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Influence Of Social Media Usage on Students' Academic Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria: A Study of Niger State.

¹Hassan ABUBAKAR KAWU, ²Muhammad SALIHU YAHAYA, ³Ndako NMA, ⁴Salubuyi JANET IKO
²Isah SHAMSUDEEN

¹Department of Islamic Studies, Umaru Sanda Ahmadu College of Education Minna, Niger State.

²Department of Economics, Umaru Sanda Ahmadu College of Education Minna, Niger State.

³Department of Geography, Umaru Sanda Ahmadu College of Education Minna, Niger State.

⁴Department of Christian Religious Studies, Umaru Sanda Ahmadu College of Education Minna, Niger State.

Abstract

This study empirically examines the influence of social media usage on students' academic performance in selected tertiary institutions in Niger State, Nigeria. It specifically evaluates the differential effects of academic and non-academic social media usage, the relationship between time spent online and academic outcomes, and the effectiveness of self-regulatory strategies adopted by students. A descriptive survey research design was employed, targeting a population of 68,333 students across 13 accredited public tertiary institutions within three educational zones. A multistage sampling technique was adopted, and a sample size of 384 was determined using the Salant and Dillman (1994) procedure. Data analysis was based on 366 valid responses. Both descriptive statistics and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression were utilized to estimate relationships among variables at a 5% significance level. The findings reveal that academic-related social media usage exhibits mixed effects on academic performance, with at least one dimension showing a statistically significant negative influence ($p < 0.05$). Time spent on social media was not found to significantly affect academic performance ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that duration alone is not a critical determinant. However, balancing strategies—including regulated usage time, avoidance of social media during lectures, and engagement with academic content—demonstrated a statistically significant positive effect on academic performance ($p < 0.05$). The study concludes that while social media usage is not inherently detrimental, its impact is contingent on usage patterns and behavioral regulation. It recommends the promotion of responsible, structured, and goal-oriented social media engagement among students.

Keywords

Social media usage,
Academic performance,
Balancing strategies.
Self-Regulation,
Strategies Ordinary Least,
Squares (OLS) Regression.

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— Faculty of Science, ATBU Bauchi —

Introduction

In today's global interconnectivity, internet usage has significantly changed the way individuals interact socially. The advent of the internet has enhanced the popularity and accessibility of social media, making it a key communication tool, especially among students in higher education institutions (Akinmusere, 2023). Its widespread use in tertiary education, is also driven by Educators who leverage digital technologies to enrich teaching and learning processes (Zhang, & Wu, 2025).

Within academic settings, social media fosters active student participation, enhances communication, encourages critical thinking, and supports collaborative learning (Dahmani, Ali, Aboelenein, Alsmairat, & Faizi, 2024). It also facilitates interaction among various stakeholders in the educational sector and aids online learning. Moreover, social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter (now X), Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram serves as a valuable resource for conducting academic research, sharing educational interests, forming study groups, and enhancing the use of electronic textbooks by enabling idea exchange and collaborative engagement among students (Akinleye & Akinde 2024).

However, in Nigeria, the rapid expansion of internet access and smartphone ownership among youths has amplified the usage of social media, particularly among tertiary institution students (Madumere, Ekwelem, & Anike, 2020). This development has sparked growing concern among Parents, Educators, and Policymakers about its possible consequences on academic achievement. Although, social media can enhance learning through digital resources and peer interaction, it can also contribute to distractions, procrastination and reduced study time if not properly used (Sivakumar,

Jayasingh, & Shaik, 2023). Several studies suggest a mixed relationship between social media use and academic performance. Some Researchers such as Akinleye & Akinde (2024), argued that productive use of social platforms for academic discussions and information sourcing can support learning. While others such as Onuoha & Eze (2019), revealed that excessive engagement in non-academic social networking activities negatively impacts concentration, reduces classroom participation, and ultimately results in poor academic outcomes.

Problem Statement

Despite the increasing popularity of social media among students in tertiary institutions, there is a growing concern that its usage may be interfering with academic performance. While students often claim to use social media for academic purposes, evidence suggests that a substantial amount of time is spent on entertainment and social interactions (Essien, 2025). This raises questions about the actual effect of social media on students' academic performance. Academically, numerous studies have been conducted to examine the impact of social media usage on students' academic performance. Interestingly, these studies have produced mixed findings regarding the role of technology in education. While some researchers have identified both positive and negative effects, others reported minimal or no significant impact on students' academic outcomes.

Several investigations revealed that excessive involvement in social media platforms can lead to a decline in students' academic achievement due to reduced study time. For instance, Onuoha & Eze (2019), explored the potential link between frequent Facebook usage and diminished academic performance among

College Students. Their findings indicated a negative relationship between Facebook usage and self-reported academic indicators such as Grade Point Average (GPA) and weekly study hours. They observed that Facebook users typically dedicated fewer hours to studying each week compared to non-users, resulting in lower GPAs. Conversely, Akinmusere (2023), argued that social media holds great potential as a tool for teaching and learning in higher education. Given that students are already active on these platforms, they can be effectively utilized as channels for sharing academic ideas and information. Supporting this view, Akinleye and Akinde (2024) reported that participation in WhatsApp academic groups improved students' class engagement and knowledge retention.

However, in Niger State, where several tertiary institutions operate under varying conditions, irrespective of who is using social media, the benefits of it in academic development are still hypothetical (Abdulrahim, Oluymo, Blessing, Nwigboji, Yusuf & Alhassan, 2024). There is therefore, the need for further research on social media to ensure better usage, understanding and proper implementation in the Tertiary Institutions of Niger State. Anchored on this rationale, this study seeks to critically examine the influence of social media usage on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Niger State, with a view to deepening understanding of this relationship.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the influence of social media usage on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Niger State, Nigeria and specifically to:

i. Examine the effect of academic versus

non-academic usage of social media on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Niger State, Nigeria.

- ii. Assess the relationship between time spent on social media and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Niger State, Nigeria.
- iii. Investigate the strategies students adopt to balance social media usage and academic performance in tertiary institutions in Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

HO₁: Academic and non-academic usage of social media has no significant effect on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Niger State, Nigeria.

HO₂: Time spent on social media has no significant effect on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Niger State, Nigeria.

HO₃: Balancing strategies adopted by student's social media usage has no significant effect on academic performance in tertiary institutions in Niger State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

The empirical review for this study was drawn on existing research that explores the positive and negative impact of social media usage on student academic performance in various settings.

Another study by Goet, (2022), determined the effect of the growing use of social media variables on the Academic Performance of Students of various colleges in Nepal. Multi-stage sampling was adopted to arrive at sample size of 360 students. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. regression was adopted for data analysis. The results represent that the association of

various social media factors have been negatively affect Academic Performance of Students. In recent times, social media variables like Video Watching, Media Sharing, Internet Searching and Video Gaming capture the students' attention there by distracting their Academic pursue. The study recommends that regulatory bodies and institutions should set benchmark for social media.

Akinmusere (2023), examined the impact of social media on academic achievement of English Language students at Federal University of Education, Ondo State, Nigeria. Used the population of the study that comprised English Language students, with the sample size of the study to be Two hundred (200) respondents. A simple random sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) English Language students from each of the levels (100, 200, 300 and 400), respectively. A self-designed and developed questionnaire was used to collect data. Data generated was analyzed using descriptive statistics, simple percentage, frequency counts. findings revealed, that social media can enhance students' interest and motivate them to be addictive to their studies. The Researcher proffered the following recommendations; that students should be encouraged to make use of social media for academic purposes and should have access to social media devices.

Akinleye & Akinde (2024) examined how social media usage affects the study habits of Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria, focusing on students from Tai Solarin University of Education and the University of Ibadan. Using a correlational survey design, data were collected from a sample of 274 students selected through multi-stage sampling. Descriptive and inferential statistics were

employed as methods of data analyses. Findings showed that students frequently use platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram (Threads), YouTube, and Research Gate, while others like LinkedIn and Pinterest were rarely used. Most students studied for 1-2 hours daily. Surprisingly, a positive and significant relationship was found between social media use and study habits contrary to common belief, increased social media use was associated with improved study habits. The study recommended that Institutions should enhance access to diverse social media platforms and strengthening ICT infrastructure to support collaborative learning and boost university visibility online.

Also, Akinwalere and Adeosun (2024) conducted a study on social media usage and preferences among students at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism in Ogba, Lagos State. Using a survey of 200 respondents, descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The study revealed that 80% of the students used social media for information-seeking. Majority of them (59.5%) preferred using all available platforms, while others favored Facebook (20%), Instagram (13.5%), and WhatsApp (7%). Additionally, 40.5% cited social media as a source of distraction, 19.5% noted its role in promoting cyberbullying, 13.5% mentioned its contribution to moral decline, and 6.5% reported time wastage. The study recommends the following; urging students to regulate their social media usage and that social media should be used for both academic and positive social engagement.

Sabo, & Audu, (2025) examined Social Media Usage and Its Impact on Learning and Social Behaviour among Tertiary Students in Nassarawa State, Nigeria. A survey design employing structured questionnaires was used

to collect data. Descriptive statistics and inferential tests was employed to analyzed the data. Findings revealed that extended non-academic social media use is associated with poor academic performance; students spending more time on social media tend to achieve lower grades. The study concludes that excessive social media engagement for entertainment purposes negatively affects academic outcomes. The study therefore recommends that the university authority should educate the students on the need to use social media to enhance their academic performance.

Theoretical Framework

The study, influence of social media usage on student's academic performance in tertiary institutions in Niger State was based on Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT): Uses and Gratifications Theory was systematically developed by, Blumler and Katz in 1974. Basically, the theory places more emphasis on "what people do with media" rather than "what media do to people". Uses and Gratifications theory is the study of the gratifications or benefits that attract and hold audiences to various types of media and the types of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs. Social networking sites as new media of communication also lends itself to uses and gratifications approach. In fact, due to its interactive nature, Uses and gratifications research has typically focused on how media are used to satisfy cognitive, affective, and personal needs.

This theory specifically puts power in the hands of the crowd. Instead of expecting that media messages have immediate, uniform impacts on the individuals who devour them, the Uses and Gratifications point of view suggests that beneficiaries make planned, purposeful

choices about the media messages they open themselves to and at what recurrence taking into account individual needs and cravings independent of its impact on them positively or negatively. Relating this theory to this current study, it shows that students use social networking sites like, Facebook, WhatsApp, 2go, Twitter and others just to satisfy their needs which may either be physical or psychological, irrespective of the direction of its influence on their academic performance. Besides, it offers explanations which suggest that students use this site for varying reasons.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and employed a multistage sampling technique. Niger State has 13 Accredited Public Tertiary Institutions with students' population of 68,333 across three educational zones (Niger State Ministry for Tertiary Education, 2025, unpublished). Two Public Tertiary Institutions were purposively selected from each educational zone; Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai and Federal Polytechnic Bida (Bida Educational Zone); Federal University of Technology Minna and Umaru Sanda Ahmadu College of Education Minna, Niger State (Minna Educational Zone); Federal University of Education Kontagora and Niger State Polytechnic Zungeru (Kontagora Educational Zone).

The sample size of 384 Respondents was determined using the Salant and Dillman (1994) sampling frame at 50/50 split on 95% level of confidence and 5% margin of sampling error. Respondents were randomly selected from the six institutions. Validity of the Instrument was done by three experts, one from the department of Mass Communication IBBU Lapai, one from the department of Education AKUM and one from English department

USACOE Minna. A pilot study was conducted to assess reliability; the results showed a high level of internal consistency value of 0.96 exceeding the recommended threshold of >0.70 Cronbach's alpha through Stata. 384 questionnaires were administered but 366 were retrieved, therefore, the analyses using descriptive and inferential statistics of the data was based on 366 retrieved questionnaires. The study adopted decision mean of 2.5 higher as accepted while otherwise as rejected, it also tested the hypothesis and adopted <0.05 p value as rejected while greater than that as accepted, (Bayarri, Daniel, Benjamin, Berger & Sellke, 2016).

The study adopted a modified Ordinary Least Square (OLS) multiple regression model to

examine how different dimensions of social media usage influence academic performance:

$$AP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1ASMU_i + \beta_2NASMU_i + \beta_3TSM_i + \beta_4BSM_i + \mu_i$$

Where:

AP = Academic Performance

(Perceived academic performance)

ASMU = Academic social media usage

NASMU = Non-academic social media usage

TSM = Time spent on social media

BSM = Balancing strategies

μ = Error term

Academic performance was measured using a self-reported perception item on a four-point Likert scale assessing whether social media usage contributes positively to academic performance.

Result and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Analysis of Demographic Information of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Cumulative Percentage%
Institutions	Fed. Poly Bida	60	16.4
	IBBU Lapai	62	16.9
	FUT Minna	61	16.7
	USACOE Minna	63	17.2
	FUE Kontagora	60	16.4
	Niger State Poly	60	16.4
	Total	366	100
Gender	Male	180	49.2
	Female	186	50.8
	Total	366	100
Age	18 - 25	183	50.0
	26 - 30	115	31.4
	31 & Above	68	18.6
	Total	366	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of institutional affiliation, gender and age. With respect to institutional affiliation, respondents were fairly evenly distributed across the selected institutions, with proportions ranging from 16.4% to 17.2%. Out of the 366 respondents, 50.8% were female and 49.2% were male, indicating a balanced gender

representation. In terms of age, 50.0% of the respondents were between 18 and 25 years, followed by 31.4% aged 26-30 years, while 18.6% were 31 years and above, suggesting that most respondents were within the active student age bracket. This balanced distribution across gender, age, and institutions suggests that the sample is representative and suitable for meaningful analysis.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the responses on effect of academic social media usage on students' academic performance

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
I regularly use social media platforms for academic purposes such as research, assignments, and academic discussion.	366	3.636612	.5355049	1	4
Social media platforms provide me with academic materials and information that support my studies	366	3.26776	.6779493	1	4
Using social media for academic purposes has positively contributed to my academic performance	366	3.270492	.7443326	1	4
I use social media more for entertainment and social interactions than for academic activities.	366	2.896175	.9186867	1	4
My non-academic use of social media distracts me from my academic responsibilities	366	2.800546	.9826438	1	4
Overall Mean = 3.17					

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 revealed that regularly use social media platforms for academic purposes such as research, assignments, and academic discussions, recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.64$, $SD = 0.54$). This indicates a strong agreement among respondents that social media is frequently utilized for academic-related activities, suggesting that social media has become an important academic support tool for students. It also revealed that respondents realized that social media platforms provide academic materials and information that support students' studies, the item recorded a mean score of 3.27 ($SD = 0.68$), which is above the decision mean of >2.5 . This result implies

that respondents generally agree that social media platforms contribute positively by providing access to academic resources and information relevant to their studies. It also revealed that the use of social media for academic purposes has positive contribution to respondents' academic performance, the item recorded a mean score of 3.27 ($SD = 0.74$), indicating agreement among respondents that academic use of social media has a positive influence on their academic performance. The respondents also reported using social media more for entertainment than academic activities, the item recorded a mean score of 2.99 ($SD=0.92$) which implies that respondents

are using social media more for entertainment than academic activities. The fifth item examined whether non-academic use of social media distracts respondents from their academic responsibilities. This item recorded the lowest mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.80$, $SD = 0.98$); however, it still exceeds the decision mean of 2.50. This suggests that respondents

acknowledge that non-academic social media usage can be distracting and may interfere with academic tasks. The overall mean score of 3.17 indicates that respondents generally agree that academic social media usage has a significant effect on students' academic performance.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the responses on how time spent on social media affect student's academic performance.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
I spend a significant amount of time daily on social media platforms	366	3.234973	.8629233	1	4
Spending excessive time on social media interferes with my ability to complete academic tasks on time	366	2.95082	.7991687	1	4
Excessive social media usage reduces the amount of time I dedicate to studying	366	3.095628	.8499041	1	4
Using social media during lectures negatively affects my concentration.	366	3.177596	.8718682	1	4
Reducing the amount of time, i spend on social media improves my academic performance	366	3.262295	.8645526	1	4
Overall Mean = 3.14					

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3 assessed whether respondents spend a significant amount of time daily on social media platforms, the item recorded a mean score of 3.23 ($SD = 0.86$), this indicates that most respondents agreed that they devote a substantial amount of their daily time to social media usage. It also examined whether spending excessive time on social media interferes with their ability to complete academic tasks on time, this item recorded a mean score of 2.95 ($SD = 0.80$), which implies that respondents generally agreed that spending excessive time on social media negatively affects timely completion of academic responsibilities. The table also assessed whether excessive social media usage reduces the amount of time dedicated to

studying, with a mean score of 3.10 ($SD = 0.85$), respondents agreed that increased social media engagement reduces study time, thereby potentially affecting academic performance. Furthermore, it also examined the effect of using social media during lectures on students' concentration, this item recorded a mean score of 3.18 ($SD = 0.87$), indicating agreement among respondents that social media usage during lectures negatively affects their concentration and attention in class. Additionally, it assessed whether reducing the amount of time spent on social media improves academic performance, this item recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.26$, $SD = 0.86$), suggesting strong agreement that limiting social media usage contributes positively to

academic performance. The overall mean score of 3.14 is above the decision mean of 2.50, indicating that respondents generally agree

that time spent on social media has a significant effect on students' academic performance.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of the responses on the strategies students adopt to balance social media use and academic performance

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
I set specific times for social media usage to avoid academic distractions	366	3.469945	.7423941	1	4
I avoid using social media during lectures or while studying	366	3.29863	.756745	1	4
I turn off social media notifications when I need to concentrate on academic activities	366	3.20219	.805866	1	4
I reduce social media usage when assignment is given and examination periods	366	3.021858	.850182	1	4
I follow educational or academic pages on social media to support my learning	366	3.368852	.822966	1	4

Overall Mean = 3.27

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4 assessed whether respondents set specific times for social media usage to avoid academic distractions, the item recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.47$, $SD = 0.74$), which indicates strong agreement among respondents that scheduling social media usage is a commonly adopted strategy for minimizing academic distractions. It also examined whether respondents avoid using social media during lectures or while studying, this item recorded a mean score of 3.30 ($SD = 0.76$), suggesting that most respondents consciously refrain from social media use during academic activities in order to maintain focus. Furthermore, it assessed whether respondents turn off social media notifications when concentrating on academic tasks, the item recorded a mean score of 3.20 ($SD = 0.81$), implying that respondents generally agreed that disabling notifications is an effective strategy for enhancing concentration during

academic work. It also examined whether respondents reduce social media usage during assignment periods and examinations, this item recorded a mean score of 3.02 ($SD = 0.85$), which also indicates that respondents agreed that limiting social media usage during critical academic periods is an effective strategy for balancing social media usage. It also assessed whether respondents follow educational or academic pages on social media to support their learning, this item recorded a mean score of 3.37 ($SD = 0.82$), suggesting that students actively use academically oriented social media content as a strategy to enhance learning outcomes. The overall mean score of 3.27, which is well above the decision mean of 2.50, indicates that respondents generally agreed that they adopt various balancing strategies to manage social media usage alongside academic responsibilities.

Table 5: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis on Academic social media usage, time spent on social media and balancing strategies have no significant effect on students' academic performance.

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	T	P>t	Remark
Academic social Media Usage (ASMU)	0.190	0.096	1,97	0.049	rejected
Non-Academic social Media Usage (NASMU)	-0.135	0.057	-2.37	0.018	rejected
Time Spent on social media (TSM)	0.203	0.081	2.51	0.013	rejected
Balancing Strategies (BSM)	0.280	0.102	2.73	0.007	rejected
Constant	1.447	0.432	3.35	0.001	rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Number of obs = 366, F(4, 361) = 6.67, Prob > F = 0.0000,

R-squared = 0.0857, Adj R-squared = 0.076, Root MSE = 0.7156

Table 5 presents the OLS regression results on the effect of social media usage variables on students' perceived academic performance. The R-squared value of 0.0857 suggests that approximately 8.6% of the variation in students perceived academic performance is explained by the independent variables included in the model. Similarly, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.076 indicates that after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model, about 7.6% of the variability in academic performance is accounted for by the explanatory variables. Although the explanatory power appears modest, this is common in behavioral and social science studies where academic performance is influenced by many factors beyond social media usage as revealed by (Jason, 2025). The Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) of 0.7156 reflects the average deviation of the predicted values from the observed values of academic performance. A relatively moderate RMSE indicates that the model predictions reasonably approximate the observed outcomes.

Academic social media usage ($\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.049$) has a positive and significant effect on

perceived academic performance, indicating that academic-oriented use enhances students' performance perception. Conversely, non-academic social media usage ($\beta = -0.135$, $p = 0.018$) significantly reduces perceived academic performance. Time spent on social media ($\beta = 0.203$, $p = 0.013$) shows a positive and significant relationship, suggesting that duration alone does not harm performance but depends on usage pattern. Balancing strategies ($\beta = 0.280$, $p = 0.007$) exert the strongest positive influence, highlighting the importance of self-regulation. Overall, the findings indicate that academic-oriented use and effective regulation improve perceived academic performance, while non-academic use negatively affects it. Therefore, the null hypotheses are rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are largely consistent with earlier research on social media usage and students' academic performance. The mixed effect of academic social media usage supports the work of Sabo, & Audu, (2025), who observed that even academically oriented social media activities can negatively

affect students' focus and learning when not properly managed. However, this result contrasts with Akinmusere (2023), who reported a positive relationship between academic social media use and academic performance. This difference suggests that factors such as students' self-regulation, intensity of use, and type of engagement may influence outcomes across contexts.

The finding that time spent on social media does not significantly affect academic performance aligns with study by Goet, (2022) revealed that duration of social media usage alone is not a strong predictor of academic outcomes. Instead, the way social media is used appears to be more important than the amount of time spent on it. This also aligns with the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which emphasizes purposeful and goal-oriented media use rather than mere exposure. Therefore, students who spend substantial time on social media but engage in structured academic-oriented, or well-regulated activities may not necessarily experience a decline in academic performance rather an improvement.

One of the most important findings of this study is the significant positive effect of balancing strategies on students' academic performance. Students who adopt strategies such as limiting social media use during lectures, turning off notifications, scheduling usage time, and following academic pages tend to achieve better academic outcomes. This result is consistent with previous empirical studies that emphasize self-regulation as a key factor in mitigating the negative effects of social media. Akinwalere and Adeosun (2024), for instance, found that students who consciously regulate their social media usage perform better academically. The present finding reinforces this view and highlights balancing strategies as a critical success factor

in students' academic lives.

By anchoring these findings in the Uses and Gratifications Theory, this study demonstrates that students are active agents in their media consumption choices. The evidence from tertiary institutions in Niger State confirms that gratification-driven but unregulated social media use can undermine academic performance, whereas goal-oriented and balanced usage promotes academic success.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the effect of social media on students' academic performance is multidimensional and is primarily determined by the nature, purpose, and regulation of its use rather than the sheer amount of time spent online. Academic-oriented engagement—such as accessing educational content, participating in scholarly discussions, and leveraging digital learning resources—has the potential to enhance learning outcomes and support academic achievement. In contrast, predominantly non-academic usage tends to fragment attention, reduce cognitive focus, and interfere with effective study habits.

Importantly, the findings indicate that prolonged time spent on social media does not, in isolation, exert a statistically significant detrimental effect on academic performance. Rather, the critical determinant lies in the intentionality and structure of usage patterns. This aligns with the tenets of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which posits that individuals actively select media channels to satisfy specific needs, thereby influencing the outcomes derived from such engagement. Consequently, students who adopt purposeful, goal-oriented, and well-regulated social media practices are more likely to harness its academic benefits while mitigating potential distractions. Overall, the study establishes

that balanced and disciplined social media use can coexist with—and in some cases enhance—academic success within tertiary institutions in Niger State.

Recommendations

The study advances the following recommendations for key stakeholders:

i. Students: Students in tertiary institutions in Niger State should prioritize academically relevant social media engagement by adopting structured and intentional usage patterns. This includes active participation in credible academic platforms, scholarly forums, and educational pages aligned with their learning objectives, while minimizing unstructured browsing and excessive multitasking that undermines concentration.

ii. Lecturers: Lecturers are encouraged to strategically integrate social media into pedagogical practices to channel students' engagement toward productive outcomes. This may involve the use of moderated platforms (e.g., WhatsApp or Telegram groups) for academic discourse, dissemination of instructional materials, real-time feedback, and facilitation of collaborative learning environments.

iii. Policymakers and Institutions: Educational policymakers and institutional administrators should institutionalize digital literacy and responsible social media usage programmes within orientation schemes and general studies curricula. This can be operationalized through the development of official academic social media channels, structured online discussion groups, learning management systems, and faculty-moderated digital platforms designed to align students' online engagement with educational objectives and reduce unproductive usage patterns.

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