

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS IN FCT, ABUJA AND NASARAWA STATE

Nweze Chinyere, Professor Muhammad S. Rabiou & Professor Anthony I. Igyuve

Department of Mass Communication, Nasarawa State University, Keffi.

mailchy2007@yahoo.com

rabiums123@gmail.com

anthonyigyuve@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated social media's influence on secondary school students' academic performance in FCT, Abuja, and Nasarawa State. It specifically examined the frequency, patterns, motivations, and impact of social media utilization among the students. The research collected data via questionnaire from a sample of 384 students from four schools; the study employs descriptive statistics to analyze the findings. Results indicate that most participants log onto social media platforms daily, spending substantial time per session. Secondly, the study identified Facebook as the dominant platform, followed by WhatsApp and TikTok among Nigerian students. Thirdly, the study revealed that the motivations driving social media usage among students include the need for social connection, followed by leisure activities and accessing news and information. The study further revealed the predominantly adverse effects of social media on students' academic performance. Based on the findings, the study, among others, recommends implementing educational programs in secondary schools to promote responsible social media use, integrating workshops, seminars, or courses into the curriculum to educate students about the risks of excessive usage and how to balance it with academic responsibilities. Explore integrating social media into classroom instruction for educational purposes, utilizing platforms like WhatsApp or Facebook for communication, collaboration, and sharing educational resources. Offer counseling and support services to students struggling with managing their online and offline responsibilities, focusing on time management, stress management, and digital well-being strategies.

Keywords: Academic, performance, Social, Media, Secondary, Schools, Students

Introduction

The advancement of communication technology has led to significant improvements in global communication facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This technological progress has effectively turned the world into a "Global village," allowing seamless sharing, storing, and accessing of information across vast distances. With billions of individuals utilizing the Internet daily, it has become a cornerstone of modern communication, transcending geographical boundaries. Recent data reveals that there are an astounding 5.35 billion individuals utilizing the internet globally, which accounts for around 66.2 percent of the total global population. Furthermore, approximately 5.04 billion people, equivalent to 62.3 percent of the world's populace, are active on various social media platforms (Kemp, 2024; Statista, 2024).

The pervasive influence of social media spans various spheres of society, demonstrating both advantageous and detrimental impacts on communication, learning, research, and education. *Social media* is defined as online platforms and mobile applications enabling users and organizations to generate, engage, and distribute content, and it has reshaped the landscape of digital interaction (Davis, 2016). While fostering opportunities for personal and organizational expression, social media's reach extends beyond traditional computing devices to encompass mobile applications and smartphones.

In Nigeria, social media usage has evoked diverse sentiments, with calls for regulatory frameworks coexisting with arguments advocating its alignment with individual freedom of speech. Amidst debates surrounding its benefits and

drawbacks, social media allows individuals to express themselves, granting voices to the previously voiceless. However, concerns arise regarding its potential misuse, particularly in excessive usage among secondary school students, which some argue may detrimentally impact academic performance.

The educational achievements of high school students in Nigeria, particularly in assessments like the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO), have attracted growing attention due to the widespread use of social media. Studies (e.g., Ogedebe, 2012) indicate a correlation between time spent on social media and student's commitment to academic activities, with observed declines in academic performance attributed to excessive social media usage. Nevertheless, scholars also highlight the positive aspects of social media engagement, citing its potential for knowledge enrichment, group participation, and writing development among students (Ito *et al.*, 2009; Ahn, 2011).

Due to the contradictory nature of research outcomes concerning the relationship between social media usage and academic achievement, there is an urgent requirement for thorough examinations. This research endeavors to delve into the effects of social media on the academic progress of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja and Nasarawa state. Emphasizing the significance of comprehending and distinguishing its impacts within educational environments.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian education system faces numerous hurdles, resulting in a noticeable decline in educational quality. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and below-par learning conditions (Birabil & Ogeh, 2020). One of the prominent issues affecting student performance in Nigeria is the pervasive impact of social media. This trend has led to a noticeable shift in focus, dividing students' attention between social media activities and academic responsibilities. Particularly among secondary school students in Nigeria, there is a significant fascination with social media platforms, occupying substantial portions of their time.

A considerable number of students prioritize social media interactions over their

academic pursuits. The ubiquitous nature of this distraction is palpable, with students engaging in social media conversations in inappropriate settings such as religious congregations, public thoroughfares, transportation, and even during lectures. Some are so engrossed in virtual interactions that they engage in social media activities while traversing busy highways. Instead of dedicating their energies to academic pursuits, they prioritize social media interactions and networking, potentially detrimentally affecting their academic performance. Academic success is inherently tied to the effectiveness of one's study habits and reading practices. Furthermore, there is an increasing worry about the decline in students' writing skills, evident in their struggles to produce thorough essays and their inclination towards using shortened language and abbreviations. This development highlights the urgent necessity to investigate how social media usage affects the academic performance of high school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Nassarawa State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The study aims of the study are:

1. To assess the frequency of social media usage among secondary school students in the FCT and Nassarawa State.
2. To identify the social media platforms used by secondary school students in the FCT and Nassarawa State.
3. To determine the motivations behind secondary school students in the FCT and Nassarawa State using social media.
4. To examine social media's potential influence on secondary school students' academic performance in the FCT and Nassarawa State.

Literature Review

Concept of Social Media

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media refers to internet-based platforms built upon Web 2.0 principles, facilitating the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Its emergence represents one of the fastest expansions of web applications in the 21st century. These platforms, which include social networking sites, blogs, forums, bookmarking sites, and online communities (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012), act as

central points for interpersonal connections and content interaction. Taprial and Kanwar (2012) outlined several key features of social media, such as accessibility, interactivity, speed, longevity, and volatility.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) categorized social media into various types, including blogs, microblogs, collaborative projects, content communities, social networking sites, virtual gaming, and virtual social worlds. However, this examination primarily focuses on social networking sites, blogs, and microblogs. Social networking sites, exemplified by platforms like Facebook, provide digital spaces for individuals to connect, communicate, and share content. Conversely, blogs, such as those found on platforms like Twitter (now known as X), offer individuals a platform to publish periodic articles, often in reverse chronological order, containing commentary, event descriptions, or multimedia materials.

Concept of Academic Performance

Academic performance can be defined as the measurable and observable conduct exhibited in a given educational context. For instance, a student's academic performance in computer science encompasses the discernible actions and achievements demonstrated throughout a course. This might include their performance on teacher-created assessments at various intervals. Thus, academic performance can be seen as a reflection of a student's behavior and their progress toward achieving predetermined educational objectives. It encompasses a range of assessments, such as teacher-made tests, first-term examinations, mid-semester evaluations, and similar evaluations (Narad & Abdullah, 2016).

The question of how to best measure student performance remains open. While exams and continuous assessments are widely used, research suggests no single method is universally agreed upon as the most effective. The debate often centers around whether to prioritize assessing procedural knowledge (skills) or declarative knowledge (facts) (Akinleke, 2012). In Nigeria, academic performance in both international and national examinations has consistently drawn the attention of parents, government officials, and stakeholders within the educational sector. This is primarily because success in these examinations is pivotal in determining a student's eligibility to pursue higher education at tertiary institutions.

However, there has been a persistent concern regarding the subpar performance witnessed in examinations such as WAEC and NECO. Many students have struggled to attain the minimum requirement of five credits, including essential subjects like English Language and Mathematics.

Review of Empirical Studies

Several investigations have delved into the association between students' academic performance and their engagement with social media platforms. For instance, Osita and Uzoma (2018) examined this link within the context of secondary school students in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Their findings highlighted a noteworthy relationship between social media usage and academic performance, although they did not delineate whether this impact leaned positively or negatively. Additionally, the researchers noted a prevalent pattern of high social media usage among the students. Kennedy (2020) conducted a study on the influence of social media on high school students in Benin Metropolis, revealing both positive and negative effects on academic performance due to prolonged social media exposure, averaging five hours daily. Conversely, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) cautioned against the adverse impact of excessive social media use on academic performance, echoing concerns raised by Mingle and Adams (2015), who observed a negative correlation between social media usage and grades. Apuke (2015) extended this inquiry to university students in Taraba State, uncovering a similar pattern of decreased academic performance among those who devoted more time to social media, particularly noting Facebook's dominance among various platforms.

In addition, Age and Echoda (2021) investigated the relationship between social media use and academic performance among high school students in Makurdi, Benue State, identifying a significant correlation and highlighting Facebook and WhatsApp as the primary platforms used by the students. Patrick and Umaru (2021) explored the impact of social media on civic education achievement in Jos South, Plateau State, emphasizing a gender gap in social media engagement and its repercussion on academic performance. However, Ejoh and Lawan's (2022) study on high school students in Anambra State found no notable link between social media usage and academic achievement in science subjects, underscoring variations in findings across different geographical areas.

Overall, while there is a wealth of research on the topic, inconsistent results exist. Some studies suggest that social media negatively affects academic performance, while others indicate a more nuanced relationship. Notably, the research appears to have a geographical gap, with limited studies conducted in certain regions such as the FCT and Nasarawa state.

Theoretical Framework

This research is framed on the Problematic Computer Use Theory, which is synonymous with problematic internet use or internet addiction theory. This theory posits that an overindulgence or compulsive engagement with computers or the internet can precipitate adverse outcomes across various life domains, encompassing academic attainment, interpersonal connections, and emotional well-being. The genesis of this theory can be attributed to a consortium of scholars spanning the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and technology studies. Among these scholars, Kimberly Young is recognized for her profound investigations into internet addiction. Young notably coined the concept of Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) during the mid-1990s, laying a foundational framework for comprehending problematic computer use (Shadrach, 2019).

Several salient observations come to light when contextualizing this theory within the sphere of social media's impact on students' academic performance. Individuals who excessively allocate their time to social media platforms may inadvertently sideline their academic obligations, including studying, completing assignments, and attending classes. Consequently, this neglect can

culminate in subpar academic achievements attributed to deficient focus and inadequate time allocation. Moreover, social media platforms exhibit addictive tendencies, characterized by incessant notifications, updates, and a continuous influx of new content vying for user attention. This perpetual distraction can encumber students' ability to concentrate on academic tasks and efficiently assimilate information. Furthermore, social media conveniently serves as an escape mechanism for procrastination, enabling students to evade challenging academic duties or responsibilities. Rather than engaging in scholarly pursuits or fulfilling assignments, students may succumb to the allure of endlessly scrolling through social media feeds, resulting in diminished academic output and performance.

Research Method

The study utilized a descriptive survey design, utilizing questionnaires as the primary tool for data gathering. The target population encompassed students enrolled in senior secondary schools within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Nassarawa State. Through a systematic process of simple random sampling, four schools were selected, comprising 3,101 students. From each of these selected schools, 96 students were chosen, resulting in a final sample size of 384 participants. The selection of respondents was evenly distributed across all three senior secondary levels (SS1-SS3) using simple random sampling techniques. The collected data underwent analysis employing various descriptive statistical methods such as frequency distribution and simple percentage calculation.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Data

Item	Frequency (n=384)	Percentage (%)
What is your gender?		
Male	215	56
Female	169	44
What is your age Bracket?		
10-15	98	25.5
16-20	191	49.7
Above 20	95	24.7
Which Class are you?		
SS 1	111	28.9
SS 2	84	21.9
SS 3	189	49.2

Source: 2024

The data in the table above highlights a notable gender disparity in secondary school enrollment. Of the respondents, 56% are males, while 44% are females, indicating a preference for male enrollment. Additionally, the age distribution shows that 25.5% fall within the 10-15 years range, 49.7% are aged between 16-20 years, and 24.7%

are above 20 years old, suggesting that the predominant age bracket for secondary school students in the FCT and Nassarawa State is 16-20 years. Furthermore, the data indicates a diverse representation across the senior secondary school classes, with 28.9% in SS1, 21.9% in SS2, and the majority, 49.2%, in Ss3.

Table 2: Frequency of social media use among the respondents

Item	Frequency (n=384)	Percentage (%)
How often do you use social media		
Daily	218	56.8
Several times within a week	94	24.5
Once a Week	68	17.7
A few times in month	4	1
How many hours do you spent on social media any time you log in?		
Less than an hour	12	3.1
1 to 2 hours	29	7.6
3-5 hours	101	26.3
More than 5 hours	211	54.9
I can't say	31	8.1

Source: 2024

The data presented in Table 2 above highlights the prevalence of social media usage among the respondents, focusing on the frequency of use. Analysis reveals that 56.8% of respondents utilize social media daily, while 24.5% engage with it

several times weekly. Additionally, 17.7% reported using social media once a week, with only 1% indicating usage a few times per month. These findings indicate a predominant daily social media usage trend among most respondents.

Table 3: Social media Platforms Frequently use by the respondents

Item	Frequency (n=384)	Percentage (%)
Facebook	361	94
Twitter (X)	124	32.3
Instagram	198	51.6
Blogs	34	8.9
WhatsApp	301	78.4
Telegram	15	3.9
Tiktok	298	77.6
Snapchat	11	2.9
Youtube	51	13.2
Others	-	-

Source: 2024

Table 3 illustrates the prevalence of various social media platforms among respondents. The findings indicate that Facebook was the most commonly utilized platform, with 94% of respondents engaging. Following Facebook, WhatsApp garnered a usage rate of 78.4%, closely trailed by TikTok at 77.6%. Instagram attracted usage from

51.6% of respondents, while Twitter's usage stood at 32.3%. Conversely, Snapchat and Telegram were the least utilized platforms, with respective usage rates of 2.9% and 3.9%. Blogs garnered an 8.9% usage rate, while YouTube was accessed by 13.2% of respondents.

Table 4: Motivations behind using social media among the respondents

Item	Frequency (n=384)	Percentage (%)
Social Connection	384	100
News and Information seeking	209	54.4
Entertainment	192	50
Academic Support	16	4.1
Self-Expression	201	52.3
FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)	132	34.4
Emotional Support	78	20.3
Passing time	301	78.4
Others	12	3.1

Source: 2024

Table 4 displays data concerning the motivations or gratifications sought by respondents through their use of social media. The findings reveal that 100% of respondents utilize social media for social connection, 54.4% for news and information, and 50% for entertainment. Merely 4.1% utilize social media for academic support. In comparison, 52.3%

use it for self-expression, 34.4% out of fear of missing out on current trends, 20.3% for emotional support, and 78.4% to pass the time. These findings suggest that respondents' primary motivations for social media usage are social connection, passing time, and seeking news and information.

Table 5: Influence of social media on the academic performance of the respondents

Item	Frequency (n=384)	Percentage (%)
Social media distracts attention away from studying and academic tasks.	312	81.3
Excessive use of social media lead to poor time management which can have negative effect on academic performance.	321	83.6
Social media reduced study time.	302	78.6
Social media give access to educational resources and information.	61	15.9
Social media contributes to Mental fatigue	211	54.9
Social media facilitates academic collaboration	21	5.5
Others	4	1

Source: 2024

Table 5 presents data regarding social media's impact on respondents' academic performance. The findings reveal that 81.3% of respondents feel that social media distracts them from studying and academic tasks. Similarly, 83.6% agree that excessive use of social media leads to poor time management, thereby negatively affecting academic performance. Moreover, 78.6% of respondents reported that social media reduces their study time. In a related trend, 54.9% believe social media contributes to mental fatigue. However, only 15.9% of respondents believe that social media provides access to educational resources and information, while 5.5% indicated that it facilitates academic collaboration. These results indicate that most respondents perceive social media to influence their academics more than a positive one negatively.

Discussion of Findings

First this research evaluated the extent of social media usage among secondary school students in both the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Nassarawa State. The findings detailed in Table 2 directly tackle this aim, demonstrating a noteworthy prevalence of social media activity among the surveyed individuals. A considerable majority of participants disclosed frequent usage of various social media platforms, with a significant portion dedicating at least three hours to each session. These findings corroborate earlier research by Osita and Uzoma (2018) and Kennedy (2020), highlighting the pervasive and excessive nature of social media usage among Nigerian students, including those in secondary schools.

Secondly, the study aimed to identify the predominant forms of social media participants utilize. The data presented in Table 3 provided insights into this objective, revealing that Facebook emerged as the primary platform, followed by WhatsApp and TikTok. This finding corroborates earlier research (e.g., Apuke, 2015; Age & Echoda, 2021), consistently highlighting Facebook and WhatsApp as the primary social media platforms among Nigerian students and young adults.

Thirdly, the study sought to elucidate participants' motivations for social media usage. Table 4 sheds light on this aspect, indicating that students were primarily motivated by the need for social connection, followed by leisure activities and accessing news and information; this aligns with previous studies (e.g., Patrick & Umaru, 2021; Ejoh & Lawan, 2022), which have underscored social connection as the primary incentive for excessive social media use among students, rather than academic purposes.

The study investigated the influence of social media on the academic performance of students. Analysis of the data presented in Table 5 shed light on this aspect, indicating a predominantly adverse effect of social media on

academic endeavors. A majority of the participants noted social media as a distractive force, consuming valuable study time and contributing to mental exhaustion. Only a minority perceived social media as a beneficial tool for collaborative academic endeavors. This contrasts with the findings of Ejoh and Lawan (2022), who did not find a significant negative impact on academic performance among secondary school students. However, it resonates with the broader academic literature, exemplified by studies such as Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) and Mingle and Adams (2015), which consistently underscore the detrimental consequences of excessive social media use on academic achievement across different educational settings.

Notably, these findings validate the Problematic Computer Use Theory, the theoretical framework of this study. According to this theory, excessive computer or internet use, including social media, can adversely affect users. In line with this premise, the study established that frequent social media use for non-academic purposes is problematic for the academic performance of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Nassarawa State.

Conclusion

This research established widespread engagement with social media platforms, notably Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok, among the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Nassarawa State secondary school students. It reveals the primary drivers for social media usage as social connection and leisure rather than academic pursuits. The study underscores a predominantly adverse effect on students' academic performance attributable to distractions, time consumption, and mental fatigue. Consequently, this underscores the need for educators, policymakers, and parents to address excessive social media usage among students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Implement educational programs in secondary schools to promote responsible social media use, integrating workshops, seminars, or courses into the curriculum to educate students about the risks of excessive usage and how to balance it with academic responsibilities.

2. Promote alternative leisure activities that are engaging and beneficial, such as extracurricular activities, sports events, or creative workshops, to reduce reliance on social media for leisure.

3. Explore integrating social media into classroom instruction for educational purposes, utilizing platforms like WhatsApp or Facebook for communication, collaboration, and sharing educational resources.

4. Offer counseling and support services to students struggling with managing their online and offline responsibilities, focusing on time management, stress management, and digital well-being strategies.

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