



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Influence of social networking sites on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State

Elizabeth Atinuke OMOTOYE <sup>1,\*</sup> and Olajide Augustus AYANLADE <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Educational Foundations & Counselling, Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

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### Abstract

This study aims to provide empirical insight into the effect of social networking sites on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. It identified the various forms of social networking engaged by undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. It also investigates the significant effects of social networking sites on undergraduate students' academic performance and furthered by ascertain the undergraduate students' attitudes towards social networking sites. The study finally determined gender influence of undergraduate students on various forms of social networking in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. These were with a view to develop positive attitudes in students towards the use of social networking sites and also improve their academic performance in schools. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised all undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. Four hundred undergraduate students were randomly selected from four randomly selected faculties in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, through simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Student Assessment Questionnaire on Social Networking Sites" (SAQSNS) was used for data collection and it consisted of four sections. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and chi-square analysis. The results of the study showed that majority of the respondents engaged in social networking. 398(99.5%) of the respondents operate on Facebook; 251(62.8%) engaged in twitter; and 393(98.3%) also involved in WhatsApp. The results also revealed that social networking activities engaged by the students had little influence on their academic performance. 69(17.3%) of the subjects are on CGPA of 4.50 and above. 191(47.8%) had a CGPA of 3.50 to 4.49 while 57(14.3%) are on a CGPA of between 2.40 and 3.49. this implies that majority of the respondents are doing well in their academic in school. The results further showed a positive attitude of students to social networking activities. 334(84.5%) of the subjects said that social networking sites help them in downloading course materials they needed in school. The results finally revealed that gender had influence on students' social networking which favour more males engaging in social networking than females ( $x^2 = 245.105, p < 0.05$ ). It is concluded that gender is an important factor as far as social networking sites is concerned among undergraduate students.

**Keywords:** Social Networking Sites; Communication; Undergraduate; Gender; Academic Performance

### 1. Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of the individual's daily life serving as a primary platform for communication and social interaction. Its relevant extends to education, where it facilitates the sharing of essential learning resources such as images, assignments, videos and academic announcements. According to Tayo, Adebola and Yahya (2019), undergraduate students' frequently use of social media for socialization, information gathering, and academic purpose.

\* Corresponding author: Elizabeth Atinuke OMOTOYE

Social media platforms enable students to participate in online group discussions, enhancing teaching and learning activities beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Jeffrey and Musah (2015), argue that social media has permeated all aspects of our society, bringing both positive and negative effects. They highlight the significant impact of social media on communication, learning, research and education as a whole. Other scholars, including Boateng and Amankaa (2016), Kolan and Dzandza (2018), and Tayo et al, (2019) have confirmed the widespread use of social media among university undergraduates for both academic and non-academic purposes. The majority of these students spent between one to three hours daily on social networking sites.

More so, it is true to agree with the saying that “no man is an island” which paves the way for man to communicate, socialize and interact with other social beings. As we are living in a networking era, the tremendous growth of the internet has a high impact on the development of the students in which they interact and socialize.

In this period, communication is the most popular term. Today, communication revolution brought us together regardless of geographical boundaries. The internet offers a wide variety of communication tools. Teenagers and youths are the prolific users of social network sites (SNSs). Social Network service is also known as SNS. A SNS is an online service platform or sites that focus on facilitating the building of social network or social relations among people, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real life connections. SNSs such as WhatsApp, Zigo, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc. Adolescents and youths become members of these SNSs communities, they will firstly get a person profile which will show their personal information including the name, job, photo, relationship status, religion, and hobbies and so on, then a network of friends are made and other users can then click on their profiles and traverse ever broadening social networks.

Furthermore, the strong sense of community and belonging fostered by SNSs has the potential to promote resilience, which helps young people to successfully adapt to change and stressful events. Importantly, the benefits of SNSs use are dependent on good internet and media literacy; having the skills to critically understand, analyze and create media content. Maximizing the benefits of SNSs and promoting internet and media literacy may help protect young people from many of the risks of online interaction, such as cyberbullying, privacy breaches and predation. For example, understanding how to produce creative content and manage the distribution of this content supports fully informed decision making an assessment of one's own, and others privacy.

Although this facility is used by people of all age groups, but the predominant social networking site users are young adults. A greater number of people especially young people are integrating the use of social media into their everyday lives. The traditional perception of youth is of them as constantly glued to their screens, sending texts, checking emails, or posting updates on their Facebook profiles. They are also seen as being aware of and influencing global events (De Ridder & Van Bauwel, 2015).

Social networking sites have brought both good and bad to the present generation. Social networking sites has helped many students to acquire knowledge from one another over internet without necessarily have to meet physically. On the other hand, social networking sites have caused many problems. For instance, many students have lost their interest in their studies as they spent most of the time on these sites. What started out as a hobby for some computer literate people has become a social norm and ways of life for people from all over the world (Adebimpe et al., 2023). The youth use social networking as a means of interaction, socializing, and for purely entertainment purposes. Although many people do not think of it, social networking sites harbor many unsafe elements and many people are concerned about some major problems that they contain, which includes education and poor learning outcomes.

On the other hand, there are many researches highlighting that the use of social networking sites does not affect academic achievement adversely. (Masalimova et al., 2023) argue that often students use social networking websites to discuss their academic issues formally and informally and also to interact with their instructors, teachers and professors. The University of New Hampshire agrees, and believes that current college students grew up in the technology era and social networking is now just a part of students' daily routine. Their research shows that 63% of heavy users received high grades, compared to 65% of light users (University of New Hampshire, 2009). The University of New Hampshire said that a majority of students use social networking for social connections and entertainment, but are also using it for education and professional reasons.

Twitter was established on March 21, 2006, by Jack Dorsey and Noah Glass. Twitter is an online social networking platform that allows users to publish text messages and read them. These texts could only contain 140 text characters at first, however on November 7, 2017, that restriction was doubled to 280 characters. We refer to these messages as "tweets." In addition, users can exchange direct messages, follow the updates of the individuals they "follow," publicly

respond to friends, or just publish inquiries or remarks as their current status. Twitter is a social network that facilitates global communication by offering online tools for sharing information and establishing connections with users through the creation of accounts that may include blogs and personal websites.

Instagram was established on October 6, 2010, by Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom. Uploading images or videos to one's page on Instagram is possible for registered users.

Mark Zuckerberg founded the social networking site Facebook. April 4th, 2004 was the day it was launched. Any person who verifies they are at least 13 years old can register as a user on Facebook. Before utilizing the website, users must register. Once registered, they can make their own personal profile, add other users as friends, message other users, and get alerts when other users update their profiles automatically. Users may also classify their friends into categories like "people from work" or "close friends" and join user groups with similar interests that are arranged by workplace, school or college, or other attributes.

The most popular social media platform in the classroom is YouTube. Students can watch videos, respond to questions, and discuss the material. They can also make their own videos to share with others. (Ogirima et al., 2021) asserted that YouTube increased productivity, increased participation, and improved students' digital skills. It also gave students the chance to learn from each other and solve problems together. discovered that videos held students' attention, sparked interest in the material, and clarified course content.

Because of older technologies, like video or computer games, studies have revealed that guys have spent more time online than girls in prior decades. According to reports from girls, they use social media for activities like downloading music and talking. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that girls will be more drawn to social media platforms and other online communities. The majority of studies on the subject indicate that there are roughly similar numbers of teenage females and boys who use these social media networks for communication.

Research indicates that although both genders are likely to have social networking site accounts, the motivations for these accounts may differ depending on gender (Adebimpe et al., 2023). Girls are more likely than boys to post sexually explicit pictures of themselves and to discuss sexual behavior in public places, and boys are more likely to create an account because they are trying to meet a significant other or because they are already in a relationship with someone who has requested them to join.

Additionally, girls are more prone than males to provide private details about their day-to-day activities. According to the findings of a recent study on Facebook, while the majority of teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 used the platform for enjoyable and constructive purposes, 55% of girls shared personal stories about relationship issues, depression, and anxiety, while only 15% of boys shared any personal information other than their interests, hobbies, and friendships. According to (Peter & Valkenburg, n.d.) research, boys appear to gain more from social media use and communication technologies than girls do.

Studies have shown that undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University has been sinking from year to year. This may not be connected with their level of involvement in social networking. There is therefore the need to investigate the level of which these social networking may likely offer their learning outcomes in school.

The main purpose of the study was to assess the impact of social networking in undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University. Specifically, an attempt was made to:

- ascertain the various forms of social networking engaged by undergraduate students' in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.
- Investigate the impact of social networking sites on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University.
- identify undergraduate students' attitudes towards social networking sites in the study area and
- determine gender influence of undergraduate students on various forms of social networking in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

The following research questions are raised for this study. It is necessary that certain questions should be asked in this study in order to get results.

- What are the various forms of social networking engaged by undergraduate students' in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State?
  - What is the effect of social networking sites on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University?
  - What is the attitudes of undergraduate students towards social networking sites in the study area and?
  - What is the gender influence of undergraduate students on various forms of social networking in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State?
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## 2. Methodology

This study used the descriptive survey research design. It is a method which is concerned with description and interpretation of existing relationships, processes, trends, or the comparison of variables. It does not make attempts to manipulate variables. The design was used because the information collected was from a sample that is meant to represent a large population.

The population of the study comprised all undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. A sample of 400 candidates was selected using two-stage sampling procedure. Four faculties were selected randomly through simple random sampling technique from all the 13 faculties the school used for the study. One hundred undergraduate students were also selected from each faculty through simple random sampling technique to take part in the study.

The research instrument for the study titled "Student Assessment Questionnaire on Social Networking Sites" (SAQSNS). It consisted of four sections; Section A seeks for demographic characteristics of the respondents, Section B consisted of ten (10) items from which respondents were to respond based on multiple choice questions of which options were provided to respond based on multiple choice questions of which options were provided and some of the items were open question format. Section C consisted of twenty (20) items from which the respondents were to respond based on "Yes" or "No" options, while the Section D consisted of five (5) items from which the subjects were to respond to either "Yes" or "No" options and a multiple choice options were also provided. To establish the validity of the instrument, the researcher sought assistance of two experts in psychology for vetting and useful suggestions and necessary correction were made. The reliability of the instrument was determined by test re-test reliability method.

The researchers administered the questionnaire to the respondents with the aid of one research assistant. The research assistant was trained on procedures to use to distribute and retrieve the questionnaire from the students to ensure high return.

Data collected was analyzed based on the research questions raised in the study. Data collected was subjected to analysis using SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) and the statistical tools employed in fulfilling the purpose were: Simple percentages and chi-square analysis

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## 3. Results

### 3.1. Research question one

What are the various forms of social networking engaged by undergraduate students' in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State?

Table 1 above showed that the 50% and above of the undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University engaged in 1, 7, 3, 2, on the various forms of social networking they are exposed to, while 4, 5, 6 and 8 are the less than 50% on the various forms of social networking they are exposed to. This signified that the undergraduate students are exposed to the different forms of social networking sites.

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics of the various forms of social networking engaged by undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University

S/N	Forms of social networking	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Facebook	398	99.5
2	Twitter	251	62.8
3	Instagram	287	71.8
4	2go	99	24.8
5	Skype	81	20.3
6	Snap Chap	69	17.3
7	Whatsapp	393	98.3
8	Wechat	61	15.3

### 3.2. Research question two

What is the effect of social networking sites on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University?

**Table 2a** Descriptive statistics of the effect of social networking on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University

S/N	Items	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
1	I am too busy with the use of social networking site	136	34.0	264	66.0
2	Social networking site has influence on my academic performance in school	216	54.0	184	46.0
3	I am not doing well as expected of me in my academics	108	27.0	292	73.0
4	My CGPA dropped because of my busy schedule on social networking sites	83	20.8	317	79.2

\*frequency (f) and percentage (%)

Table 2a showed that 216(54.0%) of the respondents agreed that social networking site has influence on their academic performance in school even as 292(73.0%) of them said no to the statement that I am not doing well as expected of me in my academics indicating that they are doing fine despite the use of social networking site.

**Table 2b** Descriptive statistics of the students' CGPA

S/N	Students' CGPA	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	1.00-1.49	6	1.5
2	1.50-2.39	77	19.3
3	2.40-3.49	57	14.3
4	3.50-4.49	191	47.8
5	4.50-5.00	69	17.3

Table 2b revealed that 191(47.8%) of the students are in 3.50-4.49 CGPA (Second Class upper), 69(17.3%) are in 4.50-5.00 CGPA (First class) and 57(14.3%) of them are in the range of 2.40-3.49 CGPA (Second class lower). These results indicated that the use of social networking sites have positive effect on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

### 3.3. Research question three

What is the attitudes of undergraduate students towards social networking sites in the study area and?

**Table 3** Descriptive statistics of the attitudes of undergraduate students towards social networking sites

S/N	Items	YES f(%)	NO f(%)	Mean	SD
1	I cannot do without social networking.	179(44.8)	221(55.2)	1.55	0.49
2	Social networking makes me know many people.	354(88.5)	46(11.5)	1.12	0.32
3	Social networking makes me know many places.	357(89.2)	43(10.8)	1.11	0.31
4	I learn new ideas through Social networking.	377(94.2)	23(5.8)	1.06	0.23
5	Serious students should avoid the use of Social networking sites.	192(48.0)	208(52.0)	1.52	0.50
6	Social networking help me to gain popularity.	233(58.2)	167(41.8)	1.42	0.49
7	I cannot do without chatting per day.	147(36.8)	253(63.2)	1.63	0.48
8	Am addicted to the use of social networking for reading books.	142(35.5)	258(64.5)	1.64	0.48
9	To me chatting is lively whilst reading is boring.	170(42.5)	230(57.5)	1.58	0.49
10	I learn a lot each time am on social network.	361(90.2)	39(9.8)	1.09	0.29
11	I use Social networking to solve academic problems.	352(88.0)	48(12.0)	1.12	0.33
12	I know about different cultures and traditions across the Nation through Social networking.	283(70.8)	117(29.2)	1.29	0.46
13	I heard about some violent behaviours' I never knew before through Social networking.	269(67.2)	131(32.8)	1.33	0.47
14	I don't like quit Social networking for any other things.	151(37.8)	249(62.2)	1.62	0.49
15	I engage in Social networking even in the class	157(39.2)	243(60.8)	1.61	0.49
16	I use Social networking sites to build a student-lecturer relationship with my lecturers and this improves my academic performance.	202(50.5)	198(49.5)	1.49	0.50
17	Group discussions are arranged with my classmates through social networking sites and this has improved my academic performance	257(64.2)	143(35.8)	1.36	0.48
18	Collaborative learning experience through Social networking sites environment is better than face-to-face learning environment.	192(48.0)	208(52.2)	1.52	0.50
19	Social networking sites help me to download materials and images for assignments and project works.	334(83.5)	66(16.5)	1.17	0.37
20	Social networking sites serve as the best means of disseminating information.	370(92.5)	30(7.5)	1.08	0.26

Table 3 above showed that undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University have positive attitudes towards social networking sites as 12 items (2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20) indicate 50% and above positive responses from the participants. Therefore, majority of the undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University have strong affinities for social networking sites as they strongly believed that social networking sites have positive impact on their academic performances.

### 3.4. Research question four

What is the gender influence of undergraduate students on various forms of social networking in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State?

**Table 4** Cross-tabulation of gender influence of undergraduate students on various forms of social networking sites in Obafemi Awolowo University

Forms of Social Networking	Gender		$\chi^2$	Df	p-value
	Male f(%)	Female f(%)			
Facebook	218(54.5)	180(45.0)	245.105 <sup>a</sup>	21	.000
Twitter	131(32.8)	120(30.0)			
Instagram	157(39.3)	130(32.5)			
2go	44(11.0)	55(13.8)			
Skype	41(10.3)	40(10.0)			
Snapchat	37(9.3)	32(8.0)			
Whatsapp	212(53.0)	181(45.3)			
Wechat	37(9.3)	24(6.0)			

Note: f = frequency, %=Percentage,  $\chi^2$  =chi-square, Df = Degree of Freedom

Table 4 above revealed that gender have influence on various forms of social networking sites as far as undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University is concerned at ( $\chi^2=245.105$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). It could be that chatting with opposite sex and friends for several reasons best known to them. Without inference, results also showed that majority of the students widely use Facebook and WhatsApp in communicating with their friends and getting useful information.

#### 4. Discussion

From the findings of study, it was observed that Facebook, twitter, Instagram, skype, snap chart and WhatsApp are the various forms of social networking engaged by undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University which is in line with the findings of (Hameed et al., n.d.), they found out that the top ten social networking sites developed with the passage of time, and its number of users increased from 46.8million to 68.8 million. However, (Van Der Wal et al., 2024) argues that from 1997 to 2001, number of social networking websites began to support various combinations of profiles and publicly expressed friends.

The results of the study also showed that social networking sites have positive impact on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. This result corroborates the findings of Brennan, (2001); and Notley, (2010); they found out that there is much interest from schools and universities in the potential of public social networking sites and social media such as blogs to leverage or complement formal educational activities and enhance learning outcomes. Consequently, Oskouei (2010) proposed that internet is advantageous to both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge creation and dissemination.

The results of the study further revealed that Obafemi Awolowo University undergraduate students have positive and strong attitude towards social networking sites. This results substantiates the findings of (Olayemi, 2022); they found out that then opportunity to express oneself creatively, explore and experiment with identity and the production-as well as consumption of online content is central to the way that social networking sites strengthens and build communities.

The results of the study finally indicated that gender has influence on various forms of social networking of undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State which support the findings of (Hamat et al., 2012); Hillier and Harrison (2007); Raunt, Basset and O'Riordan (2002), as they discovered that social networking sites can help young people who are sexually and gender diverse to meet people and learn from each other, creating sense of belonging to a broader community.

#### 5. Conclusion

The study concluded that students are very familiar with social networking sites and also make use of them, also that the students have a positive attitude towards social networking sites in the area of study. It was also observed that social networking does not have any negative impact on the academic performance of the students and the gender influence

has significant effect on undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. Therefore, further research can also be carried out to investigate the influence of social networking sites on the postgraduate students' academic performance in Southwestern Nigeria universities.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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