# Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of Adult and Community Education Students In Rivers State University

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**ABSTRACT**
The study examined the influence of social media on academic performance of adult education and community education students in Rivers State University. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population consisted of 413 male and 285 female students totaling 698 students in the Department of Educational Foundations from Rivers State University. A sample of 193 male and 60 female students totaling 253 students was obtained for the study through simple random sampling technique. The instrument used to elicit responses was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of Adult and Community Education Students Questionnaire (ISMAPACESQ)" which was validated by experts, while the test re-test reliability test was used to achieve a reliability index of 0.80. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the use of social media enhances academic performance of students when utilized efficiently and effectively. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that teachers should employ the use of some social media sites as tool for improving the academic performance of students in schools.
**Keywords:** Social Media Network, Academic Performance

**INTRODUCTION**
The world is today celebrating the improvements in communication technology which has broadened the scope of communication through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Modern Technology in communication no doubt has turned the entire world into a "Global village". But as it is, technology is like two sides of a coin, it brings with it both positive and negative sides. The evolution of internet technology has led to its use as the best medium for communication, whereby, two-third of the world's internet population visits social networking or blogging sites, thus serving as a communication and connection tool. It helps people to be better informed, enlightened, and to keep abreast with world developments. These networking sites are used by most people to interact with old and new friends, physical or internet friends (Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). The world has changed rapidly with the evolution of technology; which has resulted in the use of technology as the best medium to explore the wide area of knowledge.
Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are online communities of internet users who want to communicate with other users on areas of mutual interest, whether from a personal, business or academic perspective (William, Boyd, Densten, Chin, Diamond & Morgenthaler 2009). The millions of social networking sites have transformed the thought of the world being a global village into reality whereby billions of people communicate through social networking sites. Social networking sites include: Twitter, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook Messenger, Blackberry Messenger (BBM), WhatsApp messenger, snapchat, Skype,

Google talk, Google Messenger, iPhone and Androids (Boyd, 2007). Numerous benefits have been attributed to the use of social networking sites; one of which is academic improvement of students.

Academic excellence or performance is key to an individual's placement in the society at large. Due to this, many people are concerned about how the social network sites can enhance their academic performance. Academic performance denotes how well a student is coping with his/her studies in terms of knowledge acquisition and the ability to express knowledge gained with a verifiable change in behaviour. Academic performance is said to be measured through students' achievement across various courses with the use of Grade Point Average (GPA), high school graduation rate, annual standardized tests and college entrance exams (ballotpedia.org/Academic_performance). There is a perceived correlation between social media usage and the academic performance of students in universities.

In the 21$^{st}$ Century, most students possess Facebook accounts, which is the main reason most of them perform badly in school. Coincidentally many minds might be quick to blame it on the poor quality of lecturers but may think even harder, if they have not heard of the Facebook frenzy (Oche & Aminu, 2010). Olubiyi (2012) also noted that these days students are so engrossed with social media that they are almost 24 hours online; even in classrooms and lecture theatres, while lectures are on-going it has been observed that some students are always busy on social media sites like Instagram, WhatsApp or Facebook. The time that ought to be channeled towards learning, academic research and innovation have been most often scuttled by the passion for meeting new friends online, and discussing trivial issues. Hence most students' academics suffer setback as a result of distraction from the social media. This study therefore unraveled influence of social media on academic performance of adult and community education students in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

**Concept of Social Media**

Social media is a group of internet based applications that allow the creation and exchange of users generated content. Social media is that medium that employs mobile and web based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and community share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content (Kietzmannn, 2012). Andreas and Haenlein (2010) opined that social media is a group of internet based application that builds on the ideological foundation and allows the creation and exchange of users – generated content. Social media has become one of the major channels of chatting through platforms such as 2go, BB chat, blogger, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. There has been an increase in the mobile social media which has created new opportunities for browsing. Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment among themselves in different networks. Hence Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) classified social media into six different classes as follows:

1.      Collaborative Project (Wikipedia)
2.      Blogs and Micro blogs (Twitter)
3.      Content Communities (Youtube)
4.      Social Networking Sites (Facebook; 2go; BB chat, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger)
5.      Virtual Game World (World of war craft)
6.      Virtual Second World (Second life)

Social media include blogs, picture sharing, music sharing, crowd sourcing, e-mail, instant messaging and voice over. These services could be integrated via social network platforms.

**Ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network**

There are arguments made about the possible risks of adolescent social networking; but it is important to point out the benefits of these websites as well. Many schools have started to use these sites to promote education, keep students up to date with assignments, and offer help to those in need (Boyd, 2007). Boyd, (2007) was of the view that social networking sites provide an outlet for teens to express themselves in their own unique ways. In addition, social networking sites serve as both meeting place for teens to

interact with other like-minded people and as showplaces for teen's artistic and musical abilities (Ellison, 2007).

**Influence of Social Media Network on Students' Academic Performance**
Social, economic, and environmental factors have added to the pressure of university students in the past ten years, whereby academic standards of students are still a major national problem (Bowen, 2008). Current statistics of world ranking of universities show that university students in Nigeria are under increased pressure to be par with high academic standards of other countries. Asemah and Edegoh (2013) in their study found out that exposure of Nigerian students to social media to a great extent have negative influence on their academic performance. The use of English Language has been bastardized in most universities in Nigeria. In agreement Williams (2008) also opined that the top academic areas that many school professionals are concerned about are English and advanced literacy. According to Obi, Bulus, Adamu and Sala (2012) students use the number 4 in place of for, U in place of You, D in place of The etcetera which negatively impacts on their written English. Students are caught using social media network while lectures are going on and this serves as a source of great distraction. Ndaku (2013) buttressed that, although social media is a very good tool that improves educational upbringing of students if used appropriately, it also has a negative aspect if students over indulge themselves in it. However, the use of social media has both positive and negative effects on students. Oye, Helou and Rahim cited in Ndaku (2013) stated that as a result of more time being dedicated to the use of social networking sites for non-academic usage and less time to academic usage by students, tells on what becomes their academic output. Similarly, Asabere cited in Ifeanyi, Olatunji and Akpala (2014), asserted that some see social media as a distraction to learning for students while others attest to the benefits of social networking sites to learning. According to Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010), social network websites grab attention of the students and divert it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting. Conversely, Liccardi, Ounnas, Massey, Kinnunen, Midy and Sakar (2007) opined that students are socially connected with each other for sharing their daily learning experiences and do conversation on several topics. This shows that social networks are partly beneficial to students as it contributes to students learning experiences as well as promotion of their academic life. In addition Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels (2009) noted that the Internet is no doubt evolution of technology but specifically social networks are extremely unsafe for students. Wiley and Sisson (2006) argued that studies have shown that more than 90% of tertiary school students use social networks. In the same vein, Ellison (2007) stated that students use social networking websites approximately 30 minutes throughout the day as a part of their daily routine life. This means, the more students use social media, the more it influences their disposition to studies.

**Statement of the Problem**
The world today is a global village in which the internet is the most important source of information. Since the advent of social media sites in the 1990s, it is assumed in some quarters that the academics of students is facing a lot of neglect and challenge. It is observed that students devote more attention to social media than they do in their studies. Students' addictiveness to social networks and frequency to social networking sites, have become worrisome due to less time that is devoted to their academics. Instead of students reading their books, they spend their time chatting and making friends via the social media and this seem to have negatively influenced their academic performance. It is a common sight to see a student chatting in sensitive and highly organized places like church, mosque and lecture venues. Some are so carried away that even as they are walking along the high way, they keep chatting.

The manufacturing and distribution of equally sophisticated cellular phones have complicated the situation, as students no longer need to visit a cybercafé before they send and receive messages. The question therefore is: Do these opportunities promote academic studies of students? Thus, this study hopes to unravel the influence of social media networks on the academic performance of adult education students in Rivers State University.

**Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of social media on the academic performance of adult education and community students in Rivers State University. Specifically, the sought to:

1. identify the forms of social media networks students are exposed to.
2. determine ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network.
3. ascertain the influence of social media network on the academic performance of students in adult education and community of Rivers State University.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are those social media networking sites students use frequently?
2. In what ways do students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network?
3. How does social media network influence academic performance of Adult and Community Education students in Rivers State University?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses guided the study.

$Ho_1$   There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the social media networking sites used by students frequently.

$Ho_2$   There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network.

$Ho_3$   There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the influence of social media network on the academic performance of Adult and Community Education students in Rivers State University.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population comprised of 698 undergraduate students in the Department of Educational Foundations from Rivers State University in 2017/2018 session consisting of 413 males and 285 females. A sample size of 253 students consisting of 193 males and 60 females were gotten through simple random sampling technique. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of Adult and Community Education Students Questionnaire (ISMAPACESQ)" was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument had two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with demographic data of the respondents while; Section B consisted of fifteen (15) items. The response scale was structured based on modified Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with values 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Test-retest responses were to obtain a reliability index of 0.80. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A mean of 2.50 and above indicated that respondents agreed to the questionnaire item; while a mean of 2.49 and below indicated that the respondents disagreed with a questionnaire item. The z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. When the calculated z-value was less than the critical value which is $\pm 1.96$, the hypotheses was accepted, and when the calculated z-value is more than the critical z-value ($\pm 1.96$) the hypotheses was rejected.

**RESULTS**
**Research Question 1:** *What are those social media networking sites students use frequently?*
**Table 1: Mean opinion scores of male and female students on social media networking sites students use frequently.**

| S/N | Questionnaire Items | Male N=193 | | Female N=60 | | Average mean | RMK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | $X_1$ | $SD_1$ | $X_2$ | $SD_2$ | | |
| 1. | Facebook | 3.25 | 0.72 | 2.95 | 0.68 | 3.10 | SA |
| 2. | WhatsApp | 3.00 | 0.60 | 3.09 | 0.51 | 3.05 | SA |
| 3. | Instagram | 2.77 | 0.50 | 3.04 | 0.59 | 2.91 | SA |
| 4. | Twitter | 3.19 | 0.69 | 3.30 | 0.62 | 3.25 | SA |
| 5. | Snapchat | 2.69 | 0.52 | 3.11 | 0.70 | 2.90 | SA |
| | **Grand Mean/SD** | **2.98** | **0.61** | **3.10** | **0.63** | | |
| | **Aggregate Mean** | | | | | **3.04** | **SA** |

**Source: Field Survey 2019**

The analyzed data on Table 1 above for research question 1, revealed that students use social media networking sites with mean scores of 3.10, 3.05, 2.91, 3.25 and 2.90 for questionnaire items 1, 2, 3 4 and 5.

**Research Question 2:** *In what ways do students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network?*

**Table 2: Mean opinion scores of male and female students on the ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network.**

| S/N | Questionnaire Items | Male N=193 | | Female N=60 | | Average Mean | RMK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | $X_1$ | $Std_1$ | $X_2$ | $Std_2$ | | |
| 6 | I use materials gotten from social networking sites to complement what i have been taught in class. | 2.68 | 0.52 | 3.02 | 0.68 | 2.85 | A |
| 7 | I solely rely on information gotten from Wikipedia to do my assignments without consulting other sources. | 3.11 | 0.70 | 2.50 | 0.51 | 2.81 | A |
| 8 | I surf the internet to gain more knowledge in my course of study. | 3.31 | 0.78 | 2.78 | 0.59 | 3.05 | SA |
| 9 | I make use of WhatsApp to disseminate academic knowledge to my course mates. | 3.24 | 0.73 | 3.16 | 0.62 | 3.20 | SA |
| 10 | I use the cyber café to browse in order to make input in my course mates learning and also increase my knowledge in courses taught. | 2.98 | 0.69 | 3.01 | 0.70 | 3.00 | SA |
| | **Grand Mean/SD** | **2.94** | **0.66** | **3.07** | **0.70** | | |
| | **Aggregate Mean** | | | | | **2.98** | **SA** |

**Source: Field Survey 2019**

The analyzed data on table 2 above for research question 2, revealed that all the questionnaire items (6-10) had mean scores of 2.85, 2.81, 3.05, 3.20 and 3.00. This infers that students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network.

**Research Question 3:** *How does the use of social media influence academic performance of Adult and Community Education students in Rivers State University?*

**Table 3: Mean opinion scores of male and female students on how the use of social media influences academic performance of Adult and Community education students in Rivers State University**

| S/N | Questionnaire Items | Male N=193 | | Female N=60 | | Average Mean | RMK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | $X_1$ | $Std_1$ | $X_2$ | $Std_2$ | | |
| 11 | The usage of Wikipedia for research has helped improve my grades. | 2.68 | 0.52 | 3.02 | 0.68 | 2.85 | A |
| 12 | Engaging in social media sites other than acquisition of academic knowledge reduces my rate of understanding. | 3.11 | 0.70 | 2.50 | 0.51 | 2.81 | A |
| 13 | I will perform better in my academics if I stop using social media for fun and leisure during school period. | 3.31 | 0.78 | 2.78 | 0.59 | 3.05 | SA |
| 14 | I will not perform well in my academics even if I stop using social media for my assignments. | 3.24 | 0.73 | 3.16 | 0.62 | 3.20 | SA |
| 15 | Using social media foster collaboration, brainstorming and sharing of ideas for greater academic knowledge acquisition. | 2.98 | 0.69 | 3.01 | 0.70 | 3.00 | SA |
| | **Grand Mean/SD** | **3.06** | **0.68** | **2.89** | **0.62** | | |
| | **Aggregate Mean** | | | | | **2.98** | **SA** |

**Source: Field Survey 2019**

The analyzed data on table 3 above for research question 3, revealed that all the questionnaire items (11-15) had mean scores above 2.50, viz 2.85, 2.81, 3.05, 3.20 and 3.00. This infers that the use of social media influence academic performance of adult and community education students in Rivers State University.

HO₁    There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on how social media networking sites are used by students frequently.

**Table 4: z-test analysis of difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on social media networking sites students use frequently**

| Respondents | N | X | SD | Df | SL | z-cal | z-tab | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 193 | 2.98 | 0.61 | | | | | |
| | | | | 251 | 0.05 | -0.97 | ±1.96 | Accepted |
| Female | 60 | 3.10 | 0.63 | | | | | |

**Source: Field Survey 2019**

Data on Table 4 above revealed summaries of respondents' mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean responses of male and female students on social media networking sites students use frequently, at 0.05 level of significance and 251 degree of freedom. The z-calculated value of -0.97 as displayed on the table was less than the z-critical value of ±1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted, which infers that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students in the social networking sites students use frequently.

HO₂    There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network.

**Table 5: z-test analysis of difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network.**

| Respondents | N | X | SD | Df | SL | z-cal | z-tab | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 193 | 2.94 | 0.66 | | | | | |
| | | | | 251 | 0.05 | -0.96 | ±1.96 | Accepted |
| Female | 60 | 3.07 | 0.70 | | | | | |

**Source: Field Survey 2019**

Table 5 above shows the summaries of respondents' mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercises through the use of social media network, at 0.05 level of significance and 251 degree of freedom. Since the z-calculated value of -0.96 was less than the z-critical value of ±1.96, the null hypothesis was accepted, which infers that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network.

HO₃    There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the influence of social media network on academic performance of Adult and Community Education students in Rivers State University.

**Table 6: z-test analysis of difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the influence of social media network on academic performance of Adult and Community Education students in Rivers State University**

| Respondents | N | X | SD | Df | SL | z-cal | z-tab | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 193 | 3.06 | 0.68 | | | | | |
| | | | | 251 | 0.05 | 1.40 | ±1.96 | Accepted |
| Female | 60 | 2.89 | 0.62 | | | | | |

**Source: Field Survey 2019**

Data on Table 6 above revealed summaries of respondents, mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the influence of social media network on academic performance of students of adult and community education students in Rivers State University, at 0.05 level of significance and 251 degree of freedom. Again the z-calculated value of 1.40 was less than the z-critical value of $\pm 1.96$. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted, which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the influence of social media network on the academic performance of Adult and Community Education students in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**
Findings from Table 1 on research question 1 showed that students use social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, Instagram and snapchat frequently with aggregate mean of 3.04 which far exceeds the criterion mean of 2.50. In agreement to the findings, Andreas and Michael (2010) opined that social media is a group of internet based application that builds on  ideological foundation and allows the creation and exchange of users – generated content such as 2go, BB chat, blogger, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. Hypothesis 1 on table 4 showed no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on how social media networking sites are used by students frequently.

Findings from table 2 on research question 2 revealed the ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through: complementing what they have been taught in class with materials gotten from social networking sites; relying on information gotten from Wikipedia to do their assignments without consulting other sources; surfing the internet to gain more knowledge in courses; making use of whatsapp to disseminate academic knowledge to class mates; and using the cyber café to browse in order to make input in their classmates learning and also increase their knowledge in courses taught with an aggregate mean of 2.98. This finding corroborates with Boyd and Ellison (2007), who asserted that many schools have started to use these sites to promote education, keep students up to date with assignments, and offer help to those in need. Hypothesis 2 displayed on table 5 showed no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the ways students share learning experiences and engage in academic exercise through the use of social media network.

Findings from table 3 on research question 3 revealed that the use of social media influence academic performance of Adult and Community Education students in Rivers State University through; the usage of Wikipedia for research and knowledge acquisition; improves academic performance of students if they stop using social media for fun and leisure during school period; students perform well in their academics where they use social media for assignments; and the use of social media foster collaboration, brainstorming and sharing of ideas for greater academic knowledge pursuit and acquisition. This finding is in consonance with Ndaku (2013) who buttressed that, social media is a very good tool that improves educational upbringing of students if used appropriately. In addition, Asabere cited in Ifeanyi, Olatunji and Akpala (2014), asserted that some see social media as a distraction to learning for students while others attest to the benefits of social networking sites to learning. Hypothesis 3 as shown on table 6 depicted no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female students on the influence of social media network on the academic performance of Adult and Community Education students in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

**CONCLUSION**
In view of the results obtained from the study, the researchers are of the view that the use of technology enhances academic performance of students when utilized efficiently and effectively. The use of social media networking sites could either mar or ensure intellectual development of students. Students who frivolously use social media networking sites for fun and leisure as against their academic development in school are likely to end up with poor cumulative grade points which denotes academic failure.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1) Teachers should employ the use of some social media sites as tools for improving the academic performance of students in schools.
2) The use of social media network by students should focus on the academic relevance of those sites to students instead of using them for trivialities that sponge on their time.
3) The positive impact of social media on the academic performance of students should be emphasized by lecturers in order to motivate students who are digital natives to learn and aspire for high grades with the use of technologies.

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