

Influence of social media on the academic performance of nursing students of Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria

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Abstract

It is a generalized belief that social media use reduces students' academic performance. This study was justified by the need to find out if social media was the major issue or if other academic strategies needed to be enhanced. This research was carried out to determine the influence of social media on the academic performance of nursing students of Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria. One hundred and fifty (150) students were included in this study using a purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire which was pilot tested for its validity and reliability. Relevant literatures were reviewed in accordance with the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and represented in frequency tables, pie charts and bar charts using Microsoft Excel 2021. The findings showed that a good proportion of the participants use social media to get vital information, a larger population (65.33%) believes that the effect social media has on their academics is a positive one. Despite the fact that a large proportion of students reported using social media for purposes other than academics, the study supports a positive influence of social media on academic performance when harnessed properly.

Keywords: Influence; Nursing; Social media; Academic performance; Students

1. Introduction

Communication is an essential part of human existence. A person without any means to communicate, either verbal or non-verbal, remains in isolation and loneliness. According to Berea [1] and Çıkırıkçı [2], communication is a fundamental human need and to that end, man has always through interpersonal or mass communication satisfied this need. Breakthroughs in information technology has transformed the present world to a global village making things easier compared to the past. People now commonly describe the modern world as a "global village", meaning that advances in technology have brought distant places so close together that it feels as if everyone is interacting in one big digital space.

According to Kaitin [3], the growth of technology towards the end of the 20th century propelled by the emergence of the internet, satellite etc. led to the development of social media. Social media is a medium of electronic communication which facilitates interaction based on certain interests, among individuals [4]. Social media is a medium for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques [5]. Social media relies on internet-based tools that turn one-way communication into interactive conversations. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and other online networks allow users to share, respond, and engage with information in real time. Social networking sites (SNS), are becoming ubiquitous aspects of youth and young adult life and students have become

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accustomed to this way of living much more than older generations have in recent years, as this way of living is all they know [6].

Presently, there has been a massive increase in the usage of social media globally among students and adults, as millions of people now use Facebook [7]. One of the social media applications, WhatsApp was built to show statuses next to the individual's name and was created when the founders couldn't get a job at Facebook [8].

It is believed by both parents and tutors that this communication tool called social media, has posed as a huge form of distraction to the students. Influence of social media on the academic performance of nursing students of Abia state university, Uturu, Nigeria, is a study seeking to find out the extent which social media has been used and its positive and negative influence on the students' academic performance. The study will assess the knowledge of social media and nature of activities which students engage themselves with on social media and the influence of social media on students' academic performance.

1.1. Research questions

- What is the level of knowledge on social media and the nature of activities done on it by the students?
- What is the influence of social media on students' academic performance?

2. Methodology

2.1. Study setting

The research was conducted in Abia State University, Uturu. The university is located in the town of Uturu within Isuikwuato Local Government Area of Abia State, lies at approximately latitude 5.82° North and longitude 7.39° East, placing it in the tropical rainforest zone of southeastern Nigeria.

2.2. Study design

This study adopted a descriptive, non-experimental research design to explore the objectives. The target population consisted of students in the Department of Nursing, ranging from 100 level to 500 level classes. A total of 150 respondents participated in the study. These participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which allowed the researcher to focus on individuals who met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Data collection was carried out using researcher-designed questionnaires, which included both physical copies and electronic formats (e-questionnaires) to make access easier. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach Alpha method [9], ensuring consistency of the responses.

2.3. Data analysis

The collected data were organized and interpreted with descriptive statistics using Microsoft Excel 2021 to summarize the findings effectively.

3. Result and data presentation

Here, the data collected were analyzed using tables, percentages and presented with pie charts and bar charts. The first table shows the bio data of the respondents taking into key consideration their age, level (year of study) and marital status.

Table 1 Bio data and distribution of respondents.

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20	22	14.67
20-25	98	65.33
Above 25	30	20
Total	150	100.0
LEVEL		
100	30	20

200	30	20
300	30	20
400	30	20
500	30	20
Total	150	100.0
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	126	84
Married	20	13.34
Divorced	0	0
Widowed	4	2.66
Total	150	100.0

Remarks: As seen in table 1, 65.33% of the respondents are within the age range of 20-25 years and 84% of the respondents are single, this showed that a greater population of the students were in their youthful age and due to youthful exuberance were more likely to have a good knowledge of social media and spend more time on it.

3.1. Knowledge and nature of activities students engage themselves with on social media

The level of knowledge of the students about social media was first assessed, ensuring that they had an understanding of what the key concept was about and then noting what activity they majorly engaged in.

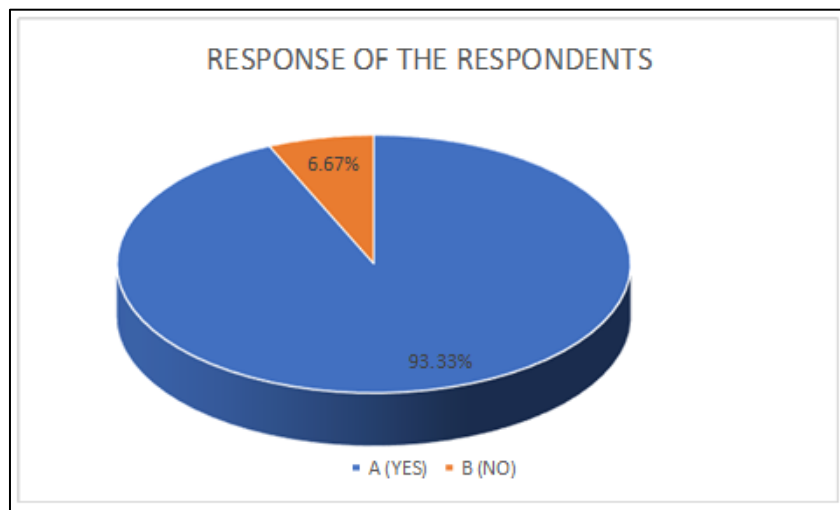


Figure 1 Are you familiar with the word social media? Yes/No

Remark: Figure 1 illustrated that majority 93.33% of the respondents are familiar with the word social media and a lesser percentage 6.67% are not familiar with it. This shows that the students have a good baseline awareness of the word social media and shows that social media is a common word currently, that can be heard in conversations, online, in class or elsewhere.

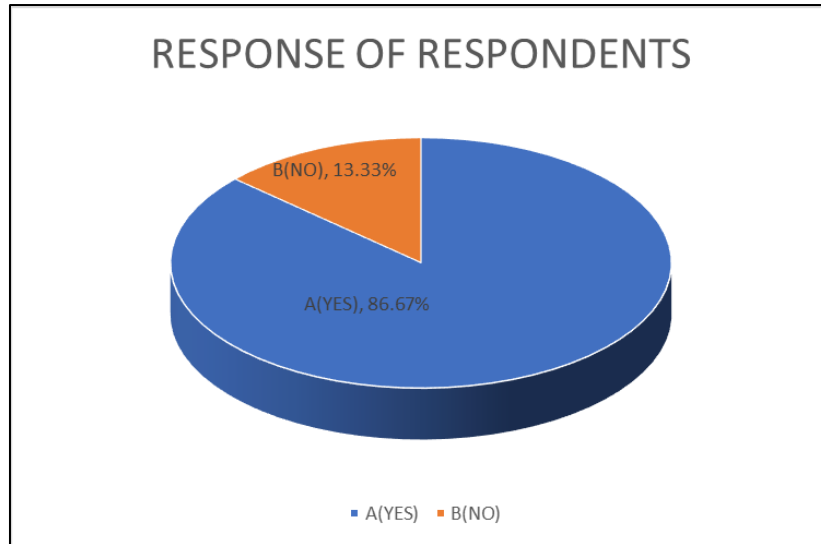


Figure 2 Do you know what social media entails? Yes/No

Remark: Figure 2 shows that 86.67% of the students know what social media entails. Besides being familiar with the word social media, they have a good understanding of it, its function and impacts and comprehend what it involves.

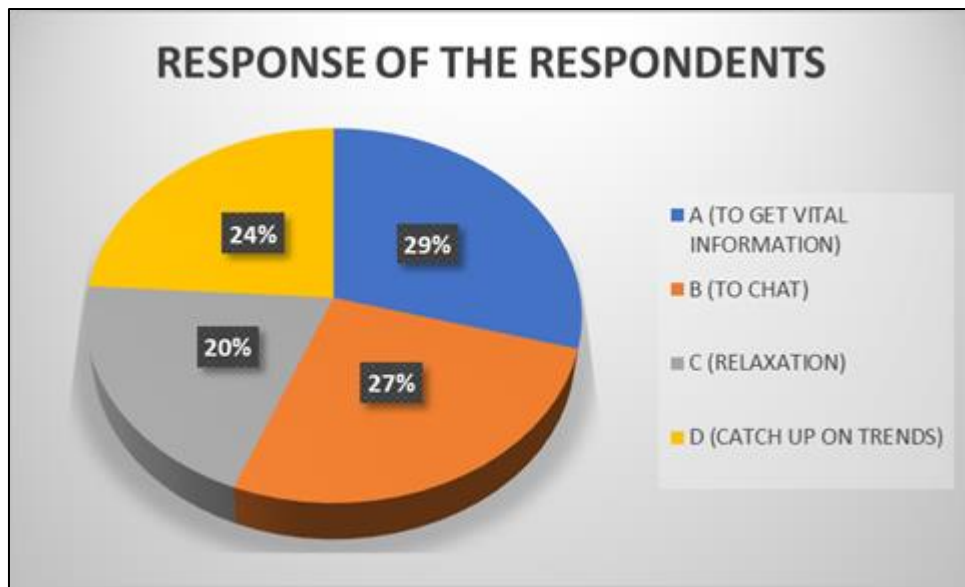


Figure 3 What major activity do you do with it? To get vital information about your studies, to chat with friends, for relaxation and leisure, to catch up on trends

Remark: Figure 3 shows that majority of the respondents use social media to get vital information, accounting for 29% of the total sample. This indicates that the students make use of social media for activities that are beneficial to their academics, as there exists class group chat on social media applications like WhatsApp, where information is usually passed online. Although, they use it to relax, chat with friends and catch up on trends, getting vital information tops the list.

3.2. Influence of social media on academic performance

Here, the respondents gave their response on what effect social media has on their academics and if it is a major factor that impedes on academic performance.

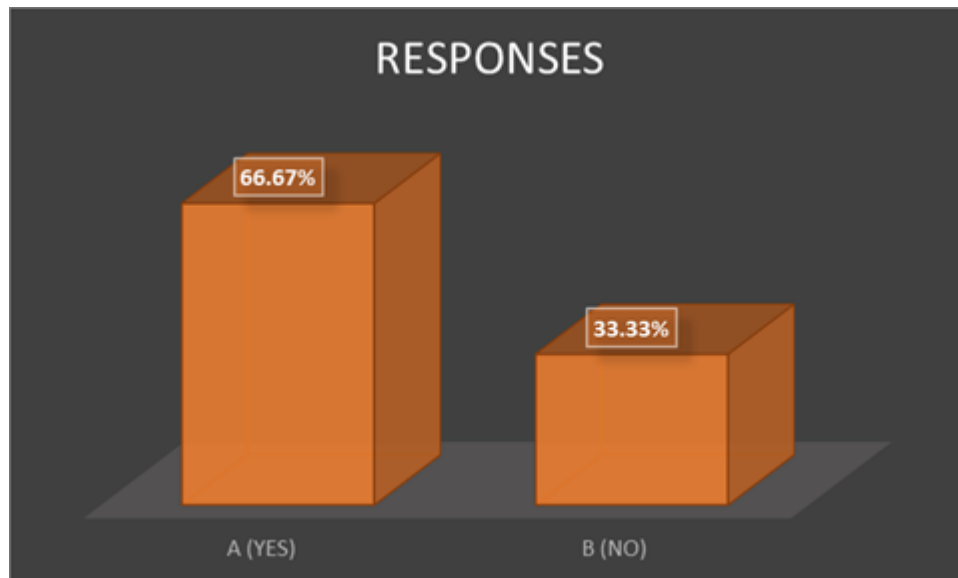


Figure 4 Does social media have any effect on your academic performance? Yes/No

Remark: In figure 4, it was seen that majority (66.67%) of the students said social media has an effect on their academics. Although this doesn't state categorically what effect it is, it sought to find out if the students have gained anything useful from social media pertaining to their studies.

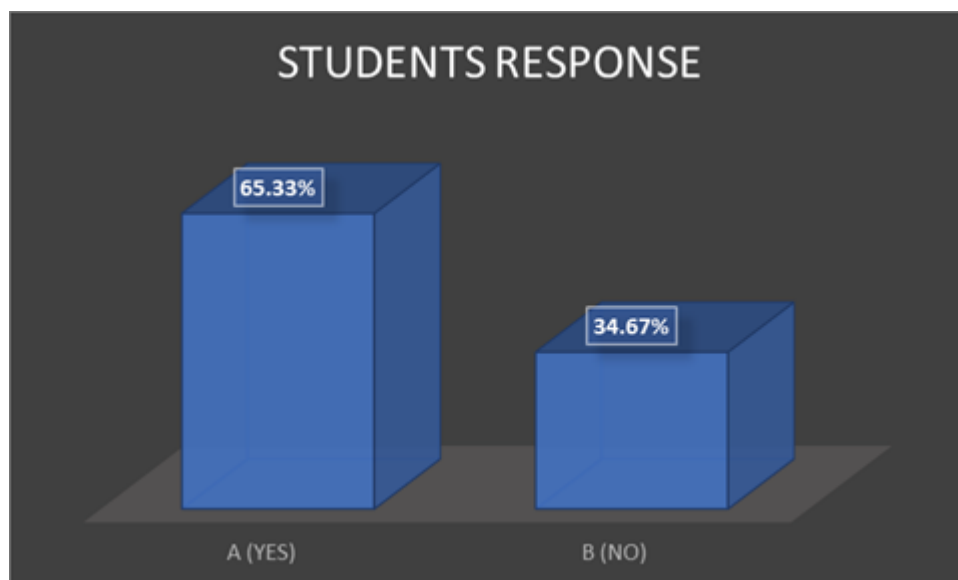


Figure 5 Is it a positive effect? Yes/No

Remark: Figure 5 illustrates that (65.33%) of the respondents believe social media has a positive effect on their academic, thus, accounting for a major part of the total sample. This implies that the students have learned/gained something useful from social media for their schoolwork.

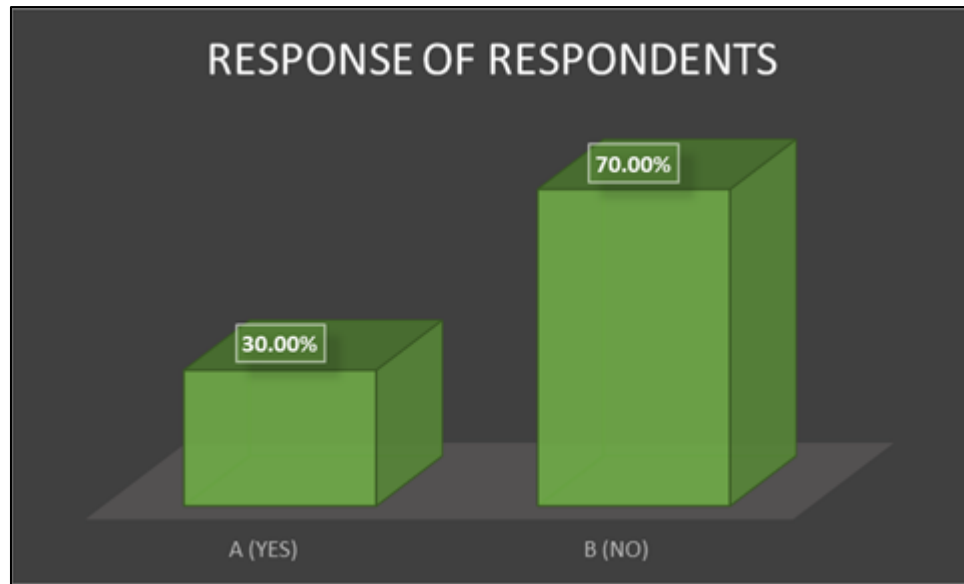


Figure 6 Does your use of social media affect your academic performance in any harmful way? Yes/No

Remark: Figure 6 illustrates that (70%) of the respondents believe that social media does not affect their academic performance in any harmful way. This implies that they do not feel distracted by social media, neither does it affect their class participation and grades and that they benefit from it by making use of educational pages and group chats for academic purposes.

4. Discussion

4.1. Answering Research Questions

Question 1: What is the level of knowledge on social media and the nature of activities done on it by the students?

Results from figures 1, 2 and 3 showed that 93.33% of the students are familiar with the word social media, 86.67% know what it entails and 29% of the students use social media to get vital information about their studies. From the study it was seen that a lot of students have a good knowledge and understanding of social media, including its function and impact, also noting that they made use of it for different reasons. Nowadays, information gets passed on WhatsApp group chats created by the students to help disseminate information easily, which accounted for why 29% of the total sample said they use social media to get vital information.

Question 2: What is the influence of social media on students' academic performance?

Results from figures 4, 5 and 6 revealed that 66.67% believe that social media has an effect on their academics, 65.33% believe that the effect is a positive one and 70% said social media does not affect their academics in any harmful way. The findings of this study showed that social media has no negative influence on the academic performance of the students cumulatively.

The study showed that most students are aware of what could serve as a distraction to them and that what is required of them is discipline. Rather, the academic performance of the students is affected by their study habits and time management [10]. Even though it is widely believed that social media is a distracting factor, it is also imperative to note that it is not the only possible source of distraction to the students. There exist gaming sites, movie sites and even environmental factors can pose as a big source of distraction [11]. Some personal good academic attitudes improve academic performance such as, full participation in the classroom, good study habit, doing assignments, making proper use of library and mostly, general interest and thirst for good grades promote academic achievements. These findings are in agreement with the studies carried out by Chamundeswari et al [12] and Zubairu [13] on the relationship between study habit and academic achievement of students, who noted that there is significant positive correlation between study habit and academic achievement of students. This research study as well, opposes the finding of Sabo & Audu [14] whose survey showed that social media affected the students negatively and hampered their academic performance.

This research study also opposes the findings of Jacobsen & Forste [15], who believes social media has a direct negative effect on students' academics.

5. Conclusion

This study was conducted among the students in various classes from 100 level to 500 level, this helped to determine the actual influence of social media on the students' academic performance. In order to tackle poor performance in school work and to raise up quality nurses in the future, the students should be advised and coached by their tutors, staff advisers and other nurses who are practising in the field, to learn to have good study habits, improve academic interest, avoid negative environmental influence and make use of tools necessary for their academic growth.

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical approval and consent

A formal letter of permission was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria, prior to the distribution of the questionnaires. Consent forms were signed by participants and confidentiality and dignity of all respondents were strictly upheld throughout the research process.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests or non-financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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