

## A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' READING CULTURE FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES IN SOKOTO STATE UNIVERSITY: A PERSPECTIVE ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

N.T. IBRAHIM<sup>1</sup>, I. M. M. FURFURI<sup>2</sup>, M. MUHAMMAD<sup>3</sup> & Z. B. NASIRUDEEN<sup>4</sup>  
 Department of Science Education, Sokoto State University, Sokoto<sup>1,3,4</sup>, Library  
 Department, Sokoto State University, Sokoto<sup>2</sup>  
 nasiru.tambuwal@ssu.edu.ng<sup>1</sup>, ibrahim.furfuri@ssu.edu.ng,  
 musamuhhammad113@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>, zaliha.nasiruddeen@ssu.edu.ng<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

**Purpose:** This study examined undergraduate students' reading culture for academic purposes in Sokoto State University in relation to use of social media.

**Design Methodology/Approach:** The study adopted survey research design. A total of 4,486 students were used as population of the study, and simple random sampling technique was used to sample 1000 for the study. The sampled students consisted of 200, 300 and 400 levels students. Self-structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection from respondents.

**Findings:** The major findings revealed that majority of students in SSU mostly use WhatsApp and Facebook; Majority of students in SSU mostly access social media through their mobile phones; most students in SSU use social media for entertainment and socialization and insufficiently used for academics; Most of the students of SSU are more friendly with use of social media than other academic pursuits; Finally, the study had uncovered the prospect and some of the challenges of our educational system in the era of social media for necessary action by educational policy makers.

**Implication:** Internet education, discussion and coaching remain a lasting solution to control students' social media usage. In other words, the university lecturers should be able to play active roles in students' use of social media. Authorities concerned, i.e., National Communication Commission (NCC) should regulate the operations of the various applications of the social media, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook to the advantage of students.

**Originality/Values:** The paper's originality lies in identifying the undergraduate students reading culture for academic purposes in Sokoto State University in relation to use of social media.

**Key words:** Undergraduate Students, Reading Culture, Academic Purposes, Sokoto State University

**Paper type:** Empirical research

### Introduction

The social media consists of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) platforms utilized worldwide by all categories of people for numerous purposes including businesses, education, politics, and social life among others. Hence, the environment of higher educational institutions worldwide has changed over the years from traditional to ICT-driven system of engagement with students. Hence, the process of teaching and learning has to be propelled by modern technological tools including the social media. In this regard, Abdullahi and Opaleke (2016) asserted that in the academic

environment, the availability and functionality of non-human elements including the social media could affect students' academic performance. Social media provides various user application packages through which individuals and organizations can interact, share knowledge and information for different purposes. Examples of these social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, blogs, etc. These social media platforms are easily deployable and made accessible via desktop computers, laptop computers, smart phones, and other mobile devices.

It has been found out by Othman and Yusuf (2015), that social media is an educational tool that can enable "peer feedback, interactions and learning in a social context". Thus, lecturers can leverage on social media to promote their students' learning for improvement of academic performance. However, from the academic perspective, the use of social media by students had resulted into distractions from effective reading as well as having distorted forms of writing, which even affects writing for examinations and other official communications. It is also a common knowledge that use of wrong spellings, chatting during lectures and leisure periods among others could make students to give less attention to reading for academic purposes. This is a terrible attitude that is generating a serious challenge to educational development worldwide.

In Nigeria, the negative effects of social media use among students have become a source of worry. It appears that social media is yet to impact positively among many Nigerian youths in terms of their intellectual and mental capacities. It was argued by Oyebode (2018), that the positive impacts of social media can be noticed among the Nigerian youths in the areas of football, distortion of social ethos and morals, yahoo or internet frauds, pornography, and other cybercrimes. However, in the educational context many youths in tertiary institutions rely on the accessibility of information on social media specifically and the websites in general, in order to provide answers or solve some of their learning tasks as well as private social problems. This means that the social media use focus less on learning and information seeking for academic purposes.

In fact, Dunn (2013) maintains that social media plays different positive roles in the higher educational institutions' environment. Such roles include students' motivation and engagement with course materials, enhanced collaboration and information sharing among students, and or their lecturers, offers opportunities for self-expression as well as acquisition of 21st century learning skills. This was because it has the potentials to enhance students' creativity and acquisition of new or

improved skills. Studies by several researchers revealed that students in Nigeria universities are among the top users of social media (Abdullahi & Opaleke, 2016, Dika & Abdulsalami, 2017). For example, Adegoke (2018) cited Afigbo who estimated that 26 million Nigerians visit social networking sites every month, while 25 million access the Facebook via the smart phones. Therefore, the influence of social media uses on reading culture and its implications on academic performance of university student has become an important issue that attracts the attention of stakeholders in education. The academic performance of students can be measured using different dimension, which include course contents, students' characteristics, successful completion of course, withdrawals, grades scored, knowledge acquired, new skill, etc (Dika & Abdulsalami, 2017).

The presence of any new trend noted on our universities' environments need to be investigated to determine how it affect the study habits, reading culture and achievement of desired educational goals of the students. In other words, students of higher educational institutions in Nigeria including the Sokoto State University, Sokoto have embraced social media use for social activities. But, there is no comprehensive study that explored and examined the types of social media platforms that students commonly use, the amount of time the students spend on social media use, the purposes for social media use and its perceived impact on the students' reading culture and academic performance at the Sokoto State University. Thus, the possible benefits that could be derived from the social media use by the students of the Sokoto State University include establishing and enhancing relationship, enhancing motivation for learning, access to personalized course materials, and collaborations in academic activities. This means that social media use among students provides ample opportunities for effective reading and improving academic performance. Hence, these researchers have observed that undergraduate students of Sokoto State University are addicted to social media use as a way of showcasing their social lives. However, the pattern of the social media usage and its relationship with students'

reading and academic performance has not been determined. Social media use in this study therefore, focus on how undergraduate students of Sokoto State University make use of the social media tools in terms of frequently use sites, medium of access to social media sites, average time spent using the social media and the purpose of the usage. Secondly, the study focused on social media use in relation to how it affects students' reading culture.

The students of higher educational institutions in Nigeria have become addicted to social media use for various purposes, especially for social interactions and sharing of knowledge and information. Studies have also shown that lecturers are engaged in social media use for both research and academic purposes. However, one of the possible consequences of how students use social media could be negative influence on reading culture as well as academic performance.

Experience and observations therefore, have shown that the widespread use of social media and how it affects reading culture and academic performance of undergraduate students of Sokoto State University remains unaddressed by previous studies. Hence, if the social media use pattern of undergraduate students of Sokoto State University remains unaddressed, the trend might have negative consequences on their effective reading culture and academic performance.

Thus, this study attempts to address this research gap identified, and in so doing, generates information on how undergraduate students use social media and its effects on their reading culture as well as its influence on their academic performance within the Sokoto State University context. Therefore, an empirical study on social media use and its possible effects on students' reading culture as well as influence on academic performance need to be investigated. In other words, what is the pattern of social media use and its likely effects on reading culture of undergraduate students of Sokoto State University?

#### Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the pattern of social media use and means of access

by undergraduate students in Sokoto State University. Hence, the following specific objectives guided the study:

1. To find out the type of Social media sites that are frequently used among undergraduate students of Sokoto State University.
2. To find out the medium through which undergraduate students of Sokoto State University access social media sites.
3. To find out the average time spent on social media usage among undergraduate students of Sokoto State University
4. To determine the effect of Social Media on students' reading culture in Sokoto State University

#### Review of Literature

In this chapter the researchers reviewed the relevant literature and provide some insights into the gaps to be filled by this study. This is of paramount importance in order to provide direction for the study. The literature review was discussed under the following subheadings:

- The Concept of Social Media
- Trends in Social Media Use
- Social Media Functions in Education
- Review of Empirical Studies

#### Concept of Social Media

The emergence of web2.0 had created greater impetus for growth of the social media technology. According to Opesanwo (2018), the advent of web 2.0 had changed the way internet is used thereby providing opportunities for people to create contents, share information through wikis, podcasting, instant messaging, blogging, social bookmarking, RSS feeds, and so on. According to Davis (in Sani, 2017), Social media refers to "web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share new user-generated or existing content, in digital environments through multi-way communication". This means that social media provides various user application packages through which individuals and organizations can interact, share knowledge and information for

different purposes. The various social media tools that users can leverage on to reach out to different groups include Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Blog, Flickr, Myspace, and so on.

**Trends in Social Media Use**

According to Terragon (2017), Comscore's Chartin 2017 shows engagement in terms of time spent on the platform versus reach among the millennial demographic. It's interesting to see how effectively Facebook dominates, but also interesting to see how well Snapchat is

doing in terms monthly usage per visitor. Facebook's dominance is truly extraordinary. Not only does it take the top spot, it's other platforms also take 2nd and 3rd respectively. Facebook Messenger has an impressive 47 penetration, and Instagram (also owned by Facebook) comes 2nd for engagement. The social Media usage trends reported that Nigeria is among the ten (10) most mobilized countries in the world. Thus, the country has been witnessing continuous increase in the use and popularity of major social media platforms.

Table 1: Showing the most frequently visited social media sites in Nigeria as at 2013.

Social media	Percentage visit in 24 hours by users in Nigeria
LinkedIn	13%
Nairaland	17%
Mobofree	17%
Skype	22%
Naija	23%
Google+	42%
Eskimi	46%
Twitter	57%
2go	77%
Facebook	56%

Source: (Terragon, 2017).

**Social Media Functions in Education**

Facebook has the potential to facilitate teaching and learning in the classroom. As such the widespread use of Facebook by students, makes it imperative to look into ways it could affect their reading culture and academic work in higher educational institutions. When the lecturers integrate social media as part of their teaching methods, it can contribute immensely towards collaborative learning and enhancement of students' academic performance. A study on use of social media in Malaysian higher education institutions by Al-Rahim, Othman and Yusuf, (2015) showed that the education functions of this technology include: 1. to facilitate collaborative learning, 2. enhance students' engagement and 3. improves students' academic performance. Similarly, Sani (2017) stressed that social media are being used to promote scholarship by youths in institutions of higher learning across the globe. For example, social media tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Wiki, Myspace, and

WhatsApp can be employed to communicate with others to interact in the form of conversations or sharing of information on topics of common interests.

**Research Methodology**

The research design for this study was correlation type of survey research. According to Nworgu (2015) descriptive survey is a type of design that is concerned with systematic description of events as they are for the purpose of collecting data and describing the characteristics, features or facts about the population of a given study. The population of the study comprised a total of 5,180 from 200 level, 300 level and 400 level students of the three faculties in Sokoto State University for the 2017/2018 academic session. Students of 100 level were not used for the study because their grade point (GP) cannot be accessed as at the time of the data collection for the study. The data on the population was obtained in June, 2018 from the academic office of the University. Purposive sampling technique was employed to

select 1000 respondents were sampled. Self-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents, the questionnaire was titled 'Undergraduate Students Use of Social Media Assessment Questionnaire' (USUSMAQ). The instrument was validated by two research experts from Sokoto State University and Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. Similarly, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument after a test-retest of the instrument. Reliability index of 0.85 (which is a good reliability), was obtained. The data collected for the study was analysed using simple descriptive statistics on research question one, two, three, four, and five. Thus,

simple percentages and frequency counts were used for the data analysis.

**Results**

The results of the study were presented in accordance with research questions and the hypotheses that guided the study. The descriptive data were presented in tabular form while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Data presentation**

Research Question One: What are the Social media sites that are frequently used among undergraduate students of Sokoto State University?

Table 2: Social Media Sites Frequently Used among Students of SSU

S/N	Items	Most Used F (%)	Moderately Used F (%)	Never Used F (%)
1	Whatsapp	189 (68.7)	58 (21.1)	28 (10.2)
2	Facebook	107 (38.9)	107 (38.9)	22.2
3	Twitter	17 (6.2)	75 (27.2)	183 (66.5)
4	Skype	4 (1.5)	40 (14.5)	231 (84.0)
5	Instagram	55 (20.0)	97 (35.3)	123 (44.7)
6	Snapchart	23 (8.4)	79 (28.7)	173 (62.9)
7	Yahoo Messenger	16 (5.8)	44 (16.0)	215 (78.2)
8	My space	0 (0.0)	6 (2.2)	269 (97.8)

Source: Field work, 2017.

Result: majority of students in SSU mostly use whatsapp and facebook. This could be due to their popularity, low consumption of mobile data, accessibility and ease of use.

Research Question Two: What are the medium through which undergraduate students of Sokoto State University access social media sites?

Table 3: Medium of Access to Social Media among Students of SSU

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percent
1	Mobile phone	225	81.8
2	Laptop	14	5.1
3	University Library	15	5.5
4	University Hotspot	7	2.5
5	Home Internet	3	1.1
6	Café	11	4.0

Source: Field work, 2017

Result: majority of students in SSU mostly access social media through their mobile phones. This could be due to increasing affordability and flexibility of mobile phones than other ICT devices in Nigeria.

Research Question Three: What is the effect of Social Media on students' reading culture in Sokoto State University?

Table 4: Effect of Social Media on Students Reading Culture among Students of SSU

S/N	Items	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1	Use of social media make it difficult for me to read lecture notes	198 (72.0)	77 (28.0)
2	Use of social media does not allow me to read books for general knowledge	174 (63.3)	101 (36.7)
3	Use of social media make me change style of writing correct English	39 (14.2)	236 (85.8)
4	Use of social media distract my attention to write lecture notes in the classroom	156 (56.7)	119 (43.3)
5	Use of social media does not allow me to visit the physical library	96 (34.9)	179 (65.1)
6	Use of social media makes it difficult to read some text fluently	239 (86.9)	36 (13.1)

Source: Field work,2017

**Result:** Most of the students of SSU are friendlier with use of social media than reading lecture notes, books for general knowledge, paying attention to lecture notes in the classroom and also visiting the physical library; thereby making the students change their style of writing correct English and also making it difficult for them to read some text fluently.

#### Discussion of Results

**Research Question One:** What are the Social media sites that are frequently used among undergraduate students of Sokoto State University?

**Result:** The frequently used Social Media among students in SSU are whatsapp (with 68.7% frequency of usage), and facebook (with 38.9% frequency of usage). This could be due to their popularity, low consumption of mobile data, accessibility and ease of use.

Other social media used by the students are Instagram (with 20% usage), followed by Snapchart (with 8.4% usage), Twitter (with 6.2% usage), Yahoo Messenger (with 5.8% usage), Skype (with 1.5% usage). This could be due to their nonpopularity, high consumption of mobile data, accessibility and unease of use.

The finding is contrary to that of Terragon (2013) which revealed the most frequently visited social media in Nigeria. This was corroborated by information from Pew Internet use (Wikipedia, 2018), because in terms of active daily usage, Facebook was in the lead. In other words, 76% of users log in daily, whilst

51% do for Instagram. Twitter manages just 42% of users login in daily, which is just over half the Facebook figure.

**Research Question Two:** What are the medium through which undergraduate students of Sokoto State University access social media sites?

**Result:** majority of students in SSU mostly access social media through their mobile phones. This could be due to increasing affordability and flexibility of mobile phones than other ICT devices in Nigeria, with 81% access, followed by University e-Library (5.5%), Laptop (5.1%), Café (4.0%), University Hotspot (2.5%), and Home internet (1.1%).

**Research Question Three:** What is the effect of Social Media on students' reading culture in Sokoto State University?

**Result:** 'Use of social media make it difficult for me to read lecture notes' was the response of 198 (72.0%) of the respondents; while 198 (28.0%) of the respondents disagree that social media affect their reading of lecture notes, meaning that social media does not affect students reading of lecture notes.

Use of social media does not allow me to read books for general knowledge was the response of 174 (63.3%) of the respondents; while 101 (36.7%) of the respondents disagree that use of social media does not allow them to read books for general knowledge, meaning that social media does not allow majority of students to read books for general knowledge.

Use of social media make me change style of writing correct English was the response of 39 (14.2%) of the respondents; while 236 (85.8%) of the respondents disagree that use of social media make them change style of writing correct English, meaning that use of social media does not change majority students style of writing correct English.

Use of social media distract my attention to write lecture notes in the classroom was the response of 156 (56.7%) of the respondents, while 119 (43.3%) of the respondents disagree that use of social media distract their attention to write lecture notes in the classroom, meaning that use of social media distracts majority students attention to write lecture notes in the classroom.

Use of social media does not allow me to visit the physical library was the response of 96 (34.9%) of the respondents, while 179 (65.1%) of the respondents disagree that use of social media does not allow them to visit the physical library, meaning that use of social media does not deter a larger chunk of students from using the physical library

Use of social media makes it difficult to read some text fluently was the response of 239 (86.9%) of the respondents, while 36 (13.1%) of the respondents disagree that use of social media makes it difficult for them to read some text fluently, meaning that majority of students confessed that use of social media makes it difficult for them to read some text fluently.

It was further argued by Tarantino, McDonough and Hua (2013), that the kind of anonymity that is available on the Internet has made many students forget that they need to filter any information that they post, not knowing that many colleges as well as potential employers tend to investigate the social networking profiles of an applicant before they grant any acceptance or an interview. They also found that there are many students who are not constantly evaluating the content which they are publishing online. All this can lead to negative consequences even later on in their life.

### Summary of Findings

The findings of this research revealed that:

- i. Majority of students in SSU mostly use whatsapp and facebook. This could be due to their popularity, low consumption of mobile data, accessibility and ease of use.
- ii. Majority of students in SSU mostly access social media through their mobile phones. This could be due to increasing affordability and flexibility of mobile phones than other ICT devices in Nigeria.
- iii. Most students in SSU use social media for entertainment and socialization. However, social media platforms are insufficiently used for academics.
- iv. Most of the students of SSU are friendlier with use of social media than other academic pursuits, such as reading lecture notes and books for general knowledge, writing lecture notes in the classroom, and visiting physical library, which makes it difficult for them to write correct English and read texts fluently.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

It is a conclusion of this research that majority of students in SSU mostly use WhatsApp and Facebook. This could be due to their popularity, low consumption of mobile data, accessibility and ease of use. Majority of students in SSU mostly access social media through their mobile phones. This could be due to increasing affordability and flexibility of mobile phones than other ICT devices in Nigeria. Most of the students of SSU are friendlier with use of social media than other academic pursuits, such as reading lecture notes, books for general knowledge, writing lecture notes in the classroom, and visiting physical library, which makes it difficult for them to write correct English and read texts fluently.

The technical nature of social media, and indeed that of the Internet, has made it difficult to enforce strong policy to restrict or control its usage by students, especially in a country where survival for life has kept parents away from their kids all day. These students are prone to use social media tirelessly. Therefore, the following recommendations are forwarded by the researchers:

- i. Internet education, discussion and couching remain a lasting solution to control students' social media usage. In other words, the university lecturers should be able to play active roles in students' use of social media.
- ii. Authorities concerned, i.e., National Communication Commission (NCC) should regulate the operations of the various applications of the social media, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook to the advantage of students.
- iii. Institutions should device a means of regulating websites accessed by students on campus, so as to minimize abuse.
- iv. Students should minimize the hours spent on social media sites, since it distracts their attention on academic pursuits. Otherwise, they should only access academically inclined websites, rather than for entertainment, keeping acquaintances, charting with friends and engaging in politics.
- v. Lecture notes should be made available online for students to access, since the students are becoming friendlier with online resources On social media platforms.

#### **References**

- Abdullahi, M. S. and Opaleke, I. (2016). Social networking and academic performance of undergraduate students in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Foundations and Development*, 1 (3), 177-189.
- Adegoke, K. A. (2018). Social media as catalyst for sustainable national integration: a librarian's point of view. A paper presented at the first annual conference organized by the Nigerian Library Association, Sokoto State Chapter, held at Sultan Muhammad Maccido Institute for Qur'anic and General Studies, Sokoto, from 3rd – 5th Dec.
- Al-Rahim, W., Othman, M. S. and Yusuf, L. M. (2015). The role of social media for collaborative learning to improve academic performance of students and researchers in Malaysian Higher Education. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 16(4). Retrieved October 20, 2019.
- Dika, S. I. and Abdulsalami, T. L. (2017). Impact of social network on students' academic performance in Kogi State University, Anyigba. *Compendium of papers of the 1st international conference and home coming 2017 on global best practices in library and information services in contemporary era*. 25th-30th June, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Dunn, L. (2013). Teaching in higher education: can social media enhance the learning experience. Retrieved June 17, 2019, from <http://www.gla.ac.uk>
- Nworgu, B. G. (2015). *Educational research: Basic issues & methodology* (third edition). Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- Opesanwo, O. A. (2018). Social media use among lecturers in selected universities in South-West Nigeria. *Nigerian Libraries: Journal of the Nigerian library association*, 51(2), July – Dec..
- Oyebode, A. (2018). Libraries in the promotion of national integration for development. Keynote address delivered at the 55th National Conference/Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Library Association, University of Lagos, July 25th.
- Sani, A. A. (2017). Assessment of the relationship between social media utilization and academic achievement of undergraduate students in North-West Nigeria. Unpublished Masters Degree Thesis Presented to the School of Post Graduate Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Tarantino, K., McDonough, J., Hua, M. (2013) Effect of students engagement with social media on student learning: a review of literature. *The Journal of Technology in Students Affaires*. Retrieved from [www.studentaffaires.com/effectof](http://www.studentaffaires.com/effectof)
- Terragon (2013). Most frequently visited social media in Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://asotoadebola.com/2011/top20mostvisitedsites-in-nigeria>.
- Terragon Group (2017). Nigeria mobile trend report 2017. Retrieved from <https://terrargongroup.com>.
- Wikipedia (2018). Pew's internet and American life project, December, 2008 Data. Retrieved from [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/social\\_media](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/social_media).