



Influence of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study of University of Nigeria Nsukka

Okoye, Onyinyechi E., Obiozor, Elizabeth E. & Ochiagha, Chibuike .D

Department of Adult Education & Extra-Mural Studies, UNN
onyinyechi.okoye@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

The social media platforms in particular, internet such as Facebook,Whatsapps, Youtube and many others, are obviously “overtaking the world” and could be regarded as “a global consumer phenomenon”. Social media usage is one of the most common activities among children, adolescents, and emerging adults nowadays. It offers today’s youth a portal for entertainment and communication and it is becoming one of the main platforms for accessing information and news. This study examines the influence of social media on Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies students' academic performance, University of Nigeria Nsukka. There was no sample because the size of population is manageable. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The responses of 29 respondents were collected, scored, and analyzed using descriptive statistics based on the research questions. The findings revealed that the internet was used to connect with other people for academic or commercial purposes; it also indicated that students use different social media on daily basis for different purposes which also served as a distraction. In the light of the above, the study recommended that seminars should be organized in various faculties and departments. Lecturers could adopt new strategy by channeling assignments or discussions on social media. The university authority should restrict access to free social media sites. The study therefore concluded that acquiring information both locally and internationally is no longer a struggle as compared to the olden days. Most students used social media to collaborate with one another on assignments and lecture notes which further enhanced their ability to use social networking sites for improved academic performance.

Keywords: Social media, internet, academic performance

Introduction

This forceful adoption of social media among the youths of our generation could be attributed to their up to date knowledge of the latest technology and convenient accessibility to these social networking tools. The advent of the internet in the 1990s led to major developments in the world of communication, hence the introduction of social media sites. This advancement led to proliferation of information on the internet whereby two-third (2/3) of the internet world’s population visit social networking sites (Camilia, Sajoh, & Dalhatu, 2013), thus serving as communication and connection tools. Social media is fast changing the public discourse in the society and is setting trends and agenda in topics that ranges from environment and politics, to technology and the entertainment industry (Asur and Huberman, 2010). Advances in internet technologies have spurred compelling changes on how students interact, communicate, learn, and build knowledge as well as collaborate to enhance academic performance. The adoption of social media among the younger generation according to Taprial and Kanwar (2012), could be attributed to their familiarity with these technologies and the ease of accessing information with these tools. For instance, they can access social media from their cell phones any time any place. This



encourages them to use social media not only for receiving and retrieving information, but also for connecting with others.

Social media keeps changing continuously, as such, it is difficult to assign a fixed definition to it. However, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. In the same vein, Whiting and Williams (2013) asserted that social media is a communication channel which is very popular, extremely fast and broad, has proven to be highly effective, as well as trusted by billions of people, to share and discover content concerning individuals, brands, information, entertainment and know how. Contextually, social media involves some form of communication between individuals over the internet. There has been tremendous improvement since this era and today there exist uncountable social networking sites either developed for local use, specific purpose or international use. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), classified social media into six (6) different categories as follows; Collaborative project (wikipedia), Blogs and micro blogs (twitter), Content communities (youtube), Social networking sites (FB, 2go, BB chat), Virtual game World (world of war craft), Virtual second world (second life). This classification has been useful to scholars and individuals for easy identification and study of a particular social media type, but today a difficulty may arise due to the high proliferation of social media and one may wonder which group a new developed social media type fits into. Social media is considered to be the fastest growing web application in the 21 century and this rapid development is being backed by technological advancement (Enraquez, 2010).

Social media can influence students' academic performance positively or negatively. Social media improved student's ability to absorb and use information effectively. Since the introduction of these social media networks, students' academic life has moved to a different dimension and several studies have affirmed that social media plays an important role on students in higher education (Rifkin et al., 2012).

Social media has contributed greatly in facilitating learning in the 21st century. Yunus and Salehi (2012), argued that students gained more vocabulary, improved their writing skills and reduced their spelling mistakes through social media usage. In fact as an educational tool, social media enriches learning by giving both students and teachers the opportunity to connect in new and very exciting ways thereby encouraging flexible mode of learning. It is stated that flexible learning expands the choice on what, when and how people learn. It supports different styles of learning including E-learning which is highly patronized across the globe (Pappas, 2013). Other scholars like O'keeffe and Clake-pearson (2011), in their study also revealed that social media benefits students by connecting them to one another on assignments and class projects. This can also improve collaboration among students.

By spending much time working with new technologies, students develop more familiarity with computers and other electronic devices. With the increased focus on technology in education and business, students build skills that will help enhance their creativity. Aside positive influences, social media also affects student's performance negatively. Studies generally imply that social media is mainly used by university students to socialize rather than for academic pursuits. Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) found out that university students around the age of 20 with accounts on Myspace or Facebook use these systems "to keep in touch with old friends" (96.0%), "to keep in touch with present friends (91.1%), "to post/look at pictures" (57.4%), "to make new friends"

(56.4%), and “to locate old friends” (54.5%). But only 10.9 percent stated that they used it “for academic purposes”, and only (12.9%) listed their courses on their profiles

Cyberbullying is a category of bullying that occurs in the digital realm or medium of electronic text. According to Tokunaga (2010), it is any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others. The causes of cyberbullying according to Calvete, et al. (2010), was significantly related with the use of proactive aggression, justification of violence, exposure to violence and less perceived social support of friends.

The rate at which people post or share fake information calls for alarm and it is difficult to ascertain that what people say and post are truly who they are. Individuals’ private information is publicly displayed on some of these social networks and malicious people take advantage and perpetrate all kinds of harassment. Furthermore, Preibusch, et al. (2007) also argued that the privacy options offered by most social networking sites do not provide users with the flexibility needed to handle conflicts with individuals who have different conceptions of privacy. Notably, Osharive (2015) revealed explicitly that social media can be problematic to students’ academic life if caution is not taken in its usage. Many students rely on any information they see on social media and the web without verifying the source. This can be hazardous considering the fact that there is fake news, rumour, misinformation, disinformation and the like which requires constant verification.

The internet is one of most growing sources of information and cannot be underestimated. The researchers have observed that so many studies have been conducted on the influence of social media on student’s academic performance in different institutions which none has been conducted in the University of Nigeria Nsukka. This prompted the researchers to find out the reasons why students spend hours with their phones on daily basis and how relatively effective this is to their academic performance. This research therefore seeks to investigate the level of engagement of students on social media and its influence on the academic performance of Adult Education & EMS students, University of Nigeria Nsukka.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study was to examine the influence of social media on Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies students' academic performance, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify the different social media used by the students of University of Nigeria Nsukka.
2. examine the reasons for using social media by the students.
3. determine the effect of social media on the academic performance of the students.
4. identify strategies that will be put in place to remedy the situation.

Research Questions

The following research questions below served as a guide for the study.

1. What are the different social media used by the students of the University of Nigeria Nsukka?
2. What are the reasons for using social media by the students?
3. What is the effect of social media on the academic performance of the students?
4. What strategies should be put in place to remedy the situation?



Methods

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive research design. Descriptive research design according to Bryman and Bell (2015) entails the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time. The researchers utilized the entire population due to manageable size. The population comprised of 400 level students in the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, University of Nigeria Nsukka with a total number of 29 students comprising of 5 male and 24 females. Table 3.1 below shows the population the distribution according to gender in 400 level of study.

Table 1: Population of Respondents

S/N	400 Level of Students	Population	Percentage (%)
1	Male	5	17.2%
2	Female	24	82.8%
	Total	29	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The gender distribution of the respondents in table 1 above indicated that 5(17.2%) are males and 24(82.8%) are females. There are more female students than the males. The decision to use questionnaire was arrived after considering the nature of the data to be collected and the relative low cost of producing it. Questionnaires were proportionally distributed by the researchers to 400 level undergraduate students of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies Department, University of Nigeria Nsukka. The study utilized descriptive statistics for analysis of data and results presented in tables, frequency distribution and percentages for coherence and explicit interpretation.

Results

Research Question 1: Which of the social media sites do you utilize/use most?

Table 2: Different Social Media used by 400 ADE Students

S/N	Social Media Site	Most Used	Moderately Used	Rarely Used	Not Used At All	Total
1	Facebook	17 58.6%	9 31%	2 6.9%	1 3.5%	100%
2	WhatsApp	22 75.8%	5 17.2%	1 3.5%	1 3.5%	100%
3	Twitter	17 58.6%	7 24.1%	3 10.4%	2 6.9%	100%
4	Youtube	14 48.3%	10 34.4%	2 6.9%	3 10.4%	100%
5	Instagram	9 31.1%	8 27.6%	7 24.1%	5 17.2%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 above shows the frequency of the different social media used by 400 ADE Students of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. 17(58.6%) of the respondents mostly used Facebook, followed by 9(31%) moderately used Facebook, and 2(6.9%) rarely used face book and lastly 1(3.5%) does not used face book at all. Whatsapp which is the second social media used by ADE students, 22(75.8%) mostly used whatsapp, 5(17.2%) moderately used whatsapp and 1(3.5%) rarely used whatsapp and



lastly 1(3.4%) do not use whatsapp at all. 17(58.6%) mostly used twitter, 7(24.1%) moderately used twitter, 3(10.4%) rarely used twitter and 2(6.9%) of the students do not use twitter at all. 14(48.3%) of the respondents mostly used Youtube, 10(34.4%) moderately used Youtube, 2(6.9%) rarely used Youtube and 3(10.4%) do not use Youtube at all. On Instagram, 9(31.1%) of the respondents mostly used it, 8(27.6%) moderately used Instagram, 7(24.1%) rarely used Instagram and 5(17.2%) do not use Instagram at all. This shows that, the respondents often use the social media such as Whatsapp, Facebook Youtube and Instagram.

Research Question 2: What are your reasons for using social media as a student?

Table 3: Reasons why ADE Students Use Social Media

S/N	Reasons why Students Use Social Media	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	collaborate with class mates on assignment	13 44.8%	11 37.9%	2 6.9%	3 10.4%	100%
2	Access literature	10 34.6%	13 44.8%	4 13.7%	2 6.9%	100%
3	To be up to date with current news and events	9 31.1%	14 48.3%	3 10.3%	3 10.3%	100%
4	Keep up with friends	14 48.3%	11 37.9%	1 3.5%	3 10.3%	100%
5	For entertainment	15 51.7%	9 31.1%	3 10.3%	2 6.9%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 shows the reason why ADE students use social media. From the responses presented, 13(44.8%) strongly agreed that they used social media to collaborate with class mates on assignment while 11(37.9%) agreed that they used social media to also collaborate with class mates on assignments, 2(6.9%) disagreed that they do not collaborate with class mate on assignment, while 3(10.4%) strongly disagreed that they do not use social media to collaborate with class mates on assignments. 10(34.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they used social media to access literature, 13(44.8%) also agreed that they used social media to access literature, while 4(13.7%) disagreed that they do not use social media to access literature and 2(6.9%) strongly disagreed that they do not use social media to access literature. To be up to date with current news and events and 9(31.1%) strongly agreed that they used social media, and 14(48.3%) agreed that they used social media to be current with news and events, 3(10.3%) disagreed with the fact that they do not use social media to be up to date with current news and 3(10.3%) strongly disagreed that they do not use social media to be up to date with current news and events. 14(48.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they used social media to keep up with friends, 11(37.9%) agreed that they used social media to keep up with friends, while 1(3.5%) disagreed and 3(10.3%) strongly agreed that they do not use social media to keep up with friends. 15(51.7%) strongly agreed that they used social media for entertainment and 9(31.1%) agreed while 3(10.3%) strongly disagreed and 2(6.9%) strongly disagreed that they do not use social media for entertainment. From the findings it shows that the respondents use social media for their academic works, keep up with friends and entertainment.



Research Question 3: In what ways do social media influence your academic performance as a student?

Table 4: Ways social media influence student academic performance

S/N	Ways social media influence student academic performance	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
6	Influences student's thinking ability	11 37.9%	12 41.4%	4 13.7%	2 6.9%	100%
7	Distraction	12 41.4%	8 27.6%	5 17.2%	4 13.7%	100%
8	Influences reading ability	9 31.1%	12 41.4%	6 20.7%	2 6.9%	100%
9	Influences writing skills	13 44.8%	11 37.9%	3 10.3%	2 6.9%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 above shows that 11(37.9%) strongly agreed that social media affects students' thinking ability, 12(41.4%) agreed while 4(13.7%) disagreed and 2(6.9%) strongly disagreed that social media does not affects students' thinking ability. Majority of the respondent strongly agreed that social media served as a distraction as indicated by 12(41.4%). Followed by 8(27.6%) agreed that social media served as a distraction to their academic performance and 5(17.2%) disagreed that social media served as a distraction while 4(13.7%) strongly disagreed that social do not distract them. 9(31.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that social media does not affects their reading ability as students, 12(41.4%) agreed that social media does not affects their reading ability while 6(20.7%) disagreed and 2(6.9%) strongly agreed that social media does not affects their reading ability. 13(44.8%) strongly agreed that social media affects their writing skills, 11(37.9%) agreed that social media affects their writing ability while 3(10.3%) disagreed that social media does not affects their academic performance and 2(6.9%) strongly disagreed that social media does not affects their writing ability.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies to be adopted to remedy the situation?



Table 5: Strategy to be Adopted to Remedy the Situation

S/N	Strategies to be adopted to remedy the situation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
10	Free data server such as Wi-Fi on campuses should be used strictly for academic purposes.	12	41.4%	15	51.7%	100%
11	Creative tasks such as practical assignment should be given to students that involve critical thinking which they cannot copy from each other	14	48.3%	11	37.9%	100%
12	Awareness should be created on the effect of social media on student academic performance	11	37.9%	10	34.6%	100%
13	Lecture notes and assignments should be uploaded online	10	34.6%	8	27.6%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

In table 5 above, the number of respondents represented by 10(41.4%) strongly agreed free data server such as Wi-Fi on campuses should be used strictly for academic performance, 15(51.7%) agreed while 1(3.5%) disagreed and 1(3.5%) strongly disagreed that free data should be used strictly for academic purposes. That awareness should be created on the effect of social media on student academic performance, followed by. 14(48.3%) agreed and 11(37.9%) strongly agreed that creative tasks such as practical assignment should be given to students that involve critical thinking which they cannot copy from each other, while 1(3.5%) disagreed and 3(10.3%) strongly agreed that creative tasks such as practical assignment should be given to students that involve critical thinking which they cannot copy from each other. 11(37.9%) strongly agreed and 10(34.6%) strongly agreed that awareness should be created on the effect of social media on student academic performance while 5(17.2%) disagreed and 4(13.7%) strongly disagreed that awareness should be created on the effect of social media on student academic performance. 10(34.6%) strongly agreed and 8(27.6%) agreed that lectures note and assignment should be uploaded online while 6(20.7%) disagreed and 5(17.2%) strongly agreed that lectures note and assignment should be uploaded online.



Discussion

The study was conducted to investigate the influence of social media on student's academic performance in Nigeria Universities, a case study of University of Nigeria Nsukka. The findings revealed that students of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies Department, University of Nigeria Nsukka are well exposed to social media networks; all 29 respondents use one social media platform or the other like Whatsapp 22(75.8%), Facebook 17(58.6%), twitter 17(58.6%), Instagram 9(31.1%) and Youtube 14(48.3%). This corroborates the findings of Wiley and Sisson (2006), that previous studies have found that more than 90% percent of tertiary school students use social media. The study thus revealed the main reason why ADE students use social media and how helpful it is to them in their academic. It also helps them to disseminate knowledge to their peers such as to collaborate with each other on assignment, to access literature and to be up to date with current news and events. More so, O'keeffe and Clake-Pearson (2011), revealed that social media benefit students by connecting them to one another on assignments and class projects. In the same direction Salvation and Adzhruddin (2014), concluded in their study that, students are able to formulate group discussions to exchange ideas and communicate to their teachers as well as call on friends about assignments on social media sites. Indeed one cannot dispute the fact that social media networks contribute immensely to students' academic life when used judiciously. The findings also showed that social media also served as a distraction and it also affects their writing skills. This finding corroborates the arguments made by some scholars such as Khan (2010) and Englander et al., (2010) whose findings suggested that social media is a nuisance to students' academic life. Lastly the research also revealed that awareness should be created on the effect of social media on students' academic performance to enhance their usage on social media without affecting their academic performance and creative tasks, such as practical work be given to students that involved critical thinking to avoid copying work from each other.

Conclusion

It is without doubt that social media is and will remain an important tool in human life as far as academics and communication is concerned. Today mankind is harvesting tremendously from its existence not only in mere communication point of view but also in most scholarly activities. Acquiring information both locally and internationally from friends, lecturers or experts is no longer a struggle as compared to the olden days and the internet is the ultimate master behind this success. The research revealed that social media influenced students' academic life positively, helped them acquire new skills and broaden their horizon but at the same time, students must be cautious so as not to become distracted and addicted to social media.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Seminars should be organized in the various faculties and department to enlighten students more about the possible implications of social media on their academic performance.
2. Lecturers can adopt new strategies by channeling assignments or discussions on social media platforms to help inculcate the habit of using these sites for academic work.
3. The university authority should also restrict access to free social media sites that may be prone to distracting students' attention during school.



References

- Asur, S. & Huberman, B.A. (2010). Predicting the future with social media. WI-IAT 10 Proceedings of the 2010 IEEE/WIC/ACM *International Conference on Web Intelligence and Intelligent Agent Technology*. Retrieved from <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/45909086>.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2015). *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Calvete, E., Orue, I., Estévez, A., Villardón, L., & Padilla, P. (2010). Cyberbullying in adolescents: Modalities and aggressors' profile. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(5), 1128-1135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.03.017>.
- Camilia, O., Sajoh, I., & Dalhatu, B. (2013). The Effect of social networking sites usage on the studies of Nigerian students. *The International Journal of Engineering and Science (IJES)*, 2(7), 2319-1805.
- Englander, F. Terregrossa, R. A. & Wang, Z. (2010). Educational Review. *Journal of education* 62(1), 85-96. <http://books.google.com.gh/books?id7MpDOE>.
- Enraquez, N. (2010). Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*. 3 (1).
- Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite: The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1)59.
- Khan, S., (2010). Impact of social networking websites on students. *Abasyan journal of social sciences*, 5 (2). 56-75. www.irjims.com.
- O'Keeffe, G.S., & Clarke-Pearson, K. (2011). The impact of social media on children, adolescents, and families. *Pediatrics*. Volume 127(4), 800-804.
- Osharive, P. (2015). Social media and academic performance of students, conference paper. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273765340>.
- Pappas, C., (2013). The role of social media in E-learning. <http://elearningindustry.com/role-of-social-media-in-elearning>.
- Preibusch, S., Hoser, B., Gurses, S. & Berendt, B. (2007) Ubiquitous social networks - opportunities and challenges for privacy-aware user modelling, In: Proceedings of Workshop on Data Mining for User Modeling, Corfu, Greece.
- Raacke, J., & Bonds-Raacke, J. (2008). MySpace and Facebook: Applying the uses and gratifications theory to exploring friend-networking sites. *Journal of Cybertherapy and Rehabilitation*, 11(2), 169–174. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2007.0056>
- Rifkin, W., Longnecker, N., Leach, J., & Davis, L. (2012). Assigning students to publish on the web: Examples, hurdles, and needs. *Journal of the NUS Teaching Academy*, 2(2). 79-94.
- Salvation, M. & Adzharuddin, N. A. (2014). The influence of social networking sites (SNSs) upon academic performance of Malaysian Students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(10) 131-137. www.ijhssnet.com/journal
- Taprial, T. & Kanwar, N. (2012). The media effect tradition. Barret, O.B. and Chriss, N. Eds. *Approaches to Media: A Reader*. London: Gray Publishing Theribridge, Wall.
- Tokunaga. Following you home from school: a critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization. *Comput Hum Behav*. 2010;26:277–87.
- Whiting Z., & Williams, C. (2013). Impact of Social Media of Student's Academic Performance. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 5(4), Pp. 22- 29.



- Wiley, C., & Sisson, M. (2006). Ethics, Accuracy and Assumption: the use of Facebook by students and employers. Paper presented at the Southwestern Ohio Council for higher education Special Topics Forums, Dayton, OH. <https://www.books.google.com.gh>.
- Yunus, M.M. and H. Salehi, 2012. The effectiveness of facebook groups on teaching and improving writing: Students' perceptions. *International Journal of Education and Information Technologies*, 1(6): 87-96.