

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON PERCEIVED ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN KWARA STATE**

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Abstract

Social media phenomenon, as a mass-mediated platform, has afforded Internet users the opportunity to meet some of their fundamental and functional needs of association, communication, networking, and pleasure, among others. The main objective of the study is to investigate the influence of social media usage on students' academic performance. The study is anchored on the Uses and Gratification theory and adopts a quantitative research method through cross-sectional design. WhatsApp and Facebook were found to be the most used social media platforms among the undergraduates. Factor analysis revealed five motives for using social media

for academic purposes, namely; collaborative motive, resourcing motive, academic enhancement motive, research motive, and academic engagement motive. Also, the study found a positive correlation between social media use and perceived academic performance. The study recommends academic-specific social media use among undergraduates as a means for enhancing positive academic performance. Future research should consider adopting the actual academic records of undergraduates.

Keywords: Social Media Usage; Academic Performance; Undergraduates

Introduction

The social media phenomenon, as a mass-mediated platform, has availed Internet users the opportunity to meet some of their fundamental and functional needs of association, communication, networking, pleasure, etc. Like many other media artifacts before it, social media were developed to serve the functional and ritualistic needs of members of society. They are instruments of communication, cultural transmission and preservation, security and surveillance, among others. The use of social media for achieving these needs are, however, grounded in the tenet of the Uses and Gratifications theory that contends that audiences are active users of media by selecting a particular medium and content/products to gratify their needs. Social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, etc are used for purposes ranging from searching for lost friends, finding new relationships, connecting with family members, and aligning users with groups of people who share the same interest (Adebiyi & Olayiwola, 2023).

According to Datareportal (2024), there are 36.75 million active social media users in Nigeria. Although social media is generally in use among every age group, it appears to be predominantly among the youth (Datareportal, 2024). Unachukwu et al., (2022) state that Nigerian university students (undergraduates) mostly use social media excessively. This shows the penetration of social media sites among undergraduates in

Nigeria. Thus, being in school where reward for study is paramount, the use of social media for a plethora of other things could be a distraction to these youngsters.

This perhaps, explains why studies on social media use for academic achievement have been polarized. Oberiri (2017), for example, argues that students who spend more time on social media socializing are likely to have poor academic output. Similarly, Samuel, et al., (2023) aver that most students ritualize social media platforms on daily basis thereby negatively affecting their English language writing skills. On the other side of the debate, scholars viewed social media phenomenon as a catalyst that improves student's academic achievement. Owan (2023) argue that social media enhance student's academic performance by providing enabling environment for academic reference materials, ideas and knowledge to travel within a network community. Corroborating this, Sivakumar (2020) state that social media usage, enhances students' academic excellence.

These divergent findings illustrate that the relationship between social media usage and students' academic performance remains inconclusive and context-dependent. Recent studies continue to emphasize that the academic or distracting value of social media is determined largely by the purpose, pattern, and intensity of use (Ramos & Berrocoso, 2024). For example, Al-Rahmi et al. (2022) report that when students actively use social media for collaborative learning, knowledge sharing and engagement with course-related

materials, their academic outcomes improve significantly. In contrast, Hussain et al. (2021) show that recreational and habitual use contribute to cognitive overload and a reduction in study discipline, ultimately undermining academic productivity. This ongoing scholarly polarity aligns with earlier findings by Oberiri (2017) and Samuel et al. (2023) and suggests that social media's impact is not inherently positive or negative but varies according to user intention and behavioural patterns. Furthermore, recent African studies, including Olatunji and Adekoya (2021) and Khan and Ibrahim (2023), indicate a growing trend of students participating in online discussion spaces linked to their academic work, yet the empirical basis for understanding how such forums influence academic performance remains insufficient, especially within Nigerian universities. As Gasmi (2022) notes, online discussion forums are increasingly becoming an extension of formal learning environments, but systematic investigations into their educational value are still sparse. In light of this gap, the present study is situated within contemporary discourse that seeks to clarify the specific conditions under which social media use supports or undermines learning. By examining students perceived influence of social media usage on their academic performance, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to provide nuanced, context-relevant insights into how social media functions within the Nigerian undergraduate learning experience.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the motives for using social media for academic purposes among undergraduates in Kwara State.
2. Examine the patterns of social media usage among undergraduates in Kwara State.

3. Investigate the relationship between social media usage and perceived academic performance in Kwara State.

Social Media for Academic Purposes

Using social media by youths is attracting considerable attention from educationists and social scientists which has prompted researchers to be exploring its effects on students' life. This mode of communication has availed students the leverage to be actively involved in the learning process, considering that a large majority of students are already members of the same network, and readily communicate with their classmates/lecturers (Ramos & Berracoso, 2024; Aldas et al., 2024). The integration of virtual environment particularly, social media sites into the pedagogical practice of many countries of the world education curriculum have taken the learning process to a new dimension. The consequences today, are the electronic learning, ubiquitous learning, mobile learning, etc., (Karatay et al., 2024; Criollo-C et al. 2021).

Social media, particularly, social network sites enable students to connect with their friends and lecturers even after school, thereby, creates a sort of relationship between and or among students and their school (Aldas et al., 2024; Samuel et al., 2022; Oguguo et al., 2020). For instance, Alumni of Mass Communication Department, University of Ilorin, through Facebook group connect with the students on the campus. Aside this, social media allows sharing and transferring of academic reference materials across campuses (Ozonuwe et al., 2021; Kutu & Kutu, 2022; Bukar & Sheji, 2023), initiating a kind of networking within the academia. Social media has increased the quality and rate of collaboration for students and serve as communication tools use for posting venue of lectures and to serve notice

of both academic and social event on the campus (Ramos & Berracoso, 2024).

Demir (2024) identifies a social media taxonomy for learning and organises it into three dimensions - consciousness, cognition and creativity, based on the cognitive and learning activities of students rather than platforms. These dimensions consist of categories in the metacognitive domain. Demir (2024) subdivides the dimensions into six (6) categories namely viewing, posting, interacting, analysing, evaluating, and curating. Viewing, the sole category in the Consciousness dimension, involving the students' initial recognition and awareness of course content. The cognitive dimension is comprised of three stages - posting, interacting, and analysing. Posting entails learners ability to be inform, conceptualise, and ideate. Interacting involves planning, sharing, asking questions, commenting and discussing to facilitate collaboration and timely feedback. At analysing stage which ends the Cognitive dimension, students focus on connecting concepts and identifying similarities, differences and shortcomings. Lastly, creativity dimension entails two stages. Evaluating is the first stage, and it is where students engage in self-assessment, peer-assessment and judging to provide constructive criticism. Curating, the highest stage, requires students to gather, revise, reconstruct and reorganise collected information to produce unique, logical and original work.

Social Media and Academic Performance

Academic performance is a complex construct that has attracted disparate scholarly interpretation and measurement. The construct has been interchangeably used with academic achievement in several literature (Oguguo et al., 2020; Samuel et al., 2022; Issahaque & Ghanney, 2024). Thus, Kumar et al., (2021) postulate that academic performance can be use as academic achievement, skills and abilities gained,

knowledge gained, career secured as well as persistence depending on the contexts and contents they are being used. Akomolafe and Adesua (2021, p.55) define academic performance as “the measurable and observable outcome of a learner’s efforts in school, usually expressed through grades, test scores, and the extent to which set educational objectives are achieved.” However, academic achievement can be defined as the academic footing that a particular student was able to accomplish at the end of an academic session, semester, or term.

Academic performance has gained considerable attention from parents, researchers, and school administrators, and scholarly studies have adopted different measurements to explicate the influence of social media usage on students' academic performance. For instance, self-reported grade point average has been used in some studies to understand the impact of social media on academic achievement (Jabr & Mohammed, 2023).

Over the past two decades, scholars have explored the influence of social media usage on students' academic performance and have come up with polarized findings. Hussain et al. (2021), in a study conducted among university students across multiple countries, found that students did not perceive social media use as having a significant effect on their academic achievement. Since, existing studies have point to relationship between social media use and students' academic achievement. Jabr and Mohammed (2023) investigate the influence of social media use on the academic performance of secondary school students in Baghdad city through quantitative research method. The findings of the study reveal no significant influence of social media use on students' academic performance, despite that the students spent hours on social media platforms. Alemayehu and Alamirew (2023) examine the effect of

social media usage on the academic performance of grade 12 students in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia through quantitative research. The study reveal that time spent on social media platforms negatively influence academic performance of students. Conversely, Oguguo, et al. (2020) investigate the influence of social media on students' academic achievement in Imo State, Nigeria. Finding of the study reveal no significant influence of social media use on academic achievement of students particularly accounting. Sumaiya and Mahmood (2022) study investigate the pattern of social media sites usage and their association with social relationships and academic achievements among postgraduate students in India. The result reveals that YouTube and WhatsApp are the most used social media sites among the students. Also, there are no statistical relationship between the use of social media sites and academic achievements.

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G). The theory was propounded by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) as an audience-based theory, U&G does elaborate on what people do with the media rather than what the media do to the people (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023). U&G sees the audience purposively go to the media in order to satisfy some of their functional and fundamental needs. Unlike other audience-based theories such as the cultivation theory and modelling theory that view audience copying what they have exposed to in the media particularly, on television screen.

The theory is appropriate for this study because it explains the rationale for social media usage among Nigerian undergraduates and how it has affected their day-to-day academic activities. Previous relevant studies

Proportional Sample Allocation Table

have adopted the theory to explain the use of social media by students (Ekwueme, et al., 2018).

Research Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the influence of social media usage on undergraduates' academic performance in universities in Kwara State during 2024/2025 academic session. By this, the researcher was able to collect data that were descriptively and inferentially analysed. This design is used for evaluating the prevalence of behaviour and has been used in previous related study (Aldas et al 2024; Oguguo, et al., 2020). The population of the study comprised undergraduates from the Kwara State University, Malete (N=34,013), University of Ilorin, Ilorin (N=48,453), and Landmark University, Omu-Aran (N= 3891). This selection was based on proprietorship type and aimed to include all universities in order to have a representative sample of universities operating in Kwara state. The sampling technique employed was the stratified random sampling technique. This was to ensure that all the key subgroups (faculties, departments and levels) were represented in the sample. The population size of the study is 77,875 (N=8657) while the sample size of 384 (n=382) size was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan sampling table. The sample size was allocated proportionally to each university according to their size as indicated in the table below.

Name of University	Population	Sample size
Kwara State University	34013	151
Landmark University	3891	17
University of Ilorin	48953	214
Total	N= 86857	n= 382

Findings

Motives for Social Media Usage

Table: 1 Respondents' Motives for Social Media Use Academic Purpose

Social Media for Academic Purpose	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
To have best cumulative grade point average.	19.8	19.3	17.7	31.3	12.0	2.96	1.33
To express my idea/knowledge better over a particular course.	13.9	17.1	9.5	43.2	16.3	3.30	1.31
For assignment submission.	9.2	10.3	11.7	42.9	25.8	3.65	1.22
For archiving academic course contents.	10.3	16.6	10.1	39.1	25.8	3.49	1.29
For synchronizing class application	16.8	12.0	20.9	31.5	18.8	3.23	1.34
For improving my knowledge and research	10.1	9.0	8.7	46.5	25.8	3.69	1.23
For discussing academic topics.	9.2	7.9	17.7	37.8	27.4	3.66	1.21
For sharing academic ideas	8.7	12.0	12.2	40.8	26.4	3.64	1.23
For connecting with scholars in the field	12.2	16.3	13.6	38.3	19.6	3.36	1.29
For academic collaboration	14.4	11.1	16.0	36.4	22.0	3.40	1.33
For reading academic materials	11.7	14.1	11.7	38.0	24.5	3.49	1.31
For learning academic techniques Online	16.0	14.4	7.9	36.1	25.5	3.40	1.41
For clarifying academic issues with colleagues and lecturer.	14.1	8.4	18.2	36.7	22.6	3.44	1.30
For updating my knowledge and about issues in my field of study.	9.2	14.4	10.1	43.5	43.5	3.54	1.24
For posting new knowledge discovered	21.7	12.0	14.1	31.5	20.7	3.17	1.45
For supporting academic view point.	19.0	13.0	13.6	33.2	21.2	3.24	1.41
To generate ideas for my academic research/assignment.	14.9	13.9	8.2	43.8	19.3	3.38	1.40
To subscribe for academic resources	17.4	26.4	11.7	25.8	18.8	3.38	1.40
To receive educational instructions from my lecturer/instructors.	12.5	13.6	7.1	45.7	21.2	3.02	1.30
Total						3.39	1.31

Table 1 shows that social media are used for a plethora of academic purposes. Further, the 20 items used to measure motives for using social media for academic purposes were subjected to explorative factor analysis. Based on the eigenvalue greater than one and Varimax rotation, five factors emerged with a total variance of 62.16. Table 4 presents the result of the factor analysis.

Table: 2 Factor Analysis on Respondents' Motives of Social Media Use for Academic Purpose

Factors	Components				
	1	2	3	4	5
Factor 1: Collaboration Motive					
For connecting with scholars in the field	.594	.099	.424	-.017	.263
For academic collaboration	.622	.274	.318	.034	.207
For reading academic materials	.592	.317	.155	.217	.132
For academic techniques Online	.666	.136	.070	.346	.068
For posting new knowledge	.672	.382	-.102	-.054	-.085
Factor 2: Resourcing Motive					
For supporting academic viewpoint	.159	.720	.278	.005	.037
To generate ideas for my academic research/assignment	.123	.655	.142	.306	.234
To subscribe for academic resources	.334	.698	.111	-.037	.057
To share links to related academic materials	.235	.697	.203	.236	.071
To receive educational instruction from my lecturer/instructor	.130	.550	.054	.280	.328
Factor 3: Academic Enhancement Motive					
To have the best cumulative grade point average	.292	.364	.620	.057	-.221
To express my idea /knowledge better over a particular course	.348	.297	.502	.268	.056
For assignment submission.	-.060	.058	.791	.097	.289
For archiving academic course contents	.265	.337	.500	.372	.262
Factor 4: Research Motive					
For synchronizing class application	.533	.064	.099	.563	-.120
For improving my knowledge and research	.061	.165	.186	.781	.108
For updating my knowledge about issues in my field of study.	.485	.209	-.012	.508	.261
Factor 5: Academic Engagement					
For discussing academic topic	-.021	.184	.192	.276	.738
For sharing academic ideas	.263	.107	.079	-.081	.834
Eigen value	7.360	1.565	1.321	1.131	1.054
Variance explained	36.80	7.82	6.61	5.67	5.27
Reliability	.789	.799	.743	.654	.695

Factor Sensitivity

Table 2 present the factors generated from the motivation of social media usage for academic performance. The first factor “collaboration”, accounts for 36.8% of the variance. It contains 5 items with 7.360 Eigen value (Cronbach α =.789). It was the only factor containing statements mainly from collaboration orientation. The second factor “resourcing” accounts for 7.82% of the variance and 1.565 Eigen value. Also, it contains five items (Cronbach α =.799). The third factor “academic enhancement” contains four items. It explains 6.61% of the variance and 1.321 Eigen value (Cronbach α =.743). Consequently, the fourth factor “research” contains three items and it explains 5.67% of the variance and 1.131 Eigen value (Cronbach α =.654). The fifth factor

“academic engagement” explains 5.27% of the variance and 1.054 Eigen value. Also, factor five contains two items (Cronbach α =.695).

Pattern of Social Media Usage among Undergraduates

Table: 3 Respondents Views on Social Media Sites Usage

Social Media Account	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Academia.edu	124	38.6	226	61.4
LinkedIn	108	29.3	260	70.7
Badoo	95	25.8	273	74.2
Facebook	297	80.7	71	19.3
Imo	137	37.2	231	62.8
Instagram	242	65.8	126	34.2
MySpace	24	6.5	344	93.5
SnapChat	156	42.4	212	57.6
Twitter	203	55.2	165	44.8
Viber	117	31.8	251	68.2
WeChat	83	22.6	285	77.4
WhatsApp	298	81.0	70	19.0
YouTube	152	4.3	216	58.7

Table 3 and 4 below indicate that undergraduates operate several social media sites account to meet their functional and ritualistic needs as well as use them on varying degree. The result of this finding indicates high prevalence of WhatsApp; this negate the finding in some social media/network site literature that Facebook is the most commonly used social media site particularly among students.

Table: 4 Respondents Views on Social Media Sites Visit

Frequency of Visits to Social Media Sites	F	%
Sparingly	23	6.3
Occasionally	46	12.5
Often	109	29.6
Very often	190	51.6
Total	368	100

Table 4 indicates that majority of the respondents used social media sites often and very often for communication purposes. The result of this is not farfetched, as institution of high learning in

Nigerian encourages the use of Internet facilities while on the campus and have now embrace virtual classes to augment the traditional pedagogical teaching and learning practices.

Relationship Between Social Media Usage and Perceived Academic Performance

Table 5: Correlation of Social Media Usage and Perceived Academic Performance

SMU & SMUAA	Correlations		
	R	N	P
	.339	368	.000

*Note: SMU= Social Media Usage

SMUAP= Social Media Usage for Academic Performance

Table 5 indicates that a positive and significant relationship exists between social media usage and perceived undergraduates' academic Performance ($r = .339$, $P = .000$).

Discussion of Findings

Results from the present study support the notion that WhatsApp is becoming the more accepted social media platform among the youth as overwhelming majority, 298 (81.0%) respondents, claim its usage, while 297 (80.7%) respondents use Facebook. This result is different from earlier findings that Facebook is the most used social media site (Adeosun, 2022; Aldas et al., 2024; Oguguo et al., 2020). The disparity in the findings may be caused by the geographical area and time in which the research was conducted.

On motives for using social media for academic purposes among undergraduates in Kwara State, findings of the study reveal that students use social media sites for intellectual strengthening activities. For instance, the study reveals undergraduates used social media sites for expressing their knowledge better over a particular course; for improving their knowledge and research work; for reading academic reference materials; for generating ideas for research; for discussing academic topics, and for submitting academic assignments, to name a few. Thus, these constitute reasons why undergraduates use social media as an effective means of pedagogical process. The finding supports the result of Aldas et al (2024), Sivakumar (2020) and Oguguo et al., (2020), which

found out that undergraduates use social media for pedagogical purposes particularly, for assignments and research works.

Consequently, the study found a positive correlation between students' social media usage and perceived academic performance. The result is comparable to Adeosun (2022) and Samuel et al., (2022) studies that found a strong positive correlation between the use of social media and academic performance. The results are slightly different from the studies that reported a negative impact of social media usage on students' academic performance (Alemayehu & Alamirew, 2023; Issahaque, et al., 2024; Salari et al (2025); Sumaiya & Mahmood, 2022). A reasonable explanation for these differences may be due to the geographical context in which the studies were done and/or the research methodology adopted.

The findings of the present study clearly align with the core assumptions of the Uses and Gratifications theory, which posits that individuals are active selectors of media platforms based on their needs, motives and expected gratifications. The high preference for WhatsApp and Facebook among undergraduates demonstrates purposive media choice, suggesting that students gravitate toward platforms that best satisfy their communication, academic, social and

informational needs. More importantly, the motives identified such as using social media to improve research skills, discuss academic topics, access reference materials, generate ideas and submit assignments reflect intentional and goal-oriented media use consistent with the theory's propositions. Students in this study did not use social media passively; rather, they strategically engaged with platforms that supported their academic ambitions, thereby validating the U&G assumption that audiences seek out media content that provides the gratifications they desire. The positive correlation between social media usage and perceived academic performance further strengthens this theoretical alignment, as it indicates that students derive meaningful academic benefits from the platforms they actively choose. Thus, the findings reinforce the central tenet of the Uses and Gratifications theory that media users are motivated actors who employ media technologies to fulfil specific cognitive, social and functional needs.

Conclusion

Learning has far moved beyond the four walls of class room with the advent of Internet that precede social media in the

Twenty-first century, as institutions of higher learning now encourages it uses. This study hinges upon the argument within the academia that students' social media usage facilitates as well as hinders their academic performance. However, the results of this present study tilt toward the pole of the debate that claims social media usage enhances students' academic performance. Thus, social media usage positively influences students' academic performance. As social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook remain as catalyst in bringing about excellent academic outcomes.

Recommendations

The use of social media for academic purpose should be encouraged in institution of higher learning through series of seminars and orientations. Also, future studies should expand the population and sample size to other students and universities in Nigeria. Such study should aim at extending the scope of the study beyond an academic session to compare the influence of social media use among undergraduates on academic performance. In essence, future studies should attempt to adopt the longitudinal method.

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