
ISSN:

Print - 2277 - 078X

Online - 2315 - 747X

© UNAAB 2022

Journal of
Humanities, Social
Sciences and Creative
Arts

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND PREFERENCE AMONG STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

¹I. AKINWALERE, ²K. G. ADEOSUN

¹Mass Communication Department, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye

²Communication and General Studies Department, Federal University of Agriculture,
Abeokuta

*Corresponding Author: adeosunkehinde68@gmail.com Tel: +234

ABSTRACT

The study analysed the social media usage and preferences among students of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Ogba, Lagos State. A survey was carried out through which 200 pieces of questionnaire were administered to gather primary data. Findings indicated that 80% used the Social Media platforms to seek information; 59.5% preferred using all the Social Media while 20.0%, 13.5% and 7.0% of the respondents preferred **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **WhatsApp** respectively. Findings revealed that 87.0% of the students used Social Media very often. 54.0% of the respondents faced the challenges of rumour and mis-information while 26.5% and 19.5% faced lack of social currency and civility, respectively. 40.5% of respondents stated that the social media caused distractions while 19.5% affirmed that social media influenced cyber bullying. 13.5% added that the use of social media led to morals decadence, and 6.5% ascertained that social media wasted their time. The study concluded that students should monitor how much time they spend using social media. The study therefore, recommended that social media should be used for purposes that would benefit both the students' academic and social activities.

Keywords: Academic, Communication, Dis-information, Influence, Mis-information, Technology

DOI

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a basic human need and for that reason, man has always found a means of meeting this need. The media, which is an umbrella term for various means of communication, has become an integral part of human life around the world. The earliest forms of personal media, speech and gestures, had the benefit of being easy to use and did not necessarily need complex technology. The weaknesses of not being able to communicate to large audiences led to the development of mass media,

such as writing. With these developments, the role of the media in the society became more and more significant. John Dewey (1938) emphasised the role of media in education. Communication is now more accessible with the aid of technology. Examples of mass media that aim to reach large populations include print, radio and television. What was previously only possible for media companies to do was made possible by the development of comparatively affordable, personal media technologies like blogging, podcasting and Internet video. Although

these media outlets are still regarded as new, in some parts of the globe they are just as much a part of the society as the traditional media. The phrase "new media" may no longer be used in a few years because these forms are ingrained in our everyday activities and their fusion with traditional media may erode their novelty.

Social media is a form of electronic communication which facilitates interaction based on certain interests and characteristics. They are media for social interaction using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques that adopt web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social dialogues. They also support the democratisation of knowledge and information and transform people from content consumers to content producers (Alejandro, 2010 cited in Akinola, *et.al*, 2016).

Social media are very useful in human life. They have been used for shopping, electronic mails, education, entertainment and business activities. They play vital roles in transforming today's society. They include social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect for interaction with one another. Social media also refer to **Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, Tumblr, Instagram, gaming sites and blogs** and many other relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that assist anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common font or to build relationship. Since the emergence of social networking sites like **Twitter and Facebook, they have served** as key tools for disseminating news, assisting journalists and their organisations to perform high-wired acts. These sites are being visited daily and have become a daily

routine for journalists and the people in our society (Akinola, *et.al*, 2016).

Social media are either web-based or mobile applications that allow individuals or organisations to create and engage with user generated and sharing of contents in digital environments (Deil-Amen, 2016). Al-Bahrani and Patel (2015) defined social media as virtual platforms that allow participants to interact with each other, develop communities and share information and ideas. Modern day classrooms allow students access these technologies and use them to accomplish their day-to-day educational goals. Students who choose to use these media in classrooms sometimes find themselves using them occasionally for other activities, like accessing social media whether the instructor is aware or not. The study of Fried (2008) on 'the effects of in-class laptop use', reported that 43.0% of students surfed the net, 68.2% reported instant messaging, and 81.0% reported checking emails.

A report published by the Pew Research Center in November 2016 observed that the use of social media has been steadily increasing since 2005 (Greenwood, *et.al*, 2016). From 2005 to 2016, there has been a 64.0% increase in the use of at least one social media website by U.S. adults. There was a 79.0% rise in the use of social media by U.S. adults between the ages of 18 and 29 (**Social Media Fact Sheet**, 2017). The five social media platforms measured included **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn**. **Facebook** has consistently remained the most used social media, with 54.0% of U.S. adults using Facebook in 2005 to 68.0% using the platform in 2016. Ezeah (2013) observed that 89.0% of students make use of social media. This indicates that students spend more time on social media.

Kaplan (2012) stated that social media has different influences on students and can affect them either positively or negatively. Majority of the users of social media are within the age range of 1–29 (7.0% in 2005 and 86.0% in 2016), the age group that is traditionally associated with studentship (Kolhar, *et.al.*, 2021). Kolhar, *et.al.* (2021) studied the “Effect of social media use on learning, social interactions and sleep duration among university students”. It was discovered that 97.0% of the students used social media. It was observed that social media was only used for academic reasons by 1% of the students. 43% used these websites to pass the time by browsing, compared to 35.0% who used them to communicate with others. Additionally, 57.0% had a social media addiction. Additionally, 74.0% spent their leisure time on social media sites, 66.0% felt more drawn to social media than to academic pursuits, and 52.0% reported that using social media had affected their learning activities. Based on utilisation, Snapchat (45.0%), Instagram (22.0%), Twitter (18.0%) and WhatsApp (7.0%) were the most widely used apps. Additionally, at about 1 am and 2 am, 46.0% and 39.0% reported they went to bed, respectively. About 68.0% blamed social media use for keeping them up later than usual and 59% reported it had impacted their social contacts.

Current literatures suggest that students use online technologies for everything from social interaction and entertainment to keeping up to date with current events and completing school assignments (Blake, 2008; Conole, 2008). Lusk (2010) opined that students use the social media for e-learning and to enhance their communication skills by using the social media to improve their learning skills. It is logical that

this high level of Internet usage would only occur to this extent if students believe that social media offers some values that they cannot find elsewhere.

Any visitor to a campus of higher institution can observe that college students are almost always within arm’s reach of some types of technology. From this background, it can be deduced that the biggest factor promoting the comfort with the use of technology among students may be age, although it is possible that a native country may also be a factor (Kennedy & Judd, 2011; Levy & Stockwell, 2006; Wang, 2005).

The new media include internet websites, such as **Myspace, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram** among others and other sharing sites like blogs that have an immense impact on Nigerian youths. Social media use has therefore become a prominent part of life for many young people today. Most people engage in social media without considering the likely consequences (Yahaya and Ayodeji, 2019). Students have become addicted to the social media that they cannot go 2–3 hours without checking and updating their profiles on these social networks while attending classes at the detriment of other activities. Students today seem to be becoming alarmingly obsessed with social networking, a trend that, if not properly managed, could adversely impact their academic, social and spiritual lives. Many worried parents have expressed their deep concern that they hardly ever managed to get their childrens' attention because they seemed to have become engrossed in the fascinating world of social networks. Some young people are such social freaks that they have created a dream and illusion world for themselves that is cut off from reality. If the dangerous tendency of social media network "obsession" is al-

lowed to continue, it could worsen Nigeria's already failing educational system. It may not be too far-fetched for students to perform badly in school today. While poor teachers can easily be held responsible, one may need to consider other possibilities if they have not heard of the term "Facebook frenzy." A young person chit-chatting is a common sight in reverent and well-organised settings like churches, mosques, and lecture halls. Some people get so carried away with their conversation that they continue to stroll along the busy street. Visible friends have received less attention than invisible friends and essential activities like study and writing have suffered as a result. This phenomenon has become a source of worry to many who believe in knowledge and skill acquisition (Osharive, 2015).

Facebook is useful in keeping social connections, which led them to spend more time using the site, which helped them adjust more successfully to College life. They interacted with their on-campus peers more on Facebook, which helped them adjust to College life and their satisfaction with it. Despite the fact that students are constantly using social media, it is critical that they strike a good balance between the time they spend online and the time they devote to their academic work (Yang and Brown (2015).

The widespread use of social media as an integral part of commercial, entertainment and educational activities is one of the most important and profoundly altering developments of the twenty-first century. The use of social media frequently results in the loss of data management. The use of social media promotes both authorised and unauthorised uses of data that are generated for both private and public purposes

(Anderson, 2019). Fake news has received a lot of notice recently. Fake news is not a recent phenomenon, but new media have made it easier for it to spread widely. Sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube offer a favorable environment for the production and spread of false information (Hilary & Dumebi, 2021). Therefore, the study tends to answer the following research questions:

1. Which of the social media platforms is preferred by students of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism?
2. How often do the respondents use their preferred social media?
3. What are the various uses that the respondents adopt the social media platforms for?
4. What are the challenges encountered by respondents on the use of social media?
5. What types of influence do the social media have on respondents?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Nigerian Institute of Journalism in Ogba, Lagos State. Three journalism training centers were established in Lagos, Kenya and Tanzania at the time of their founding in 1963 with assistance from the International Press Institute (IPI). The Poynter Institute of Media Studies in St. Petersburg, Florida, the United States, also provided manpower support to the school (Akinreti, 2021).

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents from age 18 and above across all academic levels of the Institute for the study. Data were collected on the preferred social media platforms, frequency of use, usage and influence of using social media on their education through a well-structured closed-end questionnaire. Data were collected and analysed using de-

scriptive survey design (frequency and percentages counts) statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: Which of the social media platform is preferred by undergraduates of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism?

Findings indicated that 20.0% of the respondents preferred **Facebook**, (Table 1), 13.5% of the respondents preferred **Insta-**

gram, 7. 0% respondents preferred **WhatsApp**, while 59.5% preferred using all the Social Media. Therefore, it can be deduced that, the preferred social media among respondents are **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **WhatsApp** respectively. **Facebook** is the most preferred social media that students use (Table 1). This supports the conclusion and findings of Popoola (2014) whose research work showed that **Facebook** has the highest number of users among students.

Table 1: The Preferred Social Media Platform among NIJ Undergraduates

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	40	20.0
Instagram	27	13.5
WhatsApp	14	7.0
All	119	59.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Research Question 2: What are the various uses that students of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism adopt the social media platforms for?

About 80.0% of the respondents used the social media to seek information, 6.5% of the respondents used the Social Media to express themselves while 13.0% of the respondents used Social Media to make friends (Table 2). It can be deduced that more of the respondents use the social media to seek information to either add to

knowledge educationally or to know what is going on around them. This result agrees with Lusk (2010) who opined that students use the social media for e-learning and to enhance their communication skills by using the social media to improve their learning skills. The outcome also agrees with Kolhar, *et.al* (2021) that most students used social media. Some of them use social media for academic, to pass away time by browsing and others used social media to communicate with others.

Table 2: Uses of Social Media by the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To seek information	161	80.5
To express yourself	13	6.5
To make friends	26	13.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Research Question 3: How often do undergraduates of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism use the social media platforms? About 87.0% of the respondents make use of the Social Media very often (Table 3). This implies that students spend more time on social media. Findings agree with Ezeah

(2013) who observed that most students make use of social media. The outcome also agrees with Kolhar, et.al (2021) that most students used social media; and that they blame social media use for keeping them up later than usual.

Table 3: Frequency of Usage of Social Media by the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Often	174	87.0
Often	26	13.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Research Question 4: What are the challenges encountered by students of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism on the use of social media?

54.0% of the respondents affirmed that they face the challenges of rumour and mis-

information while 26.5% and 19.5% face lack of social currency and civility respectively (Table 4). The finding agrees with Hilary & Dumebi (2021) that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube offer avenue for the production and spread of false information.

Table 4: Challenges Affecting the Use of Social Media

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rumor/Misinformation	108	54.0
Lack of civility	39	19.5
Lack of social currency	53	26.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Research Question 5: What Types of influence do the social media have on students of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism?

About 19.5% of the respondents affirmed that the social media have the influence of cyber bullying, 40.5% of the respondents opined that the social media causes distractions, 13.5% of the respondents chose lack of morals (Table 5). It is obvious that the social media distract students either while they are in classroom or at home during the time they are doing their home works. The

study agrees with Kaplan (2012) who stated that Social Media has different influences on students and can affect them either positively or negatively. The outcome also agrees with Osharive (2015) that students today seem to be becoming alarmingly obsessed with social networking, a trend that, if not properly managed, could adversely impact their academic, social and spiritual lives. Some young people are such social freaks that they have created a dream and illusion world for themselves that is cut off from reality.

Table 5: Influence of Social Media on Undergraduates of NIJ

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Indifferent	14	7.0
Cyber bullying	39	19.5
Waste my time	13	6.5
peer pressure	13	6.5
Distraction	81	40.5
Lack of Morals	27	13.5
Others	13	6.5
Total	200	100.0

Field Study, 2019

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, undergraduates should monitor how much time they spend using social media. While social media can be beneficial in terms of its academic ability to create discussion boards amongst classmates, **Facebook** pages can be useful for advertising school programmes among other benefits. Social media can also be beneficial for social adjustment amongst undergraduates. Despite the fact that students are constantly using social media, it is critical that they strike a good balance between the time they spend online and the time they devote to their academic work.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Social media should be used for purposes that will benefit both students and educational institutions instead of satisfying entertainment purposes alone.
2. The amount of time students spend on the social media platforms should be monitored and utilised well.
3. Social media law should be enforced against violations such as libel, slander, impersonation, false accusations, and wrong information and among others.
4. Social media should be programmed to have positive influence on youths.

REFERENCES

- Akinola, O.A., Oyebimpe, C. O., Ade-wole, B. A.** 2016. 'The Influence of Social Media on Teaching and Research in Nigerian Higher Institutions'. *Journal of Advances in Linguistics*, 7(2), 192-1197.
- Akinreti, Q.** 2021. Nigerian Institute of Journalism: 50 Years On. Retrieved from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/12/03/nigerian-institute-of-journalism-50-years-on/>
- Al-Bahrani, A., Patel, D.** 2015. Incorporating Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook in Economics Classrooms. *The Journal of Economic Education*. 46:1, 56-67, DOI: 10.1080/00220485.2014.978922.
- Anderson, T.** 2019. Challenges and Opportunities for use of Social Media in Higher Education. *Journal of Learning for Development*. 6(1), 6-19. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1212505.pdf>
- Blake, R. J.** 2008. *Brave new digital classroom: Technology and foreign language learning*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Conole, G.** 2008. Listening to the Learners voice: The Ever Changing Landscape of Technology use for Language Students. *Re Call*, 20(2):124-140.
- Deil-Amen, R., Rios-Aguilar, C., Davis, C. H., III, & Cache, M. S. n.d.**. Social Media in Higher Education: A Literature Review and Research Directions.
- Ezeah, G.** 2013. Social Media Use among Students of Universities in South-East, Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*: 16(3):23-32 Doi:10.9790/0837-1632332.
- Fried, C. B.** 2008. In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning. *Computers and Education*, 50(3), 906-914. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2006.09.006.
- Greenwood, S. Perrin, A., Duggan, M.** 2016. Social Media Update 2016: Retrieved March 28, 2017, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016>.
- Hilary, I. O., & Dumebi, O.O.** 2021. Social Media as a Tool for Misinformation and Disinformation Management. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S1), 496-505. <https://doi.org/10.37028/lingcure.v5nS1.1435>. DOI: 10.37028/lingcure.v5nS1.1435
- Kaplan, A. M.** 2012. Social Media: back to the Roots and back to the future. Available at Citeseerx. 1st psu.edu.
- Kennedy, G. E., Judd, T. S.** 2011. Beyond Google and the "satisfying" searching of digital natives. In M. Thomas (Ed.), *Deconstructing digital natives* (pp. 119-136). New York, NY: Routledge. Pp. 119-136.
- Kolhar, M., Kazi, A.N.R., Alameen . A.** 2021. Effect of Social Media Use on Learning, Social Interactions, and Sleep Duration among University Students. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33911938/> Saudi J Biol Sci. 2021 Apr;28(4):2216-2222. doi: 10.1016/j.sjbs.2021.01.010. Epub 2021 Jan 21. PMID: 33911938; PMCID: PMC8071811.
- Levy, M., and Stockwell, G.** 2006. CALL Dimensions: Options and Issues in Computer Assisted Language Learning. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237710614> CALL dimensions: options and issues in computer assisted lan-

guage learning.

Lusk, B. 2010. Digital Natives and Social Media Behaviours: An overview. *Prevention Researcher*, 173-176.

Mass media research, an introduction, Belmont, California: Thomas wadsworth."Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Behavioural Health in California.". National Clearing house on Families and Youth. N.p., 2011. Web. 20 Feb. 2017.

Nigerian Institute of Journalism 2023. <https://nij.edu.ng/about-nij/>
Osharive. P. 2015. Social Media and Academic Performance of Students. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273765340>.

Popoola, O., Ayandele, O., Adeniyi, F. I. 2014. Web. 2.0. Use of Social Media by young female Adults in Lagos, Nigeria. *Journal of American Academic Research*, 16 (4). 100-107

Wang, Q., Chen, W., Liang, Y. 2011. *The Effects of Social Media on College Students*. John-

son & Wales University, Providence, RI.

Yahaya, A. I. and Ayodeji, A. H. 2019. Influence of Social Media Usage on the Information Behaviour of Undergraduate Students in Selected Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/3655>.

Yang, C., Brown, B. B. 2015. Factors involved in associations between Facebook use and college adjustment: Social competence, perceived usefulness, and use patterns. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272522914_Factors_involved_in_associations_between_Facebook_use_and_college_adjustment_Social_competence_perceived_usefulness_and_use_patterns?enrichId=rgreq-dbd8de105a6e04a27ba77dbbd3b32139-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI3MjUyMjkxNDtBUzoxMDE4NzAyNTg5ODY1OTg1QDE2MTk4ODkwMzI4MTA%3D&el=1_x_2&_esc=publicationCoverPdf. DOI:10.1016/j.chb.2015.01.015

(Manuscript received: 18th February, 2022; accepted: 8th November, 2022).