period was between 20 to 30 minutes. Informed consent was observed and the study was free from harm.

Design/Statistics: The design of the study was correlational design. This was because the aims of the study were to find the relationships between social media, social media addiction, depression, and emotional

development. The statistics was Pearson Moment Correlation. The statistics examines the relationships between the variables of interest.

RESULT

Data attained interval measurement. Analyses of data were done with version 25 of the SPSS. Results or findings from both the inferential and descriptive statistics were presented. Fallout findings were also presented.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Addiction, Depression, and Emotional Development

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
GENDER	100	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
EDUCATION ATTAINMENT	100	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
OCCUPATION	100	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
AGE	100	14.00	29.00	20.0100	2.63042	.278	.241	.507	.478
STATE OF ORIGIN	100	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
NATIONALITY	100	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
RELIGION	100	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
No. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED	100	1.00	7.00	3.7900	1.73668	-.378	.241	-1.094	.478
HOURS SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA	100	1.00	24.00	8.8200	6.70802	1.121	.241	.243	.478
FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE	100	1.00	5.00	3.7300	1.26215	-.550	.241	-.997	.478
SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION	100	33.00	91.00	60.7800	15.67316	.096	.241	-1.154	.478
DEPRESSION	100	20.00	94.00	41.7200	13.20933	1.370	.241	2.700	.478
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	100	27.00	104.00	80.9200	19.15523	-1.102	.241	.388	.478
Valid N (listwise)	100								

Source: Questionnaire primary data

Table 2 shows that the participants use an average of 4 social media platforms daily, and spend at least (average of) 9 hours daily accessing social media. The participants use social media “Very Often” at an average of 3.73 (approximately 4) of 5. “Social Media Addiction” (60.78 of 91) is very high above average, “Depression” (41.72 of 91) is below

average, and “Emotional Development” (80.92 of 104) is high above average. Skewness shows that only “hours spent on social media” (1.121) and “depression” (1.370) were positive direction. Kurtosis shows that all variables are below 3-point mark of kurtosis, indicating similarity of performance.

Table 3: Correlations of Social Media Addiction, Depression, and Emotional Development

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. SMU (NUMBER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED)	1					
2. SME (HOURS SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA)	.086	1				
3. FSMU	.094	.339**	1			
4. SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION	.143	.296**	.065	1		
5. DEPRESSION	-.091	-.043	-.185	.001	1	
6. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	.095	.097	.056	.173	-.177	1

Source: Questionnaire primary data; **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); N = 100. NOTE: SMU = SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE; SME = SOCIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE; FSMU = FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

HYPOTHESIS ONE: Table 3 shows that the hypothesis one which states that “social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will not significantly correlate with social media addiction among Igbo youths” was accepted ($p < 0.156 > 0.01$, $r = 0.143$, $N = 100$). By this, social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant and

positive low relationship with social media addiction among Igbo youths.

HYPOTHESIS TWO: Table 3 shows that the hypothesis two which states that “social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will not significantly correlate with depression among Igbo youths” was accepted ($p < 0.367 > 0.01$, $r = -0.091$, $N = 100$). By this,

social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant and negative low relationship with depression among Igbo youths.

HYPOTHESIS THREE: Table 3 shows that the hypothesis three which states that “social media usage (number of social media platforms used) will not significantly correlate with emotional development among Igbo youth” was accepted ($p < 0.350 > 0.01$, $r = 0.095$, $N = 100$). By this, social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant and low positive relationship with depression among Igbo youths.

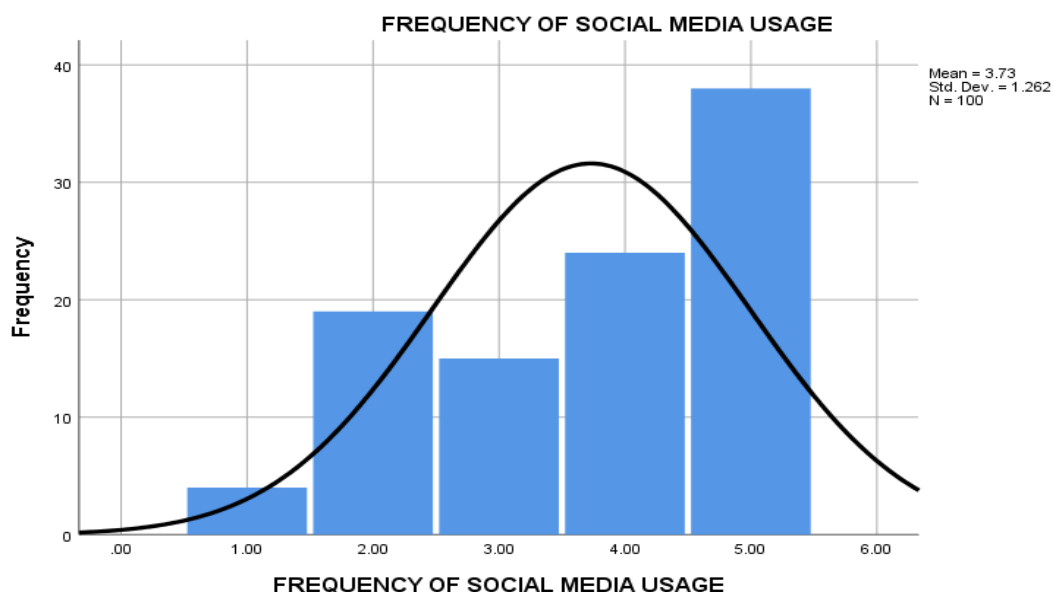
HYPOTHESIS FOUR: Table 3 shows that the hypothesis four which states that “social media exposure (time spent on social media) will not significantly correlate with social media addiction among Igbo youths” was rejected ($p > 0.003 < 0.01$, $r = 0.296$, $N = 100$). By this, social media exposure (time spent on social media) has significant and positive low

relationship with social media addiction among Igbo youths.

HYPOTHESIS FIVE: Table 3 shows that the hypothesis five which states that “social media exposure (time spent on social media) will not significantly correlate with depression among Igbo youths” was accepted ($p < 0.673 > 0.01$, $r = -0.043$, $N = 100$). By this, social media exposure (time spent on social media) has non-significant and negative low relationship with depression among Igbo youths.

HYPOTHESIS SIX: Table 3 shows that the hypothesis six which states that “social media exposure (time spent on social media) will not significantly correlate with emotional development among Igbo youths” was accepted ($p < 0.336 > 0.01$, $r = 0.097$, $N = 100$). By this, social media exposure (time spent on social media) has non-significant and positive low relationship with emotional development among Igbo youths.

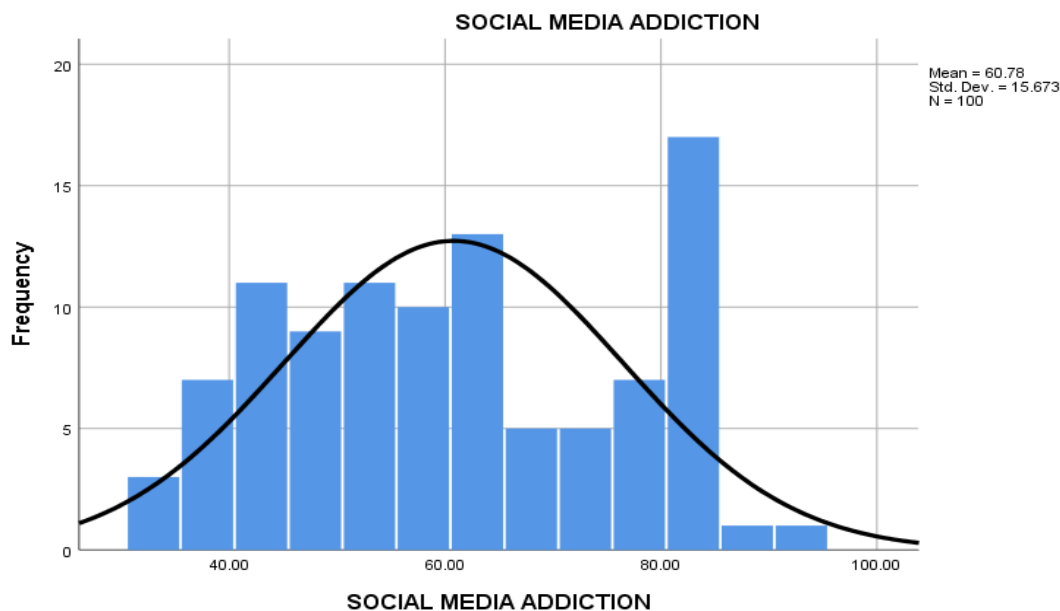
Figure 1: Participants’ Frequency of Social Media Usage



Source: Questionnaire primary data

Figure 1 shows that the participants (Igbo youths) at the 5-point rating format “Always” (5) access social media. “Always” is the highest rating point, indicating maximum social media usage.

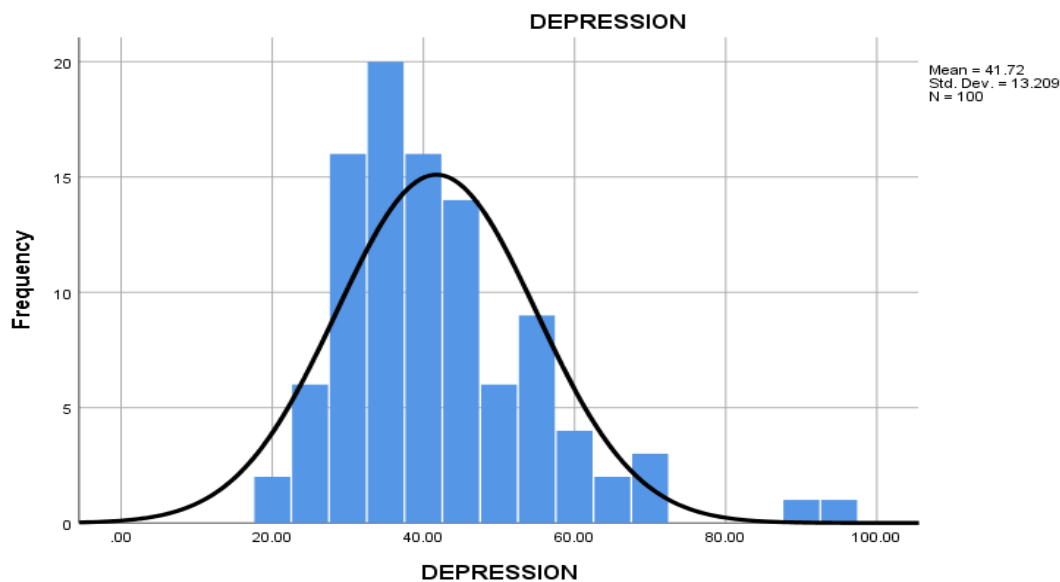
Figure 2: Participants' Social Media Addiction



Source: Questionnaire primary data

Figure 2 shows pronounced performance within the normal curve, indicating high use of social media which cannot necessarily be described as addiction.

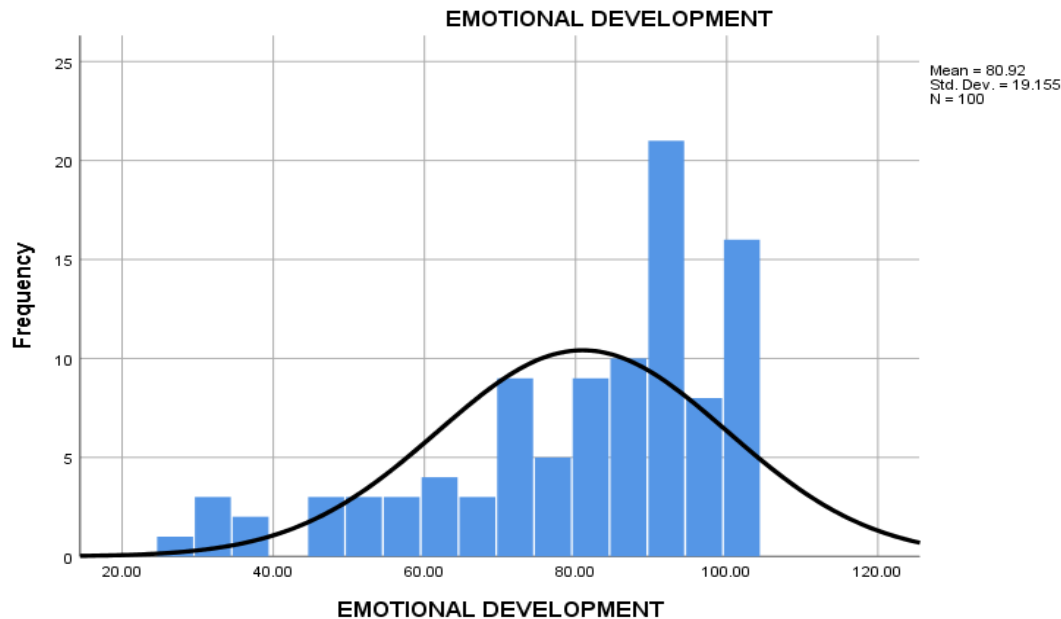
Figure 3: Participants' Depression



Source: Questionnaire primary data

Figure 3 shows left-skewed histogram with substantial outlier below the mean (41.72), indicating absence of "depression" among the participants (youths).

Figure 4: Participants’ Emotional Development



Source: Questionnaire primary data

Figure 4 shows concentration “emotional development” on the right above the mean (80.92), indicating pronounced “emotional development” of the participants (youths).

Summary of Findings/Results

1. Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant and low positive relationship with social media addiction among Igbo youths.
2. Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant negative low relationship with depression among Igbo youths.
3. Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant and low positive relationship with depression among Igbo youths.
4. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has significant and positive low relationship with social media addiction among Igbo youths.
5. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has non-significant and negative low relationship with depression among Igbo youths.
6. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has non-significant and positive low relationship with emotional development among Igbo youths.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated social media lifestyle among Igbo youths - usage, and exposure: the addiction, depression and emotional development correlates. It was the findings of the study that: Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant relationship with social media addiction among Igbo youths. Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has negative non-significant relationship with depression among Igbo youths. Social media usage (number of social media platforms used) has non-significant relationship with depression among Igbo youths. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has significant relationship with social media addiction among Igbo youths. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has non-significant relationship with depression among Igbo youths. Social media exposure (time spent on social media) has non-significant relationship with emotional development among Igbo youths.

The impact of social media on youth is multifaceted, presenting both risks and

opportunities. As young people navigate this digital landscape, it is crucial to promote digital literacy and responsible usage to mitigate negative effects while leveraging the positive aspects of social media for their well-being. Ongoing research and societal discussions are essential to address these challenges effectively.

Limitation of the Study

1. The study focused on Igbo youths of Eastern Nigeria. Only one hundred samples comprising university students were used in the study.

Implications of the Study

1. One of the major implications of the study is that Igbo youths do not experience any known adverse psychological health as a result of social media usage or exposure.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Igbo youths should sustain their seemly healthy access to social media.
2. Sense of industry should be used to engage the youths meaningfully thereby reducing their unproductive addiction to social media.

Contributions to Knowledge

The study has contributed to knowledge by bringing into focus an empirical fact that Igbo youths still have psychological healthy social media lifestyle amidst prevalent and

inevitable social media usage and exposure among modern youths.

Suggestion for Further Study

Suggestions are made for expansion of samples for future studies on the topic. Cross-cultural studies are also suggested on the topic in course of future studies.

REFERENCES

- Beck, A.T. (1972). *Depression: Causes and Treatment*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
- Copez-Lonzoy, A., Vallejos-Flores, M., Capa-Luque, W., Salas-Blas, E., Montero Doig, A. M., Dias, P. C., & Bazo-Alvarez, J. C. (2023). Adaptation of the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) in Spanish. *Acta Psychologica*, 241, Article 104072. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2023.104072>
- Hart, S. & Jacobsen, S.L. (2019). The Emotional Development Scale: Assessing the Emotional Capacity of 4–12 Year Olds. *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, 18(2), 185-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15289168.2019.1583056>