

## **Analysis of Usage and Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of University Students**

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### **Abstract**

The study analyzed social media usage among University undergraduate students and the perceived influence on their academic performance using descriptive survey research design. Participants of the study consist of 280 undergraduate students from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State and Abia state University, Uturu selected using stratified simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire validated by three experts. Its reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha for internal consistency of the items and the reliability index of the entire instrument is .83. Result of data analysis done using frequency counts, mean and percentages indicate that the social media networks mostly used by students are WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram, among others. The study also reveals that a greater percentage of the students spend six or more hours daily on social media on both academic and nonacademic activities. It was concluded that students' level of engagement in social media activities is high with social media having both positive and negative influence on their academic activities. However, the negative influence is greater than the positive. The research recommends that lecturers should redirect many of their teaching activities through social media to ensure positive utilization. The study also recommends enlightenment and counselling sessions for students on the right use of the social media platforms.

**Key words:** Social Media, Activities, Academic Performance, University students

## Introduction

The evolution of internet technology has led to prevalence in the use of social media especially among University undergraduate students who are predominantly late adolescents and young adults. In line with this, Talaue, AlSaad, AlRushaidan, AlHugail and AlFahhad, (2018) noted that users of social media, in most cases, are a representative of the younger generation. Most of the University undergraduate students have been under the restriction of parents and teachers while at the lower levels of education, but are left to take decisions on their own when they are admitted into the University or other tertiary institutions where many social activities are operational. The numerous social and academic activities that go on in the University environment make University education challenging. Although University life is one of the most memorable experiences in one's life, it is a stressful and critical developmental period of the students. The initial relative freedom experienced by the young adults in the University environments make them vulnerable to many social ills occasioned by many social factors. Social factors prevalent in the University environment include social media activities, romantic relationships, sports activities, organizations and clubs, cultism, religion, among others. Of these activities, social media is the most prominent and common among University students.

According to Nwaburuke and Eremie (2021), social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network. Hence, one could refer to social media as any media circulated with the help of social interactions. Oguguo, Ajuonuma, Azubuike, Ene, Atta and Oko (2020) noted that social media is the cybernetic and simulated relationships, among people, organizations, and companies. This entails the invention, sharing or exchanging data in the form of texts, images, and symbols. Social media, which are internet-based applications, are built on the Web 2.0 ideology and technology. Hence, individuals or groups of individuals build social media on web-based facilities that allow for the construction of public or semi-public profiles (Shen & Khalifa, 2023).

Within the past decades, new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools such as smartphones and tablets have provided sufficient incentives for enhancing communications and entrepreneurial activity (Lagi & Raja, 2017). Social media is an aspect of ICT that has rapidly proliferated and penetrated almost every sector of human life. In our present days, it is almost a common practice for people to spend a major of their time making use of social networks. This is traceable to the fact that it is easy to use and it facilitates speeds and durability. Social

media is fast changing the public discourse in our societies and setting trends and agendas in topics that range from the environment, education and politics to technology and the entertainment industries (Reuters' Institute, 2024, Casero-Ripolles, 2022). Currently, technology has invaded all sectors of the economy including education. Students own smart phones and computers, especially at the tertiary institutions. They spend time on the internet making use of social media applications accompanying these smart phones and computers. Students chat online with friends, families, teachers with many social media platforms. It is therefore obvious that the modern reality requires one to stay in touch and keep abreast with the latest news and trends of our time. Users of social networks, in most cases as have been reported, are a representative of the younger generation (Oguguo, et al, 2020).

Social media creates the opportunity to network with other members who share similar or common interest, dreams and goals. University students engage in numerous social media and internet activities such as WhatsApp. Emails, i-messages, twitter, chrome, computer games, sports, Instagram, snap chats, music, YouTube videos, telegram, Tik Tok, LinkedIn, among others. Communication through some of these media is easier, cheaper and faster. For instance, WhatsApp messenger has made communication through mobile phones easier, faster and cheaper. It is less expensive when compared to the normal phone messaging. With WhatsApp messenger, an individual can chat with friends and family overseas without having to incur global SMS charges (Mazur, 2021).

A good number of Universities undergraduate students engage in the internet activities discussed above, for both academic and nonacademic purposes while in school. These students devote a lot of time in these social media activities. It is speculated that a student's academic performance may be influenced, either positively or negatively by his/her involvement in the social media activities (Masroom, AI-Rahmi & Othman, 2021).

According to Ihedinihu (2022), academic performance is the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects. Teachers and education officials typically measure achievement using classroom performance, graduation rates, and results from standardized tests. These include grades, honors, awards, competitive results and experiences that demonstrate your academic prowess, engagement in student life, contributions to the community and resilience.

Several researchers have studied some of the uses of social media, the length of time students spend on social media and the influence of social media usage on academic activities and performance of students at secondary and tertiary levels of education. Oguguo, et al (2020) studied the influence of social media on secondary school students' academic achievement. The study adopted ex-post facto research design. Data collected from fifty students using questionnaire and achievement test were analyzed using mean and standard deviation as well as t test. Result showed that students spend average of 2 to 4 hours daily on social media. that the students frequently engage in social media in order to make new friends, research about their assignments, source for educational materials, stay up to dates with latest trends and news. The result also showed that frequency of use of social media has no significant influence on academic achievement of the students.

Talaue, AlSaad, AlRushaidan, AlHugail and AlFahhad, (2018) discussed the impact of social media on academic performance of selected college students (indicate area of study) using descriptive research design. The researchers opined that social networks become an integral part of the students' full life, took up most of their free time. Undoubtedly, in social networks, there are also things useful for the development of the students. Besides, communication with peers through social networks, can help a student socialize, find new friends, discuss with them issues related to studies. The study concluded that social media have dual impact on students' academic achievement, and advised that it is necessary to approach adolescents' use of social networks with responsibility.

Nwoburuke and Eremie (2021) examined the influence of social media on academic performance of secondary school students and its implication for counseling in Rivers state of Nigeria using a descriptive survey design approach. Questionnaire was used to collect data on a sample of 357 students. Result of data analyzed using mean and standard deviation revealed that, the use of Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube could positively and negatively influence academic performance of students. In addition, Oluwadara and Oldokun (2021) examined the influence of social media on the academic performance of students in the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. It explains the functions of the internet and its influence on the University students' academic performance. The authors opined that the university students were exposed to new information and happenings in the school and they spend more time online and things of interest to them and their studies. Business world (2020) outlined positive effects of social media on education to include diverse thinking and interaction; ability to reach experts and

improved collaboration whereas the negative effects of social media on education include low retention rates and a drop in attention span, weaker writing abilities and reliance on the internet.

Oberiri (2017) studied the influence of social media on Taraba state university students' academic performance using a quantitative survey approach. Data collected using questionnaire and analyzed descriptively revealed that students of Taraba state university have access to the internet and postulate that students who spend more time on social media are likely to perform poorly in their academic activities than those who do not. Amadi and Ewa (2018) examined the effects of social media on the academic performance of students in River state university. Causal comparative research design was adopted. The study found, among others, that majority of the students spend not less than 6 hours on social network services daily surfing the websites and interacting with other users for academic and non-academic purposes.

Osharive (2015) examined the influence of social media on academic performance of students in University of Lagos using descriptive research design. Data were collected using questionnaire and analyzed through frequency counts, percentages as well as chi-square. Research findings showed that a great number of students in university of Lagos were addicted to social media and that affected their academic performance adversely. Nasela (2017) investigated the impact of social media on students' classroom participation in social studies in Benue state University, Markurdi. The study adopted a descriptive survey. Data were collected from a sample of 200 (300-level) students offering B. Ed Pre-Primary/ Primary education social studies using rating scale and analyzed using t-test and Pearson product moment correlation. The finding revealed significant negative relationship between students' involvement in social media and their active participation in classroom activities. Similarly, Englander and Wang (2010) posited that frequent use of social media has negative relationship with students' commitment to academic activities in the classroom activities. Mehmood and Taswir (2013) noted that globalization of information sharing devices is a positive global development that students at various levels of education need to explore and compete favourably with their peers elsewhere in the world. However, this development has presented alongside some information that tend to affect individual students negatively which need to be guided against for their academic development. On the other hand, Nwangwa, Yonlofoun and Omotere (2014) carried out an investigation into the influence of social media usage on research skills of educational management graduating students in Nigeria. They reported that students who use social media

networks for the purpose of academic research are more skillful in research writing than those who depend on using physical library material.

Kolau and Dzandza (2018) investigated the effects of social media on academic performance of students in University of Ghana using descriptive survey. The findings of the study showed that a number of students are addicted to social media and that was found to be detrimental to their academic life despite its importance on students' academic life such as disseminating knowledge, group discussions and building relationships through those sites. Nagel, et al (2018) presented findings on social media use by students in three levels of post-secondary program at two institutions. The study found that students are almost universally using at least one social network, Facebook as the most popular, and Instagram second. Social media usage levels of students in the study far exceeded that of the adults.

A look at the literature review shows that most studies on social media used secondary school students whose use of social media through smart phones is restricted. The works that used post-secondary school students were conducted in other geographical regions other than Abia State. This creates the need to replicate the studies in Abia State. The purpose of the study therefore is to analyze the use of social media among University undergraduate students and its perceived influence on their academic performance.

### **Research Questions**

1. What social media networks do University undergraduate students mostly use?
2. What activities do University undergraduate students use social media for?
3. What is the estimated duration of time University undergraduate students spend on social media per day?
4. To what extent does social media usage influence academic performance of University undergraduate students?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The responses of students on the social media networks they use, the duration of time they spend on social media and what they mostly use social media to do are obtained and analyzed. Also, student's opinion on the influence of social media on their academic performance was obtained and analyzed.

Participants of the study were two hundred and eighty (280) undergraduate students from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Abia State and Abia State University, Uturu. They were selected through stratified simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire captioned “Social Media Engagement Questionnaire”. The questionnaire has two sections 1 and 2. Section 1 contained demographic data of the respondents while section 2 consisted of four clusters A, B, C and D. Cluster A captioned “frequently used social media” contained 12 items, cluster B captioned “what students use social media for” has 15 items arranged as academic and non-academic. Cluster C captioned “Duration of time spent on Social Media” contained three options. Cluster D is captioned “Influence of social media on academic performance of student” has 11 items, also arranged as positive and negative influence. Altogether, there are 41 items in the instrument. The instrument was designed using structured items that were based on a four point Likert scale of very high extent (VHE), high extent (HE), Low extent (LE), very low extent (VLE) with points 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. Three lecturers, one from Computer Science Education and two from Measurement and Evaluation validated the instrument. The instrument was trial tested on a sample of 30 students outside the participants of the study. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach alpha method based on the collected data. The estimates of cluster A and cluster B are 0.75 and 0.69 respectively, while the estimates for cluster C and cluster D are 0.82 and 0.70 respectively. The stability of the entire instrument was determined using test retest method and Pearson Product Moment Correlation used to obtain a coefficient of 0.83. The researcher engaged the services of three trained research assistants to help in the administration of the questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions. The decision was based on real limit of numbers as shown in the range: 3.5 – 4.00 very high extent, 2.5 – 3.49 high extent, 1.50 – 2.49 low extent and 1.00 – 1.49 very low extents.

## Results

**Research Questions 1: What social media networks do University undergraduate students mostly use?**

**Table 1: Social Media Networks mostly used by University undergraduate students**

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Remarks
1	WhatsApp	190	60	30	0	3.6	VHE
2	Instagram	180	70	25	5	3.5	VHE

3	Facebook	185	68	20	7	3.5	VHE
4	YouTube	45	55	60	120	2.1	LE
5	Email	125	90	50	15	3.2	HE
6	Telegram	20	30	91	139	1.8	LE
7	Zoom/Google media	30	43	100	107	2.0	LE
8	LinkedIn	12	20	68	180	1.5	LE
9	Snapchat	5	15	75	185	1.4	VLE
10	Twitter	125	95	50	10	3.2	HE
11	Tiktok	120	95	50	15	3.1	HE
12	Nelflix	40	55	60	125	2.0	LE

Out of numerous social media sites or platforms, the researcher isolated 12 based on observation, literature and interaction with the students. Results in table 1 show that out of the 12 media platforms listed, 3 have very high extent, 3 have high extent, 5 have low extent while 1 has very low extent. The order of frequently visited sites and their mean are as follows: WhatsApp (3.6 – very high extent), Facebook and Instagram (3.5 – very high extent), Twitter /email (3.2 – high extent), Tik Tok (3.1 – high extent), YouTube (2.1 – low extent), Zoom/google media 2.0 – low extent, Netflix (2.0 – low extent), Telegram (1.8 – low extent) LinkedIn (1.5 – low extent) and Snapchat (1.4 – very low extent). Hence WhatsApp emerged as the most frequently used social media site.

### Research Questions 2: What activities do University undergraduate students mostly use social media for?

**Table 2: Activities Students Use Social Media For Academic Uses**

		Academic Uses				Mean	Remarks
S/N	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE		
1	Reading educational articles	60	55	45	120	2.20	LE
2	Researching about future academic careers	60	65	90	65	2.43	LE
3	Reaching out to lecturers for guidance	130	60	50	40	3.00	HE
4	Reaching out to classmates for assignments/information about lectures	190	60	25	5	3.55	VHE
5	Completing notes with google	60	60	70	90	2.32	LE
6	Watching YouTube videos to learn	60	93	97	30	2.65	HE
7	Playing academic games/quiz	50	60	70	100	2.21	LE
8	Transferring text, program, files, spreadsheet and even photographic images to colleagues	180	70	25	5	3.52	VHE
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>2.74</b>	<b>HE</b>
Non Academic Uses							
1	Making and chatting with friends	170	80	25	5	3.48	HE



2	Uploading pictures and/ videos	120	95	50	15	3.14	HE
3	Staying up to date with latest trends and news	185	65	25	5	3.54	VHE
4	Playing recreational games	20	30	90	140	1.75	LE
5	Watching videos and movies	120	80	65	15	3.08	HE
6	Promoting businesses	120	100	50	10	3.18	HE
7	Watching football	45	50	60	125	2.05	LE
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>2.89</b>	<b>HE</b>

Result presented in table 2 shows that to a very high extent, students use social media to reach out to classmates for assignments and information about Lectures; transferring text, Programs, files, Spreadsheets and even photographic images to colleagues. To a high extent, students use social media to reach out to lecturers for guidance and information and to watch YouTube videos to learn. On the other hand, the result shows that to a low extent, students use social media to research about future academic careers, read educational articles, complete notes with google, and play academic games/quiz. The grand mean for academic uses of social media is 2.74, which indicate that to a high extent, students use social media for academic purposes.

Furthermore, table 2 shows that, to a very high extent, students use social media to stay up to date with latest trends and news. To a high extent, students use social media to make and chat with friends, upload pictures and videos, watch videos / movies and promote businesses. On the other hand, students use social media to watch football and play recreational games to a low extent. The grand mean of 2.89 shows that, to a high extent, students use social media for non-academic purposes also. It will be observed that students use social media for non-academic purposes (mean = 2.89) more than for academic purposes (mean = 2.74).

### **Research Question 3: What is the estimated duration of time spend on social media by University undergraduate students?**

**Table 3: Average time spent on social media per day by University undergraduate students.**

<b>Hours</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-2.9	14	5%
3-5.9	116	41%
6 – above	150	54%

From table 3, 5% of the students spend between 0-2.9 hours on social media per day; 41% spend 3-5.9 hours while 54% spend 6 hours and above on social media per day. Hence, a greater percentage of students spend 6 hours and above on social media per day.

Research Question 4: To what extent does social media usage influence academic performance of University undergraduate students?

**Table 4: Perceived influence of social media usage on academic performance of University undergraduate students**

Positive Influence							
S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Remarks
1	Engaging/Participating in academic discussions via social media enhances my rate of understanding	80	90	70	40	2.75	HE
2	I learn better with YouTube videos	45	70	50	115	2.16	LE
3	Social media help me complete my projects and assignments in time	155	72	43	10	3.33	HE
4	Usage of internet/google for research has improved my grade	45	55	100	80	2.23	LE
5	I don't engage in social media activities during my private studies	140	75	48	17	3.21	HE
6	Involvement in social media activities enhance my academic performance	100	90	58	22	2.96	HE
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>2.77</b>	<b>HE</b>
Negative Influence							
7	I miss lectures because of interesting video or movies	120	80	55	25	3.01	HE
8	I engage in chats or movies during lectures	140	90	30	20	3.25	HE
9	Engagement in social media activities distract my private studies	146	80	54	00	3.33	HE
10	My CGPA has dropped since I procured smart phone	40	60	80	100	2.14	LE
11	Generally, engagement in social media activities affect my academic performance negatively	170	80	20	10	3.46	HE
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.04</b>	

The influence of social media (as perceived by students) is arranged into positive influence and negative influence with six and five items respectively. The grand mean of 2.77 for positive influence of social media on academic performance indicates that students, to a high extent, perceive social media to influence their academic performance positively,

Furthermore, the grand mean of 3.04 for negative influence of social media indicate that students, to a high extent, perceive social media to have negative influence on their academic performance. Comparatively, engagements on social media have more negative influence than positive on the academic performance of university undergraduate students.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study show that the social media networks mostly used by students are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Email and Tik Tok in that order. The finding that WhatsApp ranks the most frequently visited social media site could be because students belong to many WhatsApp groups ranging from family, friends and social organizations. They need to read messages from the groups. The findings of this study agree partly with the result of Ogugua et al (2020) who reported high frequency of use of WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook, moderate frequency of use of Instagram, twitter, and telegram among others. Contrarily, the finding is at variance with the finding of Nagel et al (2018) who reported Facebook as the most popular social media engaged by university students.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that students frequently engage in social media to reach out to classmates/colleagues for assignments and information about lectures. Similarly, students reach out to lecturers for guidance and information through social media platforms. Students watch YouTube videos to learn. They chat with friends, stay up to date with latest trends, news, and watch and update pictures/videos, and promote businesses through various social media platforms. On the uses of social media, the finding of this study agrees with the finding of Oguguo et al (2020), Basil, et al (2020), who noted that students frequently engage in social media in order to make new friends, research about their assignments and source for educational materials, stay up to dates with latest trends and news.

On the frequency of use of social media, the result shows that a greater percentage of students spend six hours and more on social media activities per day. The result agrees with other researchers who noted that students spend much time on social media (Oluwadara & Oladokun, 2021, Osharive, 2015). It also agrees with Amadi and Ewa (2018) who reported that students spend not less than 6 hours average on Social Network Services daily. However, it contrasts Basil et al (2020) who reported that students spend average of 2 to 4 hours daily on social media. Most academic and nonacademic activities are done electronically. This could account for the length of time spend on social media.

The present study indicates that University undergraduate students perceive social media engagement as having both positive and negative influence on their academic performance. However, the negative influence is more than the positive influence. The result of this study aligns with a prior expectation. The numerous nonacademic activities that students engage in through social media could account for social media having more negative influence than positive on their academic performance.

As regards the influence of social media on academic performance, the result of the present study aligns with the report of other researchers who noted that social media has both positive and negative effect on academic performance of students (Nwoburuke, Eremie, 2021, Talue, et al, 2018). Some other studies have reported significant negative relationship between social media activities and academic performance (Karpinski, Kirschner, Ozer, Mellott and Ochuo, 2013; Krasilnikov and Smirnova, 2017; Bozoglan, 2017; Oberiri, 2017; Nasela, 2017). Others reported positive influence of social media on academic performance (Nwangwa et al, 2014; Oluwadara and Oladokun, 2021) while some others still found no significant influence of social media engagement on academic performance (Basil et al, 2020)

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher conclude that University undergraduate students visit many social media sites, top among which are WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. A greater percentage of the students spend six or more hours daily on social media for both academic and nonacademic purposes. Social media has both positive and negative influence on academic performance of University undergraduate students with the negative influence being more than positive. The study concludes that students' level of engagement in social media activities is high.

### Recommendations

The researchers made the following recommendations based on the conclusions drawn from the findings:

- a. Lecturers should redirect many of their teaching activities through social media to ensure positive utilization.
- b. Enlightenment programs should be organized by the ministry of education for students on the right use of the social media platforms.

- c. Counselling sessions should be organized by the university administration to educate the students on the influence of social media on their academic activities.

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