



ASSESSMENT OF THE USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF PRINCE ABUBAKAR AUDU UNIVERSITY, ANYIGBA KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Social networking sites and applications are widely used by students. They spend a lot of their time on these sites as a part of their daily lives. The extent of the usage of social media for academic learning purposes remains unclear as there are still scanty studies in this regard particularly among students of Prince Abubakar Audu, Anyigba, Kogi state, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this study carried out an assessment of the usage of social media for academic learning purposes among students of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria. The study utilized primary data elicited through the use of questionnaire. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the respondents for this study. A total number of 360 respondents were used for the study. Descriptive statistics involving the use of simple frequency, percentage and Likert rating type of scale were used. The results of the study show, among others, that social media does not give room for privacy, students post rumors and gossips, use of social media affect student study time, high cost of data subscription are some of the challenges associated with the use of social media. The study concluded that students utilized social media for varying purposes but less for academic learning purposes. It was recommended, among others, that there is need to exercise restraints on the use of social media due to the negative tendencies associated with it.

Keywords: Assessment, social media, Undergraduates, academic purpose



Introduction

Modern technology in communication has no doubt helped to serve as a means of connecting people and as a medium of interaction in the social world and educational arena. Consequently, higher education has been exploring the exciting opportunities that technologies have brought to institutions, educators and students (Subair et al.,2019). Social media is a platform where people from all over the world can connect and interact with each other. Social media has gained a lot of momentum in the past few years. This growing population of social media users is spending more and more time on social network groupings, as facts and figures show that individuals spend two hours a day, on average, on a variety of social media applications, exchanging pictures and messages, updating status, tweeting, favoring, and commenting on many updated socially shared information (Abbott, 2017). Social media has turned into an essential element of individuals' lives including students in today's world of communication. Its use is growing significantly more than ever before especially in the post-pandemic era, marked by a great revolution happening to the educational systems. Recent investigations of using social media show that approximately 3 billion individuals worldwide are now communicating via social media (Iwamoto and Chun, 2020). Social media is any digital technology that allows people to share ideas, information and thoughts via online communities and networks. Social media provides students with multiple ways to connect virtually with others (family, friends/peers, teachers, members of interest groups, and even strangers). Some of the most popular platforms currently include: Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and Houseparty among others.



Today, both social media and technology have become an indispensable part of our lives. Every individual who is above 13 years old will have their account on any of the popular social media networks such as Facebook, SnapChat, Instagram, etc. WhatsApp has raised the minimum age to 16 years old. Students are using various online tools to cater to different requirements. It will not be wrong to say that social media and education goes hand in hand in the modern world (Willbold, 2019). According to most of the population, social media is considered a diverting tool for students. Social Media has affected the route of learning among students. But in context to today's scenario, social media has a positive effect on students. As we all know, effective communication plays an important role in a student's life. If proper communication is not attainable then it will be difficult for both students and teachers in terms of learning (Shaikh,2022). Social networking sites and applications are widely used by students. They spend a lot of their time on these sites as a part of their daily lives. Studies revealed that among the various age groups of students, university students are among the most using social networking (Azizi et al., 2019). Social networking sites play a very important role in education. Indeed, students are afforded multiple opportunities to improve learning and access the latest information by connecting with learning groups and other educational systems (Greenhow and Robelia, 2009). Students can also exchange information by connecting with different individuals. This can have a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Yu et al., 2010).

Social media has more adverse effects than positive ones (Woods and Scott, 2016). Since students tend to spend more time on social media other than educational purposes; this tends to cause



distraction from the learning environment, affecting their academic progress (Bekalu et al., 2019, Hettiarachchi, 2014). Though social media has created tremendous chances for sharing information, it is noted to provide students with social support, meet students' emotional needs, or some perceived positive effects (Chukwuere and Chukwuere, 2017; Iwamoto and Chun, 2020 and Manjur et al., 2021). This may become increasingly important as students are seen to be using social media platforms more than before and social networking is becoming an integral aspect of their lives (Chen and Xiao, 2022). In recent years, several studies have been conducted to explore the potential effects of social media on students' affective traits, such as stress, anxiety, depression, and so on. Social media has the potential for students to study and share their thoughts. It provides a fresh method of interacting with peers and teachers. However, its usage for academic learning still remained unclear. There are mounting evidence showing the use of social media by students for different purposes. There is however, paucity of information on the usage of social media for learning by students particularly students of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba. This constitutes a gap in literature that this study seeks to fill. The findings of this study would therefore be of great interest to researchers and relevant stakeholders interested in learning outcome related to the nexus between social media and academic learning in the country. The major objective of the study is to assess the usage of social media for learning by students of Prince Abubakar Audu University. Five research questions guided the study. These are:

1. What is the socio-economic characteristics of the students of Prince Abubakar Audu University?



2. What types of social media do students of Prince Abubakar Audu university utilized?
3. To what extent do students of PAAU spend time on the use of social media platforms?
4. What purposes do students of PAAU use social media platforms for?
5. What are the constraints to the usage of social media by the students of Prince Abubakar Audu University?

Methods

The study utilized a descriptive research design using questionnaire. The study focused on students of Prince Abubakar Audu University situated in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. Prince Abubakar Audu University has seven (7) faculties namely, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Management Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and College of Health Science. Prince Abubakar Audu University have an estimated undergraduate population of 24,200 as provided by Registry/Establishment of Prince Abubakar Audu University in the year 2022. Multistage sampling technique was used to sample respondents from the seven (7) faculties of Prince Abubakar Audu University. The first stage, involved the random selection of three (3) faculties (Social sciences, Education and Management Sciences). The second stage, involved the random selection of two (2) departments from each faculty making up a total number of six (6) departments (Sociology, Mass communication, Business Administration, Accounting, Human kinetics and Library information science). Finally, the study randomly selected a total number of



three hundred and ninety-four students across the six (6) selected departments. The sample size was determined by Taro Yamane`s method. The data for the study was analyzed through the use of majorly descriptive statistics that involved the use of frequency and simple percentages as well as the use of four-point (4) Likert type of rating scale.

Results

Table 1: The distribution of the Socio-economic and personal characteristics of the students

Socio-economic/Personal characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
<17	58	16.11
18-20	126	35.00
21-23	138	38.33
>23	38	10.56
Sex		
Male	213	59
Female	147	41
Level		
100	79	21.94
200	56	15.56
300	63	17.50
400	58	16.11
500	104	28.89
Household size (No. of persons in family)		
<5	298	82.78
6-10	57	15.83
>10	5	1.39
Parenting type		
Single parent	87	24.17
Both parent	268	74.44
Guardian	5	1.39
Fathers` Occupation		
Farmer	97	26.94
Trader	59	16.39
Civil servants	164	45.56
Others	40	11.11
Do you own a phone		
Owned a phone	298	82.78
Do not own phone	62	17.22



Type of Phone owned		
Ordinary (None internet enabled)	58	19.46
Smart phone	240	80.54
Total	360	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 1 shows the result of the socio-economic and personal characteristics of the students sampled for the study. The result shows a large proportion of the students are between 21-23 and 18-20years old with a percentage distribution of (38.33%) and (35.00%) respectively. Majority (59%) of the students were males in different levels of their programmes. Most of the students were from households with a household size of less than or equal to 5 persons with most (74.44%) them raised or living in homes with both of their parents. Majority (45.56%) have their fathers as civil servants. Majority (82.78%) of the students own at least a phone with most of them using internet enabled smart phone (80.54%).

Table 2: Types of social media utilized by Students of Prince Abubakar Audu University

S/No.	Types of social media	% of students using the different social media
1.	Whatsapp	88.23
2.	Facebook	69.16
3.	LinkedIn	11.09
4.	Instagram	39.90
5.	Telegram	40.12
6.	Zoom	18.12
7.	Youtube	67.34
8.	Tiktok	58.22
9.	Skype	22.18
10.	Snapchat	18.22

Source: Field survey, 2023 * Multiple responses allowed



Table 2 shows the social media platforms used by undergraduate students of Prince Abubakar Audu University during the period of the survey. As can be seen in Table 2, the five most utilized social media platforms used by students of Prince Abubakar Audu University are WhatsApp (88.23%), Facebook (69.16%), YouTube (67.34%), Tiktok (58.22%) and Telegram (40.12%). The result revealed the least used social media by the students are LinkedIn (11.09%), Zoom (18.12%) and Snapchat (18.22%).

Table 3: The average time spent by students on social media (within 24 hours)

S/No.	Time spent by students on social media	Percentage
1.	1-2 hours	38.50
2.	3-4 hours	21.50
3.	>4 hours	15.75
4.	Not sure of the average time	34.25

Source: Field survey, 2023

The result on Table 3 shows that the average time spent on social media by students within a daily period (24 hours). The result revealed that a large proportion of the students affirmed spending between 1-2 hours (38.50%), 3-4 hours (21.50%), > 4 hours and (34.24%) not sure of the time they spend a day on social media (34.25 %).

Table 4: Purposes for which social media platforms were used by the students

S/No.	Purposes for which social media platforms were used	Percentage
1.	For watching films or movies	78.12
2.	Use for downloading and playing	74.39
3.	For News update	54.63
4.	For sport update	59.23
5.	Video making	32.22
6.	Chatting on Facebook/WhatsApp/ Snapchat	82.26
7.	For the purposes of Academic learning	21.46

Source: Field survey, 2023



The result on Table 4 shows the purposes for which the students utilized social media. According to this result most of the undergraduate students use social media platforms mainly for watching films or movies (78.12%), (82.26%) Chatting on Facebook/WhatsApp/ Snapchat, (74.39%) for downloading and playing, information, and (59.23%) for sport update.

Table 5: Challenges associated with the use of social media used for learning purposes

S/No.	Challenges facing the use of social media for academic purposes	Mean score	Std. Dev.
1.	Use of social medial affect student study timing	2.86	1.02
2.	I feel more attracted towards social media compared to study	2.76	0.96
3.	Learning of anti-social behaviours	2.75	0.86
4.	I often feel addicted to social media	2.56	0.58
5.	Does not help my writing and spelling skills	2.28	0.72
6.	Does not give room for privacy	3.23	1.16
7.	Posting of rumors and gossips	3.09	1.12
8.	Lack of computer literacy skills	2.80	1.01
9.	Availability of too many social media platforms	2.23	0.68
10.	High cost of data subscription	2.85	1.02

Source: Field survey, 2023

The result on Table 5 shows that the challenge with the highest mean score indicated that social media does not give room for privacy (mean score=3.23). The result also show that the least challenges associated with the use of social media by the respondents were availability of too many social media platforms and that social media do not help students' writing and spelling skills with the mean score of (2.23) and (2.28) respectively.



Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that the five most utilized social media platforms used by students of Prince Abubakar Audu University are WhatsApp (88.23%), Facebook (69.16%), YouTube (67.34%), Tiktok (58.22%) and Telegram (40.12%). This result reveals that the least used social media by the students are LinkedIn (11.09%), Zoom (18.12%) and Snapchat (18.22%). This finding is consistent with the result of Subair et al., (2019) who reported that the popular social media platforms used by students are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, MySpace, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Google Plus, among others. Also, the findings from the study also support Kaya & Bicen (2016) who disclosed that Facebook and WhatsApp were mostly used by students.

One of the findings of the study is that a large proportion of the students affirmed spending between 1-2 hours (38.50%), 3-4 hours (21.50%), > 4 hours and (34.24%) not sure of the time they spend a day on social media (34.25 %). The finding of this study is consistent with the result of Subair et al., (2019) that reported that a larger proportion of undergraduate students of in Nigerian Universities spend between 1-2 hours and 3-4 hours respectively on social media per day. Hashem & El-Badawy (2015) noted that the undergraduate students spend an average of 2 to 3 hours daily on social media platforms. This may explain the extent of Internet addiction among undergraduates. Similarly, Talaue, Alsaad, AlRushaidan & AlHagail (2018) reported in their study that students spend on average 1 to 3 hours per day on social media.



This result however, revealed that social media is not a medium used by undergraduate students of Prince Abubakar Audu University for academic learning purposes. The finding of this study is consistent with the tendency for youths to be involve in social media usage largely to socialize with friends, get information about sport. This perhaps explains the priority given to the purpose of using social media. The finding of this study is consistent with the results from past studies Owusu-Acheaw and Larson, (2015) & Abbas et al., (2019) among others that reported that students who spend more time on social media sites are likely to demonstrate poor academic performance. This is because they spend time chatting online and making friends on social media sites instead of reading books. This has a negative effect on their academic performance.

The undergraduate students reported several challenges associated with the usage of social media. The finding of the study reveals that the challenge with the highest mean score indicated that social media does not give room for privacy, rather it gives room for posting of rumors and gossips. The findings also show that the use of social medial affect students' study time and there is high cost of data subscription. The least challenges associated with the use of social media, according to the findings of the study is the availability of too many social media platforms and that social media do not allow to learn writing and spelling skills very well as it distracts them.



Conclusions

This study carried out an assessment of the usage of social media by undergraduates of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba Kogi State, Nigeria. The study found that social media is used for different purposes other than academic and that students spend a lot of time on social media to the detriment of their academic.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. Students should make effort to redirect their priority in the use of social media towards academic rather than other trivialities.
2. University authorities should ban the use of smart phones in the lecture areas to reduce the extent of use of social media during academic activities. This will reduce the level of distraction to students' academic activities with social media.

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