CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS: A STUDY OF NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT
Over the last 500 years, the mass media has influenced, to a large extent, on educational development and literacy rate in Nigeria as a result of the advent of various technological advancement. From time immemorial there were books, newspapers, magazines, photography, sound recordings, films, radio, television which make communication inescapable in all field of human endeavour. Introduction of internet in the later part of twentieth century changed not only the media involvement in effective information dissemination but has also ensured effective interraction between and among people of different countries. Internet is the mother of Social Media. It is part of enculturation, of learning which provides the main vehicle for education and information. The rationale behind this paper is to find out whether the exposure of students to social media has any effect on their academic performance using the survey research method. The findings shows that exposure of youths to Social Media has to a great extent affect both the interest of students in learning as well as their performances in academics. Therefore It is recommended that students should pay minimal attention to the use of Social media for other than educational motive.
Key words: Social Media, Academic Performance.

INTRODUCTION
There is no doubt that students are actively engaged in social media networking communities. Ndubueze (2013) posits that one of the breakthroughs in information and communication technology in the 21st century was the discovery and emergence of the new media which has facilitated the creation of the different platforms for social interaction. The potentials of the new media are seamless and boundless in terms of interactions, interrelationships, and information sharing and exchanges. Spurgeon (2008), “the Internet is considered the most interactive of all communication media because it is engineered to support all modes of interpersonal, mass and computer-mediated communication”.
Paxson (2010) further explained that the new media include internet websites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Flicker, and other social networking or social media, and sharing sites, as well as blogs, video games, virtual worlds, mobile telephones, text messaging devices and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices. Social media such as blog, video sharing (YouTube) audio sharing (Podcast), mobile sites (2go etc), image or picture sharing (flicker), etc have to a large extent boost participation because of its openness, conversation nature, connectedness, and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeal. Verster, (2010) It is imperative to concede to the fact that social media are “fast becoming the default internet mode of interaction, communication and collaboration”. And, according to Abubakar (2011), “social media are both internet and mobile based apparatus that allow people to easily share and discuss information”. Thus, the role of the different social media platforms in enhancing socio-cultural, economic, political and technological development of any nation as well as its citizenry can never be overemphasized. More importantly, social media are being used to promote scholarship for students in institutions of higher learning across the globe. Overholser (2010), while citing a group of students in Annenberg College of Journalism, quotes:
... we at Annenberg have done it patchily by bringing in
folks to do series of workshops for students and faculty.
We’ve had regular discussions with digital media
innovators throughout the year.

The above stresses the fact that, social media platforms could be activated and actively used for the promotion, acquisition and distribution of knowledge-based information. Therefore, the question arises as to
what extent has the Nigerian students converted the potentials and possibilities of the social media to platforms for networking academic materials for scholarship and academic excellence? What kind of effects do these sites have on the students’ commitment to their academics also considering the time spent on-line? More students are joining sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter to interact with friends, families and strangers. The advent of social media has changed the lives of students in many ways. Today, it can be used as a very helpful tool in changing a student’s life, but at the same time can cause such conflicts which can have negative impact.

Students are also addicted to excessive use of social media majorly while studying, students search for relevant materials online. They get attracted with the ongoing events online to kill the boredom in their study time this therefore divert their attentions from their academic work and they end up focusing on the sites rather than academic research. These social networks have affected not only the academic life of students but also their social life. It is therefore important to study the influence of social media on the students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria with a view to finding out the degree of its impact on their academic performance and then proffer possible solutions and recommendations. In line with the above this paper is set out to find out to what extent has the social media influenced the performance of the students of The National Open University of Nigeria? Is there any correlation between the students performance and the time spent on social media and does the social media enhance the performance of students in anyway? Indeed this are among the findings that shall be looked into as truely the National Open University Of Nigeria (NOUN) occupies a vital position in tertiary education hence it will be used as a case study in this research.

ADVENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN NIGERIA
The Internet has become a daily need for a lot of people recently, especially with the technological innovation that saw the emergence of the new media. The innovations in information dissemination occasioned by technology advancement poses a huge challenge to existing traditional media. Social Media has come to stay and it seems to have occupied a prominent position in almost every facet of life including politics, economy, education and lifestyle. Social Media is however not confined to the hardcore news dissemination as it is also a highly interactive social platform connecting friends, families, organizations and business associates together. Facebook and Twitter are biggest examples of the social media which the youths are more conversant with.

FACEBOOK
Facebook allows the connection with friends, family and other relatives virtually. The popularity of the website has made it a major application that connects people throughout the world and has transformed relationships across the world. On Facebook, anything can be posted by a user on his/her wall. The wall of the user is a common ground that family and friends can actually place their comments, as can the user. This medium is used by a lot of people to post some of their personal information and updates about them. Gambo(2013) reported in Nigeria Intel Online Media that globally there are about 1 billion users of Facebook. While Paxson (2010)& Abubakar(2011) described facebook as one of the important social media networks and websites. It is one of the new media networks which provides users with the mix of interpersonal and mass communication capabilities that have not existed before, and which places emphasis on interactivity and mobility. Paxson, makes it known that Mark Zucherberg originally launched “the facebook” on February 4, 2004 and was located at “the facebook.com”. However, in 2005, it dropped “the” from its name after purchasing the domain named facebook.com for $200,000 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/facebook).

In Harvard University, the first created site by Zucherberg came up with 500 Augustan images with one image per page which he opened up to his classmates for note sharing (Ibid). However, Facebook was opened up for everyone of age 13 and above with a valid e-mail address on September 26, 2006. Thus, by September, 2012, Facebook has over one billion active users (Ibid). The platform allows users to join common interest groups, organized by workplace, school or College for social networking (Ibid). Facebook, according to Wikipedia, is the most popular social networking site in several English speaking countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Even in Africa, there were about 17 million Facebook users at the start of 2011 and the figure was expected to rise to 28 million by 2012 (Ledgard, 2011). Thus, as at June 2011, Facebook had reached one trillion page viewers, making it the most visited website in the world. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/facebook).

The above assertion corroborates Experian Hitwise (2011) study and its ranking of the world 10 most visited sites.
Table 1: The Ten World most visited sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Visit Share (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>facebook</td>
<td>64.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>19.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yahoo! answers</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MySpace</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tagged</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My Yearbook</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Linkedin</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My life</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Meebo</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 1 above shows that about 65% of website visitors visit Facebook. At inception, Facebook was exclusively limited to the undergraduates of Harvard University, but by March same year (2004), it allowed students of other Universities such as Tanford, Colombia, Yale, Boston, etc to use it. And, by September 2005, it allowed high school students in countries such as England, Canada, etc to use it. And by 2006 it allowed everyone above age 13 to use the site. Facebook became popular among youths, especially, undergraduates because of its potentials. Verster (2010), while commenting on the potentials and usage of Facebook, says:

“You can create a social space from where you can send notices, organize classroom events and aggregate learning feeds from any of the aforementioned tools using Facebook’s built-in array of tools … You can make it your classroom’s informal start page to kick-start any formal assignment and discussion.”

Thus, it is imperative to note that the new media, and by extension social media, by their very nature are drivers of social change, national development and organizational development. (Ikpe and Olise, 2010) they possess the capability to increase work efficiency and speed as well as reduce cost.

According to Pempek et al (2009), an estimated ninety-one percent of college students utilized facebook.com. The utility ranged from simple ownership of a Facebook account (profile) to active daily visitor or user. It is important to note that, according to a study conducted by Madge et al (2009), about 53% of College students who use Facebook had an active profile.

**TWITTER**

On Twitter, anybody’s status can be seen and updates can be received about someone a user might chose to follow on the network. In fact, a user can follow companies, tech blogs, news channels, celebrities and a lot more. The most important benefit on Twitter is that a user can post his/her updates too and this is where Twitter is different from Facebook. Twitter is a very useful network of the people that like to follow live news faster than any media reporter or news channel. It has hundreds of tweets every minute including news link, blogs, and many more. Because of this, the network has become a very useful information medium. The activities on Twitter are not just about following others or being followed; one can also have a group of friends to get united with, just as it is on Facebook. A user can chat with friends and get to discuss issues. Professionally, one can engage on Twitter for business networking, corporate solutions, hiring workers, and many more.

**SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE**

Since the Internet became part of our existence, virtually everything has changed including the news media. The mode of getting current news has improved to a large extent, e.g breaking news and other updates have become more dynamic, employing every conceivable electronic platform to deliver news as they break either via SMS window or the more sophisticated audio-video mobile devices on social websites. According to Gambo (2013), it was observed that the power to democratize the coverage of news relies on social network as conversation that makes the news is discussed by the users of social network. They have the capacity to write what they believe is important and the changes they want to see in the society. It cannot be denied that social media has also changed the way the tradition news sources give information out to the public. A lot of people have argued that posting articles online have led to the decrease in the values of a lot of them.
However, this is part of the trend and improves the level of information to the uninformed in society. In the developed countries, environmentalists have achieved remarkable success in reaching the public with their messages through different social media and to help raise awareness about different issues. This trend has also been extended to developing countries overtime. Gambo (2013) in Nigeria Intel Online Media, reported that ultimately, in Nigeria today, while a number of unsavory incidents have come about from the advent of social media they have made substantial impact in the social, economic and political spheres. It is no wonder that millions of people and businesses now connect regularly by the means of mobile phones, computers, laptops and tablets. Oruame (2012) notes a week where Nigerians marched out in their millions to vent their anger against the removal of oil subsidy and their frustrations on a system they regarded as parasitic, the traditional media was found wanting. It was largely silent where the social media was loud and aggressive on the call for change. The traditional media lost the momentum to the social media, and if you prefer to call it, the participatory media. All the frenzy of the moment, the defining points, the live image of a mammoth gathering in several cities within Nigeria and the rest of the world where protest marches occurred where captured and streamed live not by the traditional media but the social media.

Oruame (2012) in The Nation Newspaper, asserts that the world outside largely followed the news, still pictures and video images on Occupy Nigeria not from the pages of newspapers or the broadcast channels of terrestrial television services but from the windows of mobile devices and PCs all carrying updates of what was happening in Nigeria as transmitted by diverse news reporting and sharing tools riding on the back of the Internet. Whenever the traditional media reported the news, it always appeared to be several annoying hours behind the social media that practically appeared to be more on ground and had literally ‘occupied’ not only the minds of millions of people who have access to the Internet but also the critical space for news dissemination.

The place of social media as agent of change cannot only be restricted to the Nigerian society. It resonates globally. The recent ‘Arab spring’ is another good example, Uzor Uzoatta writes that “the lesson to be drawn is that the Arab Spring is real and can manifest anywhere with the democratization of communications as made possible by the social media. One man changed the history of the world by setting himself on fire.” Uzor Maxim Uzoatu(2013) in The Premium Times where he captures the origin of the Arab Spring thus: Tunisian, Mohammed Bouazizi, was unable to find work and had to make ends meet by selling fruits at a roadside stand. On December 17, 2010 a municipal inspector confiscated his wares. An hour later, he doused himself with petrol and set himself on fire. His death on January 4, 2011 brought together various groups disillusioned with the existing system in Tunisia: the unemployed, political and human rights activists, trade unionists, students, professors, lawyers, and many others. Thus began the Tunisian Revolution. This uprising led to the sacking of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on January 14, 2011 thus ending his 23 years in power. The ousted Ben Ali fled into exile in Saudi Arabia. Barely 10 days after the sacking of the Tunisian President, protests began in Egypt on January 25 which lasted for 18 days.

Beginning around midnight on 28 January, the Egyptian government attempted to eliminate the nation’s Internet access, in order to inhibit the protesters’ ability to organize through social media. It was all in vain for, on February 11, 2011, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt was forced to flee from power, after being in office for about 30 years. Then the revolution spread to Libya, the land of the strongman Muammar Gaddafi. Protests in Libya lasted till October 20, 2011 when Gaddafi met with gruesome death. The uprisings sweeping through the Arab world has since been given the name: The Arab Spring. The fear of the Arab Spring spreading to other parts of the world is on the front burner in this day and age of the social media. Through the Internet, Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry landmark protests can easily be organized in the twinkling of an eye. Freedom and democracy are today atop the laps of all citizens of the world. Nigeria had a glimpse of the Arab Spring when the President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan’s regime removed the fuel subsidy on January 1. The very unpopular New Year “gift” sparked off spontaneous anti-government demonstrations in many Nigerian cities the very next day, that is, on January 2 2012, Nigerian towns such as Kaduna, Kano, Ibadan, Ilorin, Kebbi, Gusau etc. were literally on fire as many protesters marched on the streets with placards and made bonfires. The demonstrations involved people from diverse social strata and different works of life. The various classes of people were all united in opposition to the anti-people policies of the government. The uprising brought together the unemployed, the under-employed and even the employed. The poor and middle class people were involved. The educated and uneducated persons shared company in the march on against the government. The artisans and sundry workers, musicians and diverse artists, students, all kinds of activists were united in the struggle. The name that was given to the crusade was “Occupy Nigeria”.

The first objective of the Occupy Nigeria protest was to force the government to return to the status quo and cause petrol to be sold at the previous rate of 65 naira per litre and also provide infrastructural facilities,
eradicate corruption. Messages passed back and forth on the social media network about the imminent revolution. The Facebook pages were replete with instructions on how to follow through the Nigerian Spring. Facebook group pages were created to spur Nigerians globally against the fuel subsidy removal. One of the Facebook groups called “Nationwide Anti-Fuel Subsidy Removal: Strategies & Protests which was created on January 2, 2012 will remain green in our memories as Nigerians had over 20,000 members by January 9 2012. People tweeted on how the government would be upstaged.

Uzor Maxim Uzoat (2013) opines that it is indeed ironic that the social media like Facebook was used in the mass action against the President Jonathan regime. The president also has a Facebook account which boasts of well over half-a-million fans, and still counting. In fact according to findings, the Nigerian President has more Facebook fans than the combined tally of the British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor- Angela Merkel, and South African head of state Jacob Zuma.Incidentally, United States President Barack Obama is continuing to build on the social media campaign he used in his 2008 presidential campaign, with a 17-minute online video being released on his own YouTube page, thus underscoring the great importance of the media on world affairs.

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND NIGERIAN STUDENTS**

Since the advent of internet and social media, interesting discourse is going on in the academic world looking objectively at the harmful and positive effects of social media on students’ performance all over the world and also trying to show whether social media are by themselves evil or good. Social media like Facebook, Twitter, 2go, Skype and many others are becoming increasingly popular among Nigerian students. At a time when academic performance especially in the Senior School Certificate Exam, SSCE is disturbingly poor and university graduates are tagged “unemployable” there is concern within a school of thought that social media may be negatively influencing the performance of students. Anza Msonter (2102) is of the opinion that with the advent of social media, access to information has become almost completely free. Account holders on Facebook for instance, can subscribe to news feeds of interest to them. Whenever they sign into their accounts, the information they need is available for their use. Students who need information about scholarships can simply subscribe to the Facebook pages of the sites providing this information. This way, they are sure of not missing the chance whenever it is available.

Social media have also reduced the cost of communication among students. The mobile chatting application 2go for instance, has become a veritable tool among students for disseminating information about fixed lectures, assignments and other academic activities. These days, anyone looking for information on when any school conducts its Post-University Matriculation Examination, Post-UME, only needs to post a status update seeking such information. Within minutes, responses will pour in from his/her friends and soon, he/she will establish contact with a reliable informant. This is quite convenient and eliminates unnecessary cost. Good as the use of social media is, there are also harmful effects that arise from excessive obsession with or abuse of them. One of such effect is waste of time that should be used for productive academic engagements. The ability of social media to cheaply bring into contact two or more people at a time strongly tempts students to always engage in prolonged online chatting about unimportant issues that do not contribute to any positive development of the students.

Oche (2010) cited by Anza Msonter (2102), laments that with so many social networking sites displayed on the internet, students are tempted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference for chatting online with friends. The social media frenzy is becoming an addiction. Some students can’t do without accessing their account within an hour. They like to stay up-to-date. And they do it irrespective of whether lectures are going on or not. i.e while lectures are on, they still chat with friends online, which distracts their concentration Another harm social media do to students manifests in the form of instant-messaging abbreviations.

Today, informal communication abbreviations permeate even formal writings and this is evident all over the print media. For instance, the use numeral figures in the place of some words – 2 for “to” or 4 for “for” – and the use of certain English alphabets for some words – u for “you” or ur for “your” – have become rampant. The need to say much in as few words as possible has also led to the formation of unconventional abbreviations like OMG (Oh My God), FOC (Free of Charge), YTM (You are Too Much) etc. And some fellows have so used these abbreviations that they have gradually lost the ability to spell English words correctly. As a result, the quality of written English has deteriorated and this has serious academic consequences for students. It must be clear now that social media are not in themselves friends or enemies of students. They can become either, depending on the use to which they are put. (Junco, 2011) cited by Anzaa Msonter (2012) “Specific uses of social media are related to positive outcomes while others are related to negative ones. Therefore social media use in and of itself may not be detrimental to academic outcomes, it depends on how it is used. Using Facebook for socializing is negatively related to GPA while using
Facebook for collecting and sharing information is positively related”. Following the negative impacts of social media on students, one may be tempted to suggest that they be denied access to social media. However, the discomfort such a black-out would cause is better imagined.

**METHODOLOGY**

The survey method research design was adopted in this study. Three hundred students were sampled from National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). This is because the students of the University cut across diverse ethnic, economic, social and religious backgrounds. This provided a valid and fair assessment of the views of Nigerian students on the study.

The questionnaire was used as the instrument for collecting data from the respondents. It was personally administered to the sampled students.

**ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**RESEARCH QUESTION ONE**: Do the social media have any influence on the performance of students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)? what type of influence? Positive or negative?

**TABLE 1 Influence of Social Media on Students Academic Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does Social Media influence your academic performance?</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents agreed that Social Media has influenced their academic performance. About two of every five respondents say that Social Media do not influence student’s academic performance.

**TABLE 2 Type of Information Respondents Search for on Social Media?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Information</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and Entertainment</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reveals that academic information tops the list of what respondents search for on Social Media as an overwhelming majority of the respondents attested to this while social, sports and entertainment information follow in that order. Respondents who search for political and other information not listed on Social Media represented an insignificant number of the respondents. This table simply indicates the kind of information that students search for on Social Media.

**RESEARCH QUESTION TWO**: What is the average time duration that students spend on social media daily?

**TABLE 3 How many hours do you spend browsing the internet daily?**
Table 3 shows that three quarters of the respondents spend a maximum of three hours and a minimum of an hour daily browsing the internet. Only very few of the respondents spend more than three hours daily on internet. This suggests that students spend an average of two hours on the internet daily.

**RESEARCH QUESTION THREE:** Is there any correlation between the student’s performance and the time spent on Social Media?

**TABLE 4:** Do the time spent on Social Media clash with students’ academic schedule

Table 4 shows that over two third majority of respondents agree that the time spent on social media sites does not clash with their academic schedule while the remaining one third do not agree. Going by the result of this table, it is clear that students have specific time and needs on social media sites and this does not interfere with their academic schedule.

**RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR:** How can social media enhance the academic performance of students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)?

**TABLE 5:** Enhancement of Students Performance through Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should Social Media be Incorporated Into Educational Curriculum?</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 5 shows that over two third of the respondents amounting to 69% percent of the population believe that social media sites should be incorporated into educational curriculum while the rest think otherwise. This clearly underlines the yearnings of the majority who believe incorporating social media sites into educational curriculum will not only aid the educational facility, but would also succeed in improving learning facilities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
DISCUSSION

From table 1, the problem posed here was whether social media have any influence on the performance of students of National Open University of Nigeria. A breakdown of the result as shown by use of percentage signifies that social media enhances academic performance of students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) since majority of the students agreed that social media has influenced their academic performance.

Table 2 also revealed that since social media contains useful academic content as well as affords students the opportunity to extend learning and knowledge through open discussions and research windows; this on the long run, impacts on students’ academic performance as students find that extra information that enhances their performance in class on social media.

Given the validity of the above data and with the findings of this research it was revealed that 93% of students of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) subscribe to Facebook, then it can be seen how influential social media can be with students in their academics. The overall result is the positive impact it is making in their academic performance.

Table 4, shows that students devote quality time on the internet daily – an average put at two hours daily. This correlates the student’s performance and the time spent on social media based on findings that large population of students rely on social media to obtain further information capable of boosting their academic performance.

Findings from this research also found out that students search for academic materials, information as well as join academic discussions as much as social media provides them with the opportunities to do so daily in the two (2) hours spent online daily.

So also the time spent by students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) browsing social media sites does not affect their academic schedule since the larger number of the sample population agreed that their academic schedule is not hampered by the time they spend browsing social media sites.

According to findings on the question of how social media can enhance students’ academic performance and recommending it for educational curriculum planners to incorporate social media sites into the curriculum, this clearly underlines the yearnings of the majority who believes incorporating social media sites into educational curriculum will not only aid educational facility, but would also succeed in improving learning facilities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

In general, other factors of influence of social media on academic performance of students National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) that were also analyzed, revealed that ninety-three percent (93%) of students make use of social media and belongs to a minimum of two (2), irrespective of sex, age, religion or religious status. It was also discovered that students use more of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube more than the known serious academic platforms as Wikipedia, Reddit, Studynow.com, LinkedIn and Ehow.com. The cause of this is left to be determined in further studies that may be carried out as knowledge advances, but it can be easily established that there is more to be discovered and taken advantage of in social media sites than is being done today.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the above findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- That with proper guidance, students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria including those of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), can be positively influenced by social media in their academic performance.
- With 93% of students maintaining profile accounts with at least two social media platforms, the average time spent on social media sites by students is largely impactful on scholarship.
- There is correlation between the time spent on social media sites and academic performance of students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- Social media can enhance academic performance of students of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

- Social media use is not detrimental to academic outcomes, it depends on how it is used hence it should be encouraged in the academic system.
- Tertiary institutions in Nigeria being the pinnacle of learning, should strive to upgrade their facilities to be up to date with modern day cutting edge technology. This will aid teaching and learning processes at the University level and enhance scholarship.
Educational curriculum planners should consider incorporating social media use and social media sites into the educational system and take advantage of the huge patronage of these sites by students to advance academic activities.

Since National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is online based, institution authorities should not be left behind in the new media trend. Taking advantage of the interactive nature of social media in its deliveries of lectures, assignments and other research based projects would enhance academic performance of students in the institution and place the institution in the annals of history as an innovative institution worth emulating.

Efforts should be made by education authorities to further enlighten students on the good and bad of social media especially as it affects scholarship. This will help create better understanding on how best students can use social media to enhance their performance.

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