



Relationships Between Social Networking and Students' Academic Performance in Nigerian Public Universities in Ekiti State

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationships between social networking and students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State to find out the major problems of social networking and ascertain the impact of social networking on students' academic performance in Nigerian public Universities in Ekiti State. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population for the study constituted all the students in various Faculties and Departments in Nigerian public Universities in Ekiti State. The three public universities in Ekiti State that were used for the study are Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State University and Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti. The researcher's instrument used for data collection was titled: Relationships between Social Networking and Students' Academic Performance. The study analyzed the data collected using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The study revealed a dual impact of social networking platforms among Nigerian public university students in Ekiti State. Specifically, WhatsApp aids academic collaborations, but excessive usage of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter often hamper students' academic focus. The study emphasized the need to balance online engagement with academics, advocating for awareness campaigns and interventions to optimize students' digital interactions in Ekiti State. The recommendations offered include awareness campaigns by

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educational institutions, promoting balanced social media use, replicating the study with a diverse sample, conducting longitudinal studies and harnessing positive social media aspects for education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through various formal and informal means. Traditionally, education has primarily taken place in schools, colleges and universities with a structured curriculum, textbooks and face-to-face interactions between teachers and students. Social networking involves the use of online platforms and tools to connect with others, share information and engage in virtual communities. Examples of social networking platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and many others (Ibrahim, 2012). These platforms enable people to communicate, collaborate, and build relationships across geographical boundaries. Education and social networking are intertwined in the digital era, offering immense potential for transformative learning experiences. By harnessing the power of social networks responsibly, educational institutions, policymakers and individuals can unlock the full educational benefits while addressing the associated challenges. This partnership can make education more inclusive, engaging and adaptable to the needs of learners in a rapidly changing world. Social networking has grown to be one of the largest and most influential components of the Internet but despite its worldwide prevalence, not everyone uses or understands it. Social networks represent relationships and flows between people, groups, organizations, animals, computers and other units of information or knowledge processing. Social networks are based on specific structures that allow people to express their individuality and meet people with similar interests. Common components of social networks include comments, blogs, profiles, friends and followers, home feeds, likes, groups and tags.

Kamaku and Mberia (2014) defined social networking as the activity of establishing personal and business relationships with other people, especially through the exchange of information and personal messages over the Internet. Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok and Twitter are popular among teenagers. Using social networks is a lot of fun and helps us feel connected to the people who matter most. Adults also use social networks to share resources and find jobs, while the elderly and trapped people benefit from being able to stay in touch with family and friends. With the transition to the technology age came the emergence of the internet and social media. Technological advances have made it easier for people, especially young people, to access the Internet and eventually social networks where they can meet friends (Ibrahim, 2012).

Social media and networks have revolutionized the way we socially interact. This is the process by which people interact online. Therefore, people seek out and enjoy interacting with others online. Support the exchange of information and services between individuals and groups of common interest. Most websites help strangers connect with others based on common personal interests, political and economic views, or just for leisure. Some sites target a diverse audience, while others are drawn to similarities, such as a common language, common race and sexual, religious or national identity. Nevertheless,

social networks have only one common goal. The aim is to facilitate new communication methods and information exchange. In addition, members such as students and librarians in higher education institutions are provided with an excellent opportunity to use it to promote library services and to obtain first-class information about their patrons through their interaction with them. Most importantly, students benefit from the fact that some websites have informative and educational posts and can comment on these posts after reading them.

Academic performance is the result of education. How well students, teachers, or institutions have achieved their educational goals (Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012). Academic performance is usually measured by exams and continuous assessment, but it is important to understand how best to assess it and which aspects of procedural knowledge, such as skills, or declarative knowledge, such as facts, are most important, there is no consensus. Today's adolescents spend a lot of time outside of school in organized activities, so it is important to understand the impact of these activities on academic achievement. Universities often offer a variety of extra-curricular activities for today's students. To engage all students, these activities often range from internet access to theatre rehearsals to soccer practices (Purvis & Savarimuthu, 2010). The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships between social networking and students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. The objectives to achieve the purpose of the study are stated below:

1. To determine the commonest types of social media networks used by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State.
2. To examine the major causes of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State.
3. To find out the major problems of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State.
4. To ascertain the impact of social networking on students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State.

Research Questions

This study aims to provide answers to the following important questions:

1. What are the commonest types of social media networks used by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State?
2. What are the major causes of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State?
3. What are the major problems of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State?
4. What is the impact of social networking on students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State?

Research Hypotheses

HO: There is no significant relationship between social networking and students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities, Ekiti State.

Literature Review

While at it, scholars got keener on the impacts of these technologies on society in wide areas, one of them being in education. In Ekiti state, public universities, just like in some other parts of the country, the issue of knowing how intersected social networking is with the student's academic performance becomes a crucial matter for educators, policymakers, and students. It should be noted that various research works have been related to information that outlines the relationships between social networking and academic performance at large across the globe and within a Nigerian-localized context. From the study by [Rostaminezhad et al. \(2019\)](#), an approach to mediate the negative effect of social networking on academic performance was identified. These results have shown that there is a negative relationship between the time spent on social networking sites and student academic performance. [Bankole and Adio \(2018\)](#) further added that the ability to use the Internet is acquired mostly from training at the university and by trial and error. Most of them use the internet to complete assignments, entertain themselves, and communicate. Many of the respondents agreed that the Internet had been of great benefit in their academic pursuits, while only 36% were satisfied with the quality of Internet service the university was providing. The major problems reported included the slow speed of internet accessibility, difficulty in finding useful info and methods of information retrieval.

[Araoye \(2018\)](#) further revealed that with the internet in use, effective and timely communication is realized. Today saw the rise in the use of a lot of social applications such as Facebook and WhatsApp that are being used by GSM deployed through Nigerian Students. The failure and decline of the performance of students in the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria cannot be detached from the way students engage themselves with social media. The result has shown that all these students are online most of the time, with smartphones available, and those on WhatsApp are 85%. On this note, chatting most of the time in the morning, during the day, and at night is engaging most for them. Many said they chat while lectures are going on. This is going to affect their performance in academics.

Likewise, [Azizi et al. \(2019\)](#) further elaborated on the association between social networking addiction and academic performance among Students of Medical Sciences in Iran: A cross-sectional study. The study determined that those students utilizing social media excessively have a lower grade point average. However, in the Nigerian context, very little substantive research work has looked at how social networking affects the performance of students within universities in Ekiti State, to be precise. The glaring gap in literature must be cried for more investigation to shed light on some of the peculiar challenges and opportunities that Nigerian students face in that area, especially in this digital age. The statement of the problem in existing research is that since its ultimate objective, it has been speculation as to how the type of social networking platform used may affect the student's academic performance; for example, some may be academically collaborative, some are just application timelines, while others may be more distracting and time-consuming.

Understanding these distinctions goes a long way in the world of educators and students using social networking to enhance their academic performance. This is in comparison to probable outcomes within a Nigerian public university social-economic and cultural contingency approach in regards to students' use of social networking. For instance, access to a reliable internet connection, technological devices, and digital literacy skills could highly influence the way students interact with social media and websites in getting their academic needs. The study will try to fill the gap left by studies on the relationship between

social networking and academic performance among students in public colleges in Nigeria within Ekiti state. Based on the above challenges and opportunities examined by the study within the context, the below study findings will offer practical recommendations to educators as well as the policymakers who will be supportive of the students for appropriately and dedicatedly using social networking platforms for the development of academics, in the following section. Consequently, this piece of work's outcome will be meaningful to other academicians on the impact of social networking on students' academic performance, particularly within the Nigerian higher education space. By shedding light on the surplus factors influencing the academic practices of students using social media in Ekiti State, this present analysis can offer an enlightening sign for the development of correctly targeted interventions and strategies for learners to get improved outcomes in learning and the quality of their experience at school. The research will be honoured and privileged to have a platform that will focus on these missing gaps from literature, find comparative results of this research with previous findings, and state the contribution of this study toward the body of knowledge and hence pave a way forward for evidence-based interventions in supporting the student population to leverage social networking for academic excellence.

2. METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive research design because it is fact-finding in nature. Descriptive research design enables the researcher to collect and analyze data from a few participants who are considered to be the representatives of the research's target population. The target population for the study constituted all the students in various Faculties and Departments in Nigerian public Universities in Ekiti State. The total respondents are 293 students from the selected universities. The three public universities in Ekiti State that were used for the study are Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State University and Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti. The researcher's instrument used for data collection was titled: Relationships between Social Networking and Students' Academic Performance. The study analyzed the data collected using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The researchers distributed the questionnaires to the students of the sampled institutions and also guided the respondents with the needed explanations and instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Following the administration of the instrument, the researchers collected and analyzed the data using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistical tools of Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the research hypothesis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the most common types of social media networks used by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State?

Table 1

Use of WhatsApp By Students in Nigerian Public Universities in Ekiti State

S/N	Use of WhatsApp	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	I use WhatsApp to exchange course materials with my coursemates	1.15	.354	Poor

2	I participate in group work activities through WhatsApp	1.39	.534	Poor
3	We use WhatsApp to share ideas on class projects and assignments	1.29	.502	Poor
4	We often communicate with Lecturers on the class schedules via WhatsApp	1.72	.743	Poor
5	I obtain feedback and comments from Lecturers	2.00	.898	Good
Pooled Mean		1.51		Poor

Table 1 shows the use of WhatsApp by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, given that the pooled mean (1.51) is less than the criterion means (2.00), the use of WhatsApp by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State is poor. It was shown that students have poor knowledge of the use of WhatsApp to exchange course materials with coursemates, participate in group work activities, share ideas on class projects and assignments and often communicate with the Lecturers on class schedules via WhatsApp.

Table 2

Use of Facebook By Students in Nigerian Public Universities in Ekiti State

S/N	Use of Facebook	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	The use of Facebook complies with my academic requirements	2.81	.799	Agree
2	The amount of time I spend using Facebook is very large compared to the time I spend in the study	2.64	1.017	Agree
3	I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends from school	2.45	1.116	Agree
4	I use Facebook to achieve my academic goals	3.14	.772	Agree
5	Using Facebook helps me to study more efficiently	3.18	.598	Agree
Pooled Mean		2.84		Agree

Table 2 shows the use of Facebook by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, given that the pooled mean (2.84) is more than the criterion mean (2.00), the use of Facebook by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State is mostly agreed with. The majority of the students reported using Facebook to compile with academic requirements. However, the amount of time they use Facebook is very much, compared to the time they spend on their studies. Also, the students agreed that they use Facebook to keep in touch with friends in school, to achieve academic goals and to study efficiently.

Table 3

Use of Instagram By Students in Nigerian Public Universities in Ekiti State

S/N	Use of Instagram	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	The amount of time I spend using Instagram is very large compared to the time I spend in the study	2.66	.979	Agree
2	Instagram attract me a lot from my studies and duties	2.36	.894	Agree
3	I spend most of my time using Instagram for leisure and entertainment	2.07	.837	Agree
4	I use Instagram to find and disseminate information	2.41	.723	Agree

5	I exchange multimedia resources on Instagram with other students	2.53	.875	Agree
Pooled Mean		2.41		Agree

Table 3 shows the use of Instagram by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, given that the pooled mean (2.41) is more than the criterion mean (2.00), the use of Instagram by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State is well agreed with. The majority of the students reported that the amount spent on Instagram is far more than the amount used for their studies. It also attracted participants from studies and duties, mostly spent on Instagram during leisure and entertainment, who find Instagram helpful for finding and disseminating information and exchanging multimedia resources with other students.

Table 4

Use of Twitter by Students in Nigerian Public Universities in Ekiti State

S/ N	Use of Twitter	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	Using Twitter helps me connect with family and friends	2.19	.833	Agree
2	Twitter allows me to join university groups with other students	2.22	.979	Agree
3	For online discussion with other students around the world	2.00	.869	Agree
4	Using Twitter is an easy way to connect with co-workers.	2.00	.782	Agree
5	Using Twitter allows easy access to news and information across the university	1.90	.876	Disagree
Pooled Mean		2.06		Agree

Table 4 shows the use of Twitter by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, given that the pooled mean (2.06) is more than the criterion mean (2.00), the use of Twitter by students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State is mostly agreed with. It was mostly agreed by the students that the use of Twitter helps them to connect with friends and family, allowing them to join university activities with other students, for online discussion with other students around the world and allow easy access to news and information across the university.

Table 5

Use of TikTok By Students in Nigerian Public Universities in Ekiti State

S/ N	Use of TikTok	Mea n	S. D	Remar k
1	When I use TikTok, I get the impression that my views are not taken into consideration	2.17	1.02 3	Good
2	Does using TikTok aid you in developing a sense of collaboration with your coursemates?	2.92	.911	Good
3	How often has the use of TikTok improved your relationships with your coursemates and Lecturers?	3.07	1.01 1	Good
4	How often were you able to learn new skills and gain experience from other TikTok users?	2.14	1.03 6	Good

5	Using TikTok helps me organize academic events and communicate with colleagues and lecturers	2.77	1.064	Good
Pooled Mean		2.61		Good

Table 5 shows the use of WhatsApp by the students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, given that the pooled mean (2.61) is more than the criterion mean (2.00), the use of TikTok by the students in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State is Good. The majority reported getting the impression that their views are not taken into consideration, developing a sense of collaboration with their coursemates, often the use of TikTok to improve their relationships with their coursemates and Lecturers, learn new skills and gain experience from other TikTok users and them to organize academic events and communicate with colleagues and Lecturers.

Research Question 2: What are the major causes of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State?

Table 6

Major Causes of Social Networking in Public Universities in Ekiti State?

S/N	Major causes of social networking	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	Social networking sites provide an opportunity for students to connect and communicate with each other easily	1.87	.902	Disagree
2	Social networking sites provide an opportunity for students to connect with other students within their field of study	1.86	.716	Disagree
3	Social networking use complies with the nature of specialization	1.83	.529	Disagree
4	Social networking use complies with my academic requirements	2.35	.810	Agree
5	Using social networking sites does not require a lot of mental effort	2.33	.641	Agree
Pooled Mean		2.048		Agree

Table 6 shows the level of the major causes of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, given that the pooled mean (2.048) is more than the criterion mean (2.00), it implies that the major causes of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State are mostly agreed. The majority agreed that social networking use complies with academic requirements and that using social networking sites does not require a lot of mental effort.

Research Question 3: What are the major problems of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State?

Table 7

Major Problems of Social Networking in Nigerian Public Universities in Ekiti State?

S/N	The major problems of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	Addiction to online social networks is a problematic issue that affects my academic life	2.07	.985	Agree

2	Online social networks distract me from my studies	2.05	.75	Agree
			3	
3	Hours spent online can never be compared to the number of hours I spend reading	1.84	.78	Disagree
			9	
4	There has been no improvement in my grades since I became engaged in these social networking sites	2.95	.68	Agree
			3	
5	I don't face any problems while using Social networking	2.69	.76	Agree
			8	
Pooled Mean		2.32		Agree

Table 7 shows the level of the major problems of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, given that the pooled mean (2.32) is more than the criterion mean (2.00), it implies that the major problems of social networking in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State are positive. It was agreed by the majority that online social networks are a problematic issue that affects academic performance and distracts participants from studies, there has been no improvement in grades since became engaged with social networks and most do not face social networking issues.

Research Question 8: What is the impact of social networking on students' academic performance in Nigerian public Universities in Ekiti State?

Table 8

Impact of Social Networking on Students' Academic Performance in Nigerian Public Universities in Ekiti State?

S/N	Impact of social networking on academic performance	Mean	S. D	Remark
1	Addiction to online social networks is a problematic issue that affects my academic life	2.84	.837	Agree
2	Online social networks distract me from my studies	2.39	.894	Agree
3	Hours spent online can never be compared to the number of hours I spend reading	1.93	.771	Disagree
				e
4	There has been no improvement in my grades since I became engaged in these social networking sites	2.12	.671	Agree
5	I don't face any problems while using Social networking	2.29	.866	Disagree
				e
Pooled Mean		2.314		Agree

Table 8 shows the level of the impact of social networking on students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, given that the pooled mean (2.31) is more than the criterion mean (2.00), it implies that the impact of social networking on academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State is positive. It was agreed that online social networks constitute a problematic issue that affects academic performance, they distract respondents from studies and no improvement in grades.

HO: There is no significant relationship between social networking and students' academic performance in public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Table 9

Correlations Between Social Networking and Students' Academic Performance in Public Universities Ekiti State, Nigeria

		Academic Performance	Use of Social Networking Sites
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	-.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	293	293
Use of social networking sites	Pearson Correlation	-.280**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	293	293

Table 9 shows the relationship between social networking and students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State. As indicated in the table, there exists a negative and significant relationship between social networking and students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State ($r = -.280$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, social networking has a negative and significant relationship with students' academic performance in Nigerian public universities in Ekiti State.

Discussion of Findings

The pervasive adoption of social networking sites among students has spurred a stream of research into the implications of social networking sites use for college student's academic performance. It was shown that students have poor knowledge of the use of WhatsApp to exchange course materials with coursemates, participate in group work activities, share ideas on class projects and assignments and often communicate with Lecturers on class schedules via WhatsApp. This was supported by Selwyn (2016) who stated that social media empowers educators to disseminate information and resources efficiently, reaching a wide audience beyond the confines of traditional classrooms. Educational institutions can leverage social media platforms to share announcements, course materials and supplementary resources, ensuring timely and accessible information for students. The majority of the students reported using Facebook to compile academic requirements, also the amount of time used is very large compared to the time required to study, using Facebook to keep in touch with friends from schools, using Facebook to achieve academic goals and Facebook to help to study efficiently. Hrastinski (2017) rightly reported that social media platforms provide a digital space for students, educators and institutions to connect and communicate effectively. Through features like instant messaging, discussion boards, and live video streaming, social media enhances collaboration among learners, promoting active engagement and knowledge sharing.

The majority of the students reported that the amount spent on Instagram is far more than the amount used to study, it also attracts the participants from study and duties, mostly spent on Instagram during leisure. It was mostly agreed by the students that the use of Twitter helps them to connect with friends and family, allowing them to join university activities with other students, for online discussions with other students around the world and allow easy access to news and information across the university. A study by Kuss and Griffiths (2011) found that excessive use of social media can lead to addictive behaviours, affecting students' ability to allocate time effectively for their academic commitments. It was agreed by the majority that online social networks are a problematic issue that affects

academic performance, it distracts participants from studies, there has been no improvement in grades since becoming engaged with social networks and mostly not facing social networking issues. It was also agreed that online social networks are a problematic issue that affects academic performance, distracts respondents from studies and gives no improvement in grades.

Therefore, social networking has a negative and significant relationship with student academic performance. According to a study conducted by [Junco and Cotten \(2012\)](#), the use of Facebook and Twitter was negatively associated with academic performance among college students. The constant urge to check notifications, engage in conversations and browse content on social media platforms diverts students' attention from their academic responsibilities, leading to reduced productivity and lower grades.

4. CONCLUSION

The study conducted among public university students in Ekiti State revealed that while social networking platforms like WhatsApp facilitate academic collaboration, excessive use of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter often leads to distractions from studies. The findings confirmed a negative relationship between social media usage and academic performance. This study underscores the importance of balancing online engagement with academic commitments and calls for awareness and interventions to optimize students' digital interactions in Ekiti State. The following recommendations are provided in light of the research findings:

1. Educational institutions in Ekiti State should implement awareness campaigns to educate students about the potential negative effects of excessive social media usage on academic performance.
2. University Lecturers and parents should encourage their wards to develop a balanced approach to social media use. For example, universities can provide guidelines on setting limits for social media interaction, ensuring that students allocate sufficient time for studying and other academic commitments.
3. To enhance the study's credibility and generalizability, future research could replicate the study with a larger and more diverse sample from different regions of Nigeria.
4. Longitudinal studies can be conducted to track changes in social media behaviour and academic performance over an extended period. This would provide insights into the long-term effects of social media usage and any evolving trends.
5. Institutions should harness the positive aspects of social media for education. Encouraging the use of platforms like WhatsApp for sharing resources and communicating with educators can enhance the learning experience.

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