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Effectiveness Of Social Media Usage On Social Skills And Self-Awareness Of Undergraduate Students In Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

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Abstract

The study investigated effectiveness of social media usage on social skills and self-awareness of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 1500 second year students in the Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and the total sample of 350 second year students (male and female) were sampled from three departments viz; Educational Foundations, Technology and Vocational Education Department and Science Education Department. Structured questionnaires titled "Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ), Social Skills Questionnaires (SSQ) and Self-Awareness Questionnaires (SAQ) were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts, one from the Department Technology and Vocational Educational whereas two are from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha coefficient was used in testing the reliability which yielded the reliability coefficient value of 0.84 and 0.89 and 76 respectively. Direct delivery technique (DDT) was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to provide answers to the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The results show that social media usage does not significantly affects social skills and self-awareness of undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The researcher concluded that social media usage is effective on Nnamdi Azikiwe undergraduate students' social skills and self-awareness.

Therefore, the researcher recommend that social media usage should not be abused rather should be monitored among the undergraduate students so that they can make adequate use of them since it improves their social skills and self-awareness.

Keywords: Social Media Usage, Social Skills, Self-Awareness

Introduction

Engaging in various forms of social media has become a routine daily activity for many especially the undergraduate students in the universities. Social media sites provide students with the opportunity to stay connected to friends, families and lecturers. The media improve these students with the idea of making new friends, share pictures and exchange ideas via online. It's at the same time give them opportunity to engage in their communities thereby, helping them participating in their community activities, develop their insight by sharing their talents which lead them to know other people from diverse areas and backgrounds. This is what led Boyd (2008) to conclude that social media use offer and enhanced learning opportunities to the students.

Contextually, social media use in all ramifications facilitates growth of interactive dialogue and communities of the users regardless of physical location. For example, academic libraries market their products through online and make people aware of what goes on in the library, providing useful information that is accessible by social media/online. According to Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) social media is the interactive communication that exist between people using a specialized electronic platform such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Myspace, Linkedin, Instagram, Blogs, Tablets, Mobile phone, Laptops and so forth. Chen and Sakamoto (2013), Ma, Lee, and Goh (2014), Ursula and Ukamaka (2020) noted that students frequently use these apps (Myspace, Skype, Linkedin, Whassap, facebook, and the like) to communicate, read, comment, share and create contents.

Many schools in this 21st century are now using social media sites for teaching and assessment of workers and students respectively. For example, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka uses Cirs for assessment of the workers and computer base test (CBT) for undergraduate and postgraduate student's exams / assessments. However, some schools use blogs as teaching tools with the benefit at improving English skills, writing and creativity. Borja (2005) noted that students use Facebook and other similar sites to gather outside of school, exchange ideas about assignments and also to collaborate on group projects. In a study, Lenhart, Parcell, Smith and Zickuhr (2010) observed that about 57% of social media users are between the age bracket 18 to 29 and they have personal online profile on multiple social media websites. Lenhart et al (2010) revealed that social media allow these students to easily create their own profile online and display online network friends.

Similarly, Mehmood and Taswir (2013), Ahmed and Oazi (2011), noted that social media usage have a significant impact on academic performance of undergraduate students and their qualitative impact is determined by the type of usage. Ahmed and Oazi (2011) added that some students often times find it difficult to concentrate and study effectively because of the amount of time they spent on social media sites. Likewise, Lewi (2009), Sponci and Gitimu (2013), Yoo and Kim (2013) asserted that the highest percentage of social media users these days are students. According to Pampek, Yermolayeva and Calvert (2009) the social media platform are gaining popularity, especially students. Notably, these students make use of social media primarily to meet their information needs but sometimes they over used it and deviate from their previous intention in using the media. However, it takes students awareness of self to limit the time spent on social media. As Adaku (2013) puts, students spent much of their study time, diverting their attention from their studies to other irrelevant communications on social media.

Further, despite the fact that social media usage enhances communication and improves learning. Lenhart 2007; Hinduja and Patchin, 2010) demonstrated that social media can often become a risk for both the adolescents and the adult. These researchers noted that, the use of social media can easily lead to cyberbullying which is referred to as using social media to communicate false, embarrassing or hostile information about another person and it is the most common risk among teens (Lenhart 2007). According to Hinduja and Patchin (2010), Ezeonwumelu, Okenwa, Nwikpo, Oparaugo and Okoro (2022), this issue of

cyberbullying happened to anybody and it is very dangerous to health and as a fact can result to psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, isolation and even suicide.

Information from the National Campaign to Treat and Prevent Unplanned Pregnancy (2008) reported that 20% of teens have posted rude or semi-rude photos or videos of themselves using social media site such as Facebook. Lenhart 2009, however indicated that these posted videos and photos by the students is easily distributed and can incur felony child pornography charges as well as school suspension and emotional distress for the victims.

It is observable and well noted that students who are spending much time on social media site can experience depression. Depression in turn, can put these students at risk for social isolation and seeking help from risky online websites and blogs that may promote unhealthy coping mechanisms including substance use, unsafe sex, or self-destructive behaviors. The danger of it all is that most of these students do not understand that everything they posted via social media leaves a digital footprint and can hurt their future reputation, hurt their image and their study and even follow them forever and this the reason why students should be encourage be always aware of themselves so that they will know their limit in all they do especially in the aspect of time spent on social media use.

Contextually, Self-awareness is the capacity of becoming the object of one's own attention. It is the ability to tune into someone's feelings, thoughts and actions. Then a student is aware of himself, he understands his strength, challenges and also know what helps him thrive. Another word or synonyms to self-awareness is self-consciousness, self-recognition or self-analyses. Self-awareness requires active identification, process and strong information about oneself. Morin (2011) noted that there is a self-regulatory aspect to self-awareness whereby, when an individual focuses on himself, he is reminded of his personal and ideal standards. The ideal standard which an individual focused on reminded him if he is experiencing discrepancies between his current state and ideal standard. Thus, a highly self-aware student is likely to alter any problematic behavior to align with its ideal standard. Again, Morin (2011) described self-awareness as a private self-aspects like emotions and thoughts as well as public self-aspects like physical appearance and behaviour. Morin (2011) asserted that self-awareness involves reflection when perceiving and processing stimuli. The regulatory aspect could either lead to self-reflection (resolving the discrepancy) or rumination.

This is in line with the assertion of Dishon, Oldmeadow and Kaufman (2018) who said that when self-awareness is heightened individuals attributed more meaning to their careers. In so doing, self-awareness is associated with a lot of benefit including a high self-aware person having access to identify obstacles in relation to his personal idiosyncratic goals and also the individual having access to identify obstacles within his assigned task (Kreibich, Hennecke, and Brandstätter 2020). Philips and Silvia (2005) is a study revealed that self-awareness strengthens the relationship between emotion and self-discrepancies. This assertion align with the assertion of Morin (2011) which stated that self-awareness enhances self-regulatory aspects which helps the student to shun and problematic behaviour which equally could be contracted through social media use. Qiu, Lin, and Eung (2010) in a study discovered that self-awareness has a close relationship with social media use and that the individuals with inflated self-esteem increases their public awareness after long time use of social media. Therefore self-awareness makes social media use more valuable because a student who is aware of himself makes out time for media use and his study hence social media use makes difference in evaluating media messages more critically and equip him with the requirement for social skill. Social skills are the fundamental factors for the formation of relationships, for the quality of social interactions and even for the individual mental health (Greshman, 2006). One of the essential materials used in building someone interpersonal and personal relationships is social skill.

It is good to understand that a student whose social skills is well developed tends to accomplish his career goals, contribute to school achievements, perform well in both academics and other professional networks. This means that the moment a student understands and improve in his social skill, the more benefit he will achieve in every aspect of his life because social skill manifest in day to day activities. As Jennifer (2023) pointed out, social skills are used to communicate with others daily in varied ways which include verbal, nonverbal, written and visual. Social skill is verbal when it involves spoken language, whereas it is nonverbal

when it involves body language, facial expression and eye contact (Knapp and Hall, 2010). Whenever a student interacts with another student, it is a must that social skill is involved. When individual social skill is well developed it can help him to communicate more effectively and efficiently and at the same time help him build, maintain and grow relationship with colleagues / mates, client and new contacts.

Further, a well-developed social skill attracts a lot of benefits including an individual communicating his needs clearly and effectively, having better or potentially more relationship, navigate tricky social situations, being considered for career opportunities and also feel happier. Additionally, Jennifer (2023) listed six major importance of social skills which could facilitate better interactions in the school, workplace, family and society at large and these importance of social skills include effective communication, conflict resolution, active listening, empathy, relationship management and respect.

In a short note, effective communication is core social skill which entails the ability to communicate effectively with others. A student who has the ability to communicate effectively with others easily shares their thoughts and ideas clearly with peers and every other person around him. In conflict resolution, the student find it easier to get to the source of the problem and find a workable solution to it should conflict arise. The ability to pay close attention to a person who is communicating with you is what is referred to as active listening. When one is an active listener, those around him recognize and regard him seriously because of the attention and respect he gave others. People easily confide on those who understands and sympathize them. Empathy therefore means the ability to understand and identify with the feelings of others. Relationship management is the ability to maintain healthy relationships and build key connections. A student who is a course rep might be responsible for nurturing the relationship between his group/ mates and the school authority. Respect involves knowing when and how to initiate communication and responds. In a group setting or learn, allowing others to speak without interruption is a necessary communication skill that shows respect.

Consequently, Social skills are acquired at an early age either spontaneously or with the help of others. In other words, they are not innate rather they can be improved and enhanced just like any other skill (Josefina Castelan). Knapp and Hall, (2010) noted that students understanding the nonverbal communication is crucial because in social situations it modifies their behaviours in response to the reactions of others. Knapp and Hall in other words reported that individual's ability to process emotional cues has a very strong relationship with his personal, social, and academic success. Sherman, Michikyan and Greenfeld (2013) on the other hand assert that these non-verbal, affective cues are much stronger when it comes to communicating in person versus digitally. This lead to the assertion by Giedd (2012) which stated that student's extensive use of social media can curtail their face-to-face experiences necessary for them to develop and master important social skill. Therefore, it is based on these background that the researchers intent to find out the effectiveness of social media use on social skills and self-awareness of undergraduate students in the universities.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the effectiveness of social media use on social skills use and self-awareness of undergraduates students. Specifically, to find out if;

1. Social medial use affect undergraduate students communication with others
2. Social medial use affect undergraduate students respect to others
3. Social medial use affect undergraduate students relationship management
4. Social media use affect undergraduate students self-awareness

Research questions

1. To what extent does social media use affect undergraduate students communication with others
2. To what extent does social media use affect undergraduate students respect to others
3. To what extent does social media use affect undergraduate students relationship management
4. To what extent does social media use affect undergraduate students self-awareness

Hypotheses

The following Ho guided the study

1. Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students communication with others
2. Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students respect to others
3. Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students relationship management
4. Social media use does not affect undergraduate students self-awareness

Methods

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive research design according to Nworgu (2016), is a type of design that involves collection of data and describing it in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. In descriptive survey design, a group of people is studied by collecting and analyzing data from a small or few group of people which is considered to represent the entire population, The design was therefore, considered appropriate to this study which is on perceived effectiveness of social media use on social skill and self-awareness among undergraduate students of Namdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

The population of the study comprised 1500 second year students in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Three hundred and fifty (350) second year students (male and female) from three departments viz; Educational Foundations, Technology and Vocational Education Department and Science Education Department were sampled for the study. Multi stage random procedure was used in sampling the participants for the study. Three instruments titled “social media use questionnaire (SMUQ), social skill questionnaire (SSQ) and self-awareness questionnaire (SAQ) were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts, one in department of Technology and Vocational Education and two in the department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The questionnaire was tested using Crombach’s alpha method which yielded the reliability index of 0.84 (SMU), 0.89 (SA) and 0.76 (SS) respectively. Direct delivery technique (DDT) was adopted for the collection of data. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. Decisions for the research questions were based on the criterion mean benchmark of 2.50. Any item having mean score below the criterion mean score was regarded as low extent while items having mean score above the criterion mean score of 2.50 was regarded high extent. For the hypothesis, t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does social media use affect undergraduate students’ communication with others?

Table 1: Respondents’ mean and standard deviation ratings on the extent social media use affect undergraduate students’ communication with others (N = 350)

S/N	Items on extent social media use affect undergraduate students’ communication with others	X	SD	Decisions
1	Social media helps me communicate more effectively with my peers	2.94	0.50	High extent
2	I find it easy to express myself through social media platforms	3.03	0.76	High extent
3	Social media enhances my ability to stay connected with friends and family	3.37	0.90	High extent
4	Social media allows me to share my thoughts and opinions freely	2.64	0.63	High extent

5	I spend more time communicating with others through social media than in person	3.15	0.73	High extent
6	I feel more connected to classmates through social media	2.45	0.65	Low extent
Average mean		2.93		High extent

The result in Table 1 reveals that item 6 with mean score 2.45 was rated low extent while items 1 – 5 with mean scores 2.94, 3.03, 3.37, 2.64 and 3.15 were rated high extent. The cluster mean of 2.93 summarized that social media use affect undergraduate students' communication to a high extent. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.50 – 0.90 means that the respondents' mean ratings were closely related.

Research Question 2: To what extent does social media use affect undergraduate students respect to others?

Table 2: Respondents' mean and standard deviation ratings on the extent social media use affect undergraduate students respect to others (N = 350)

S/N	To what extent:	X	SD	Decision
7	has social media made you less respectful towards others	2.05	0.46	Low extent
8	are you likely to judge others based on their social media posts	2.41	0.91	Low extent
9	has social media interactions led to more conflicts and arguments with others	2.11	0.43	Low extent
10	has social media use decreased your empathy towards others	2.23	0.79	Low extent
11	social media made you more tolerant of diverse opinions of my classmates	3.21	0.41	High extent
12	Have you been mindful of the impact of social media interactions may have on others' feelings	2.97	0.73	High extent
Average mean		2.49		Low extent

The result in Table 2 reveals that items 11 and 12 with their respective mean scores of 3.21 and 2.97 were rated high extent while items 7 – 10 with their respective mean scores of 2.05, 2.41, 2.11 and 2.23 were rated low extent. The cluster mean of 2.49 summarized that social media use affect undergraduate students' respect to others to a low extent. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.41 – 0.91 means that the respondents' mean ratings were closely related.

Research Question 3: To what extent does social media use affect undergraduate students' relationship management?

Table 3: Respondents' mean and standard deviation ratings on the extent social media use affect undergraduate students' relationship management (N = 350)

S/N	To what extent	X	SD	Decision
13	Has social media use improved my ability to maintain relationships with friends and family	3.16	0.60	High extent

14	Do you rely on social media to communicate with friends and family	3.64	0.82	High extent
15	Social media use helped me stay connected with classmates who are important to me	3.25	0.54	High extent
16	Does social media use strengthened my relationships with classmates and peers	3.80	0.45	High extent
17	Do you feel confident in managing relationships because of social media	3.23	1.04	High extent
18	Were you able to resolve conflicts with colleagues through social media	2.80	0.59	High extent
Average mean		3.30	0.98	High extent

The result in Table 3 reveals that items 13 – 18 with their respective mean scores of 3.16, 3.64, 3.25, 3.80, 3.23 and 2.80 were rated low extent. The cluster mean of 3.30 summarized that social media use affect undergraduate students' relationship management to a high extent. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.45 – 1.04 means that the respondents' mean ratings were closely related.

Research Question 4: To what extent does social media use affect undergraduate students' self-awareness?

Table 4: Respondents' mean and standard deviation ratings on the extent of social media use affect undergraduate students' self-awareness (N = 350)

S/N	To what extent:	X	SD	Decision
19	Has social media use helped me gain insights into my own thoughts and feelings	2.59	0.52	High extent
20	Are you aware of how social media use influences your mood and emotions	3.12	0.64	High extent
21	Has social media use helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses	3.29	0.62	High extent
22	Do I compare myself to others on social media and feel insecure about myself	2.66	0.73	High extent
23	Do I feel pressured to present a certain image of myself on social media	2.61	0.78	High extent
24	Has social media made me more conscious of how I interact with others	3.21	0.94	High extent
Average Mean		2.91		High extent

The result in Table 4 reveals that items 19 – 24 with their respective mean scores of 2.59, 3.12, 3.29, 2.66, 2.61 and 3.21 were rated high extent. The cluster mean of 2.91 summarized that social media use affect undergraduate students' self-awareness to a high extent. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.52 – 0.94 means that the respondents' mean ratings were closely related.

Statistical Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' communication with others

Table 5: One-sample t-test on social media use significantly affecting undergraduate students' communication with others

	t	df	P	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Communication	8.624	348	.000	11.6787	12.2387	-10.0927

Data presented in Table 5 reveals that the null hypothesis of no significance is rejected since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, $t(348) = 8.624$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore, social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' communication with others.

Hypothesis 2: Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students respect to others

Table 6: One-sample t-test on social media use significantly affecting undergraduate students' respect to others

	t	df	P	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Respect to others	9.742	348	.000	20.7632	19.9234	-19.4742

Data presented in Table 6 reveals that the null hypothesis of no significance is rejected since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, $t(348) = 9.742$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore, social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students respect to others

Hypothesis 3: Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students relationship management

Table 7: One-sample t-test on social media use significantly affecting undergraduate students' relationship management

	t	df	P	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Relationship mgt	15.046	348	.000	34.0023	32.1753	-39.56724

Data presented in Table 7 reveals that the null hypothesis of no significance is rejected since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, $t(348) = 15.046$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore, social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' relationship management.

Hypothesis 3: Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' self-awareness

Table 8: One-sample t-test on social media use significantly affecting undergraduate students' self-awareness

	t	df	P	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Self-awareness	22.901	348	.000	22.6752	22.1294	-19.7428

Data presented in Table 8 reveals that the null hypothesis of no significance is rejected since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, $t(348) = 22.901$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore, social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' self-awareness.

Discussion

The cluster mean of 2.93 summarized that social media use affect undergraduate students' communication to a high extent. The findings collaborate the findings of Chen and Sakamoto (2013), Ma, Lee, and Goh (2014), Ursula and Ukamaka (2020) in their studies which indicated that students frequently use social media apps (Myspace, Skype, Linkedin, Blog, Laptops, Mobile phones and the like) to communicate, read, comment, share and create contents. with the assertion of Boyd (2008) who concluded that social media use offer and enhanced learning opportunities to the students. It also agreed with Borja (2005) who noted that students use Facebook and other similar sites to gather outside of school, exchange ideas about assignments and also to collaborate on group projects. The study disagreed with Adaku (2013) who said that students spent much of their study time, diverting their attention from their studies to other irrelevant communications on social media. According to the respondents, students often utilize their social media use for relevant study issues and other relevant activities. For example, they can use it to create their profile online and display online network friends as Lenhart et al (2010) revealed in a study. However, the study showed that social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' communication with others.

The cluster mean of 2.49 also summarized that social media use affect undergraduate students' respect to others to a low extent. The findings collaborates the assertion of Lenhart (2007) which stated that, the use of social media can easily lead to cyberbullying which is referred to as using social media to communicate false, embarrassing or hostile information about another person and it is the most common risk among teens. From the findings, students reputations may not be affected because of the social media usage and from the analyses the findings showed that, social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students respect to others. This means that students who handled social media with care will fly higher in their academics and professional networks.

The cluster mean of 3.30 summarized that social media use affect undergraduate students' relationship management to a high extent. The findings succinctly agreed with Greshman, (2006) that states that Social skills are the fundamental factors for the formation of relationships, for the quality of social interactions and even for the individual mental health. Therefore, based on the findings, social media use helps in building someone interpersonal and personal relationships. This however, indicates that social media use enhanced relationship management among students. The test of Ho also revealed that social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' relationship management. That shows that when social media is used with consent, relationship is maintained and it takes one to be aware of himself in order to maintain a free and fro relationship with others. Therefore, it is assumed that social media use instead of being harmful to relationship management, it makes relationship more strong and also make students more connected to peers, friends, families and communities.

The cluster mean of 2.91 summarized that social media use affect undergraduate students' self-awareness to a high extent. This finding is in line with the findings of Qiu, Lin, and Eung (2010) in a study which discovered that self-awareness has a close relationship with social media use and that the individuals with inflated self-esteem increases their public awareness after long time use of social media. Therefore self-awareness makes social media use more valuable because a student who is aware of himself makes out time for media use and his study. Hence, social media use makes difference in evaluating media messages more critically and equip students with the requirement for social skill for self-awareness. The findings correlate with Dishon, Oldmeadow and Kaufman (2018) who said that when self-awareness is heightened individuals attributed more meaning to the students' choice of careers. The findings revealed also that social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' self-awareness. This simply means that a self-awared student knows how to manage his time and knows his limit on social media use and other activities he attends to.

Conclusion

The study concluded that social media use has a strong effect on Namdi Azikewe university students' social skills and self-awareness. It concluded that social media use enable students whose social skills is well developed to accomplish their career goals, contribute to school achievements, perform well in both academics and other professional networks. Based on the findings, the study also concluded that social media

use gave students the ability to communicate effectively with others easily shares their thoughts and ideas clearly with peers and every other person around him. Additionally, social media increases self-awareness and make students gain popularity and also expose them to the societal needs.

Recommendations

Social media use should be incorporated in the school curriculum so that every student will perfectly learn how to use the apps since it increases the knowledge and understanding of the students on both academic and social activities.

Secondly, since students can use social media to create their own profile, the study recommend that the school administrators should encourage teaching online, computing students' results online and as well making students transcript online as soon as the students graduated to enable the students access and document their academic achievements.

The study also recommend that social media usage should not be abused rather should be monitored among the undergraduate students so that they can make adequate use of them since it improves their social skills and self-awareness.

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