



SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AS CORRELATE OF STUDY HABITS OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Keywords:
*Social Media,
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Abstract: *The main purpose of the study was to investigate social media usage as correlate of study habits of students in public universities in South-East, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in South-East, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 29,432 (300 level) regular undergraduates in the 2023/2024 academic session from seven public universities in Nigeria. Only undergraduates in Federal universities were used in the study. The sample of 320 regular undergraduates was used for the study. The multi-staged sampling procedure was used to determine the sample for the study. Two structured questionnaires developed by the researcher were used to collect data for the study. The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by subjecting the instrument for scrutiny by three experts. To determine the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was carried out on 20 business education students in public universities in Delta State. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis on the data collected yielded reliability coefficients of 0.89 for QSMU and 0.85 for QSSH. Data for the study were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The finding of the study revealed that there is a high negative relationship between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. The finding of the study also revealed that there is a high negative relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended among others that administrators of universities should organize time management workshops and counselling programmes to help students develop self-regulation skills.*

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Introduction

The increasing impact of technology is evident in the manner in which human activities are conducted. Technology has permeated all aspects of human life, with social media being one of its integral components. Social media stands out as the fastest-growing online platform in the twenty-first century. Social media comprises internet-based applications that are built on ideological foundations, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Aichner et al. (2021) described social media as a widely used communication channel that is exceptionally fast and expansive, proving to be highly effective and trusted by billions of individuals for sharing and discovering content related to people, brands, information, entertainment, and expertise. According to Jha and Bhardwaj, as cited in Bouchikhi and Bouanani (2017), social media refers to a category of online discourse that allows individuals to create, share, bookmark, and network at an impressive rate. Similarly, Peter (2015) defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that leverage the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0, facilitating the development and exchange of user-generated content. Adeniyi (2022) characterised social media as a broad range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to engage in online commerce, contribute user-generated content, and participate in online communities. Furthermore, social media serve

as modern interactive communication platforms where individuals connect, exchange ideas, share experiences, and distribute photographs, messages, and information of mutual interest (Ngwu, 2019). Social media is the most rapidly expanding web application of the twenty-first century, attributing its growth to technological advancements (Aichner et al., 2021). Kaplan and Haenlein, as cited in Aichner et al. (2021), classified social media into six categories: collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, 2go, BBM), virtual gaming worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft), and virtual second worlds (e.g., Second Life). Moreover, social media platforms facilitate real-time communication through applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Messenger, 2go, BBM, blogs, and wikis. Essentially, social media create opportunities for establishing new relationships and reinforcing existing ones. Adeniyi (2022) noted that social media provide numerous learning and interactive opportunities, making it evident how students and other users benefit from their use. Apuke (2017) highlighted that students in tertiary institutions have internet access and utilise various devices, including computers, tablets, and smartphones, for connectivity. Similarly, Nwaka-Nwandu et al. (2024) reported that tertiary institution students leverage social media platforms to form new social connections,

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engage in discussions with existing friends and conduct research for academic assignments. Onyekwelu (2024) also opined that students use social media to access educational resources, stay updated on contemporary trends and news, collaborate with classmates on group projects and explore potential academic pathways for their future endeavours. State that sadly it appears like social media seem to be a form of distraction as it affects students study habits. Authors like Onyekwelu and Onourah (2024) stated that students' performance in tertiary institutions seem to be troubling. This might not be unconnected to their poor study habits. Study habits refer to various techniques that learners utilise to enhance their understanding and retention of study material, including summarising, note-taking, outlining and locating relevant resources. Study habits represent relatively stable methods of studying. Study habits can be evaluated through assessments, inventories, reports, examinations and rating scales. Study habits reflect students' approach to studying, whether systematic, efficient or ineffective (Olutola et al., 2016). Essentially, effective study habits contribute to positive academic performance, whereas poor study habits result in academic failure (Obadara & Olaopa, 2018). Several researchers have raised concerns about the negative influence of media on students' study habits and academic performance. Adegbite-Badmus and Joda (2019) observed that an increasing number of students

use the internet not for academic purposes but for engaging in anti-social activities. Many students access websites for pornography, fraudulent activities, and other societal vices. Chibueze (2018) further argued that social media platforms promote negative behaviours among students, such as interacting with strangers and engaging in unproductive activities. A study by Shaheen et al. (2021) identified a negative correlation between general social media usage and students' study habits, suggesting that increased time spent on social media leads to a decline in academic performance. This finding aligns with evidence indicating that many students allocate only about one hour per day to studying, which corresponds to the time they spend on social networking platforms. Similarly, Adegbite-Badmus and Joda (2019) discovered that students often engage in non-academic activities on social media, such as chatting and browsing, which reduces their focus on academic tasks, including homework. Studies indicate that factors such as gender can moderate the impact of social media usage on students' study habits and academic performance. Wickramaratne et al. (2019) found that gender moderates the relationship between Facebook usage and academic performance among university undergraduates. Similarly, Ma (2022) revealed that gender moderates the relationship between social media usage and self-esteem, which can indirectly influence academic performance. These findings suggest that the effects of social

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media on academic outcomes may vary based on gender. These views however, have not been empirically proven to be the case in public universities in South-East, Nigeria. It is against this background that the researcher investigated social media usage as correlate of study habits of students in public universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The rising engagement with social media among students in public universities across South-East Nigeria has sparked concerns regarding its effect on their study habits. Platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube have become an integral part of students' daily routines, often consuming a substantial amount of their time. While these digital tools facilitate academic collaboration and grant access to educational resources, they also present challenges by distracting students from their academic commitments. Research indicates that excessive social media usage can result in poor time management, diminished concentration on academic tasks, and a decline in study habits. Obadara and Olaopa (2017) reported that students who spend prolonged hours on social media often dedicate less time to reading and completing assignments, negatively affecting their academic performance. Also, social media addiction has been associated with procrastination and the deferral of crucial academic responsibilities (Nwazor & Godwin-Maduiké, 2015). Although social media offers

educational benefits such as participation in group discussions and access to online learning resources, its improper use frequently overshadows these advantages. Consequently, scholars and educators have sought to examine the relationship between social media engagement and students' study habits. Gaining a deeper understanding of this correlation is essential for formulating strategies that minimise the negative consequences of social media while optimising its educational benefits. Thus, the researcher investigated social media usage as correlate of study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main of the study investigated the correlation between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

1. Investigated the relationship between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria.
2. Determined the relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria?

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2. What is the relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria.

2. There is no significant relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria.

Methods

The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in South-East, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 29,432 (300 level) regular undergraduates in the 2023/2024 academic session from seven public universities in Nigeria. Only undergraduates in Federal universities were used in the study. The universities are; University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State; NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State; Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State; Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State and Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi State. The sample of 320 regular undergraduates were used for the study. The multi-staged sampling procedure was used to

determine the sample for the study. At the first stage, the researcher used purposive sampling technique to select two universities; University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. This comprised of 8,850 undergraduates from University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State and 7,200 undergraduate from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. This comprised 16,050 undergraduates. At the second stage, the researcher used purposively sampled two federal universities; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and University of Nigeria Nsukka. At the 3rd stage, the researcher selected four faculties in each university. These Faculties were the Faculty of Education, Arts, Management Science and Engineering. The researcher in the fourth stage purposively selected 40 regular undergraduate students from each selected faculty in both universities. This translated to a total of 320 regular undergraduates. Two structured questionnaires developed by the researcher were used to collect data for the study. The first instrument was titled “Questionnaire on Social Media Usage (QSMU)”. It contains 15 items on students social media use. The second instrument was titled “Questionnaire on Students Study Habits (QSSH)”. It contains 10 items on students study habits. Both instruments were structured on 5-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The face and content validity of

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the instrument was determined by subjecting the instrument for scrutiny by three experts. These experts are lecturers from the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. To determine the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was carried out on 20 business education students in public universities in Delta State. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis on the data collected yielded reliability coefficients of 0.89 for QSMU and 0.85 for QSSH. Out of 320 copies of the instruments administered to the respondents, 286 copies were completed and returned in good condition. The 286 copies of instrument returned amounted to 89.4% questionnaire return rate. The 34 copies of the instrument not well completed or lost amounted to 10.6% questionnaire loss rate. The 286 copies of the instrument returned was considered

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation between Social Media Usage and Study Habits of Students in Public Universities in South-East Nigeria

Variables	N	r	Remarks
Social Media Usage Study Habits of Students	286	-0.73	High relationship Negative

The result of the Pearson's correlation (r) presented in Table 1 shows that the correlation between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria was -0.73. This value indicates a high negative correlation. This suggests that as

adequate and used for the analysis of data. Furthermore, data for the study were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The decision rule followed Price et al. (2017), interpreting correlation coefficients on a scale from very low (0.00–0.20) to very high (0.80 and above), with positive values indicating a direct relationship and negative values showing an inverse relationship. Hypotheses were assessed based on p-values: if $p \leq 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship; if $p > 0.05$, it was retained, suggesting no significant correlation.

Results

Research Question One

What is the relationship between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria?

students' social media usage increases, their study habits also decreases at a high rate.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria?

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Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between Social Media Usage and Study Habits of Male and Female Students in Public Universities in South-East Nigeria

Variables	N	r	Remarks
Male			
Social Media Usage	112	-0.64	High negative relationship
Study Habits of Students			
Female			
Social Media Usage	174	-0.84	Very high negative relationship
Study Habits of Students			

Table 2 presents the result of the Pearson's correlation between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. The Pearson's correlation (r) obtained for the male sample was -0.64, which indicates a high negative relationship. For females, the r was -0.84. This value shows a very high negative relationship between social media usage and

study habits of male and female students. When compared to the value obtained for the male students, the relationship between the two variables was stronger among the female students.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria

Table 3: Test of Significance of Pearson's Correlation between Social Media Usage and Study Habits of Students in Public Universities in South-East Nigeria

Variables	N	r	p	Remark
Social Media Usage	286	-0.73	0.00	Significant
Study Habits of Students				

The results in Table 3 show that there was a significant negative relationship between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria, $r = -0.73$, $p < 0.05$. Since the p -value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria.

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Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson's Correlation between Social Media Usage and Study Habits of Male and Female Students in Public Universities in South-East Nigeria

Variables	N	r	p	Remarks
Male				
Social Media Usage	112	-0.64	0.000	Significant
Study Habits of Students				
Female				
Social Media Usage	174	-0.84	0.000	Significant
Study Habits of Students				

As shown in Table 4, there was a significant negative relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria, $r = -0.64$, $p < 0.05$ (for males) and it was $r = -0.84$, $p < 0.05$ (for female). Since the p-values for both groups were less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that there is a high negative relationship between social media usage and study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. The finding that there is a high negative relationship between social media usage and the study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria can be attributed to the extensive use of social networking platforms for non-academic purposes. Many students devote significant portions of their time to social media, often at the expense of their academic responsibilities. Rather than using these platforms for educational purposes, students frequently engage in activities such as chatting, browsing and entertainment, which reduce the time available for

studying and completing assignments. The addictive nature of social media further contributes to poor time management, procrastination and a decline in students study habits. The finding is in agreement with Adegbite-Badmus and Joda (2019) who revealed that an increasing number of students access the internet not for academic purposes but for anti-social activities, including pornography, fraudulent acts, and other societal vices. Similarly, Chibueze (2018) argued that social media platforms promote negative behaviours among students, such as interacting with strangers and engaging in unproductive activities. These distractions limit students' ability to concentrate on their studies, leading to a decline in academic performance. In support of this, Muhammad et al. (2021) identified a negative correlation between general social media usage and students' study habits, indicating that as students spend more time on social networking platforms, their study habits deteriorate. Furthermore, the finding of the study revealed that there is a high negative relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. This is

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in support with Adegbite-Badmus and Joda (2019) who reported that students frequently engage in non-academic activities on social media, such as chatting and browsing, which reduces their ability to focus on essential academic tasks, including studying and completing homework. This further reinforces the argument that social media usage contributes to declining study habits among students in higher institutions. The finding of the study revealed that there is a high negative relationship between social media usage and study habits of male and female students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. The finding might have resulted because of the excessive time students dedicate to social media platforms, which reduces their engagement in structured study activities. Prolonged social media use often leads to distractions, poor time management, and reduced academic focus, ultimately weakening students' study habits. This finding is in line with Wickramaratne et al. (2019) found that gender influences the relationship between Facebook usage and academic performance among university undergraduates, indicating that male and female students may experience different academic effects from social media use. Similarly, Ma (2022) reported that gender moderates the connection between social media usage and self-esteem, which can indirectly shape academic performance. These findings imply that social media's effect on study habits may not be uniform across genders. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant negative relationship between social media usage and students' study habits in public universities in South-East Nigeria. This is supported by Ma (2022) and Wickramaratne et al. (2019) who reported that students who spend excessive time on

social media engage less in academic activities, leading to poor study habits.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher concludes that social media usage has a high negative relationship with study habits of students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. The study revealed that social media usage has a negative relationship with study habits of students in public universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study revealed that social media usage has a negative relationship with the study habits of male and female students in public universities with females being more affected. It is therefore necessary to ensure that measures are put in place to improve the use of social media for academic purpose in universities in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Administrators of universities should organize time management workshops and counselling programmes to help students develop self-regulation skills. These programmes would enable undergraduates to allocate sufficient time to academic work while minimising distractions from social media.
2. Administrators of universities should develop policies that regulate social media usage during academic activities like restricting access to non-educational platforms in lecture halls and libraries.

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3. University lecturers should encourage students' use of social media for academic purposes by using social media team and collaborative groups for teaching courses. Lecturers could assign academic tasks to students in academic groups or discussion forums on social media to enhance learning.

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