



# **GENDER AND LOCATION (RURAL OR URBAN) DIFFERENCE IN STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated the gender and location differences in students' attitude towards social media usage and its influence on academic achievements in colleges of education in north-east Nigeria. This study aimed to find out the gender and location differences in students' attitudes towards social usage and its influence on the students' academic achievement. The study used 7 research objectives with 7 corresponding research questions. Survey design was used for the study, the population of the study was (11855) students from colleges of education in North-East Nigeria from which (378) respondents served as sample of the study using cluster and simple random sampling technique. Two instruments were used for the study namely: Students' Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ), and Students' Attitude towards Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SATSMUQ). The instrument was validated by experts from faculty of education university of Jos for content and construct validity. The Kendall's coefficient of concordance ( $W$ ) was used to judge the agreement among the experts. Kendall coefficient value of 0.79 was obtained for SMUQ and 0.77 for SATSMUQ, for the construct validity factor analysis was used. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of research assistants. The researcher collected all completed instruments and data from various colleges of education which was further subjected for coding and onward analysis respectively. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data in this study. The study revealed that: WhatsApp and Facebook are the most widely used social media platforms among students due to their accessibility and role in communication and information sharing, students in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria primarily use social media for education, communication, and entertainment, students generally have a positive attitude toward social media in education, students generally have a positive attitude toward social media in education, While individual social media usage and attitudes alone do not significantly affect academic achievement, their combined influence does. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that: extensive use of social media among students in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria, particularly on platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. While social media plays a significant role in communication, education, and entertainment, its usage for stress relief and enhancing physical social interactions remains limited. the following recommendations were made among others: Institutions should educate students on balancing social media use for academic and personal purposes while minimizing distractions, Colleges should encourage lecturers to integrate educational content into popular platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube to enhance learning, Training programs should be introduced to teach students how to effectively use social media for academic purposes.*

**KEYWORDS:** Social media, Social Media Usage, Students Attitude, Addiction, Academic achievement, gender, location.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The widespread adoption of social media has transformed the way people communicate and interact. In Nigeria, social media has become an integral part of daily life, especially among young people. However, there is growing concern about the impact of social media usage on academic achievement.

Social Media refers to online platforms or tools that allow users to create, share, and interact with content, information, or other users in virtual environment. Social media are online platforms that facilitate teaching and learning; support collaborative learning, knowledge sharing and community building in educational settings. Social media are online environment that enable students to engage in social constructivist learning, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving. Social media is defined by Zahid, Ahmad, Syed and Faisal (2016) as "technologies that made social communication easy and enable discussion among its participants". Social media increased the quality and rate of collaboration for students, with the help of social media students can easily communicate or share information quickly with each through various social sites like Facebook, whatsApp, Tiktok, Youtube and Instagram (Camilia, Sajoh & Dalhtu, 2013). Lau (2017) found that online social networks help initiate learning activities among students. Students who use online social networks can develop their knowledge based on extensive communications and knowledge sharing from the social network sites



Attitude refers to a mental state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all objects and situations with which it is related. Zakaria and Ahmad (2015) Students' attitude refers to a student's beliefs, values and thoughts in terms of learning environment and learning processes with appropriate or inappropriate behaviours in accordance with the expectations of the environment. Mao (2014) reported that students' attitudes and beliefs about these new technologies, and related obstacles and issues in using social media. Findings indicated that students show positive attitudes and beliefs about social media use in education

Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. Men and women use social network services (SNSs) differently and with different frequencies (Giles and Price, 2018). In general, women use social network sites more than men. Girls are often more vulnerable to the negative effects of social media usage at an early age than boys, yet both are at risk. Negative effects of social media use can involve bullying, comparison, body dysmorphia, depression, anxiety, distraction, and so many more (Tufekci, 2018).

Location refers to a specific point or area in a physical space, often specified by geographical coordinates, address, or other identifying features. It can be described in ways, including: Rural and Urban. Rural areas are typically characterised by open landscapes, low population density and limited access to amenities and services, while urban areas have high population density, large settlements (town and cities). Urban areas generally have better internet (faster, more reliable and better mobile data coverage), which facilities frequent and diverse social media use. In rural areas, connectivity might be slower, intermittent, or expensive (Onitsuka, 2019).

Mohammed and Hani (2022) defined academic achievement as the performance outcomes in intellectual domains covered within instructional environments at different academic levels. Aina and Olanipekun, (2014) stated that the factors that can influence students' academic achievement; however, could vary from one person to another and from country to another. Most previous studies on factors that influence academic achievement of students have focused on factors such as socio-economic background, class environment, gender differences, family educational background and teaching and learning style preferences. These factors identified have been viewed as factors responsible for students' poor academic achievement in schools. However, Baldwin, Bedell, and Johnson, (2017) indicated that social media networks often directly or indirectly necessitate access to information and knowledge attainment; more so, that these networks have influences on student academic achievement. Ezema and Ekere, (2009) reported that poor academic achievements in the recent times have been traced to technological developments

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The widespread adoption of social media among students in North-East Nigerian Colleges of Education has raised concerns about its impact on their academic performance. While social media offers several benefits, such as access to information and connectivity, excessive usage can lead to distractions, decreased attention span, and reduced academic performance. Moreover, there is a need to understand the role of gender and location in shaping students' attitudes towards social media usage and its impact on academic performance. This study aims to investigate the influence of social media usage on academic achievements, with a focus on gender and location differences among students in North-East Nigerian Colleges of Education.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study's particular goals are to determine how students' attitudes regarding social media usage and its impact on academic accomplishment differ by gender and region in northeastern Nigerian colleges of education. Specifically, the study sought;

1. to determine the college of education students' attitude towards social media usage
2. find out the influence of social media usage on students' academic achievement.
3. find out the of students' level of social media usage on the basis of gender.
4. find out the of students' attitude mean score towards social media usage on the basis of gender.
5. to determine the social media usage mean scores of the students based on location (rural or urban).
6. to determine attitude mean score of students towards social media usage on the basis of college location (rural or urban).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the college of education students' attitude towards social media usage.
2. What is the academic achievement of students based on level of social media usage in colleges of education in North-East?
3. What is the of students' level of social media usage on the basis of gender.
4. What is the of students' attitude mean score towards social media usage on the basis of gender. What is the social media usage mean scores of the students based on location (rural or urban).
5. What is attitude mean score of students towards social media usage on the basis of college location (rural or urban).



## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The type of research design employed for the research was a descriptive survey research design, specifically the cross-sectional survey research design since this research deals with influence of students' attitudes toward social media usage on academic achievement. The population of the study consisted of all the NCE two students in the 12 public Colleges of Education in the six states of North-East Nigeria with the total 11,855 Students.

### Sample

A sample of 378 students was used for the study. The decision for the stated sample size was determined using the 3.5% margin error. According to the table, a study with population of 11,855 students will require a sample of 378.

The multi-stage sampling was adopted for this study; is a technique where the population is divided into separate groups, called clusters, and a simple random sample of these clusters was selected. All the Colleges of Education in the six North-East States of Nigeria namely: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe. Each state will served as a cluster from the six North-East States. Simple random sampling method was be used to choose two Colleges of education from the six states, each College within the selected states had an equal chance of being included as sample of the study, to avoid bias in the sampling process and a fair representation. The simple random sampling technique will also be used in selecting the respondents (students).

### Instrument

Two instruments were adapted and used for the study namely: Students' Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ), and a Students' Attitude towards Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SATSMUQ). Participants' academic achievement was obtained from their grade point average, which was accessed from the examination office of the colleges of education in the North-East that was selected as sample of the study.

### Validity

To ensure the content validity of instruments, the judgment of three experts were used. The Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) was used to judge the agreement among the experts. The experts scrutinized the instruments in term of comprehensiveness, adequacy, relevance, clarity, simplicity and ambiguity of the items. The Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) indicated that for a strong agreement the Kendall's coefficient value should be greater or equal to 0.60, for the present study, the Kendall coefficient value of 0.79 was obtained for SMUQ and 0.77 for SATSMUQ, which showed that the agreement between experts in their judgment was strong, therefore, the instrument is considered valid for use in the main study.

The Construct validity of SMUQ and SATSMUQ were established using factor analysis; the result revealed that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.909, indicating suitability of the instrument. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant at  $p = 0.000$ , since the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance ( $p < .05$ ), it means that the data was suitable for factor analysis. In determining factor to be retained, the Kaiser criteria of Eigen value greater than 1 and the scree plot test was used in retaining factors to avoid over or under extraction of factors. In extracting factors the Principal Component method was used, 19 for SMUQ 15 items for SATSMUQ were factorised, only one component was extracted with Eigen value greater than 1 for the social media usage students attitude questionnaire, accounting for 91% variance in students' responses to the items. The orthogonal varimax rotation was used to rotate the factors for the SMUQ and SATSMUQ and all the items loaded on one factor. It then means that all the items are measuring one construct. Hence, the items were retained since none of the retained items have absolute value below 0.6. This is in line with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) who recommended an absolute value of 0.4 and above as minimum for accepting any item as valid. Therefore the instrument is considered valid for use in the main study

### Reliability

The reliability of the Social Media Usage Questionnaire (SMUQ) was established using the Cronbach alpha method. The reliability of coefficient SMUQ was 0.99. Kaplan and Saccuzzo (2017) indicate that Coefficient between 0.68 and above is accepted that the instrument is reliable thus as a sign of acceptable reliability; since the coefficient is 0.99. The reliability of the SATSMUQ was established using Cronbach Alpha method to measure the internal consistency with an index of 0.97 index.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data in this study. Research questions 1 to 6 were answered using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, simple percentages, mean and standard.

## RESULTS

### Research Question one

What is the students' attitude towards social media usage in the colleges of education?



**Table 1**

Students' Attitude towards **Social Media Usage in Colleges of Education in the North-East**

<b>Direction of Attitude</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Negative	52	14
Neutral	196	52
Positive	130	34
Total	378	100

Attitude Score Range

1 – 20 = Negative

21 – 40 = Neutral

41 – 60 = Positive

Table 1 present the result on direction of attitude of students towards social media usage in colleges of education in North East Nigeria. Fifty two out of the 378 students have negative attitude towards social media usage, 196 of them representing 52% have neutral attitude, while 130 students representing 34 % have positive attitude to social media usage. This implies that majority of the students have neutral attitude, followed by positive attitude towards social media usage.

**Research Question Two**

What is the academic achievement of students based on level of social media usage in colleges of education in North-East?

**Table 2**

**Result on the Academic Achievement of Students based on Level of Usage of Social Media**

<b>Academic Achievement</b>	<b>Level of Usage</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
Distinction	14(3.7%)	5(1.3%)	2(0.5%)	21 (5.6%)
Upper Credit	164(43.4%)	44(11.6%)	13(3.4%)	221(58%)
Pass	1(0.3%)	12(3.2%)	33(8.7%)	46 (12.2%)
Fail	2(0.5%)	14(3.7%)	74(19.6%)	90(24%)
Total	181(47.9%)	75(19.8%)	122(32.3%)	378(100%)

Table 2 shows the result on the academic achievement of students based on level of social media usage in colleges of education in North-East. From the result 14 out of the 21 students with distinction have low level of social media usage, 5 of them have moderate level, while 2 have high level of social media usage. Also, 164 out of the 221 students with upper credit have low level of social media usage, 44 of them have moderate level, while 13 of the students have high level of social media usage. Again, 1 out of the 46 students with pass have low level of social media usage, 12 of them have moderate level, while 33 students have high level of usage. Two out of the 90 students with fail have low level, 14 of them have moderate level, and then 74 of the students had high level of usage. This implies that, majority of the students with low usage of social media have upper credits and distinctions, while majority of students with high usage of social media have pass and fail in their achievement in colleges of education in North East Nigeria.

**Research Question Three**

What is the level of students' social media usage on the basis of gender?

**Table 3**

**Result on the Male and Female Students Level of Usage of Social Media**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Level of Usage</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
Male	8(2.1%)	99(26.2%)	119(31.5%)	226 (59.8%)
Female	5(1.3%)	70(18.5%)	77(20.4%)	152(40.2%)
	13(3.4%)	169(44.7%)	196(51.9%)	378 (100)



Table 3 shows the result on the level of students' social media usage on the basis of gender in Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. From the result 8 out of the 226 males had a low level of usage of social media, followed by 99 males with moderate level of usage and 119 of the male students had high level of usage. Also, 5 out of the 152 female students had low level of social media usage, then 70 of them had moderate level of usage, while 77 of the students had high level of social media usage. This implies that, majority of the male students have higher level of social media usage than female students in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria.

**Research Question Four**

What is the attitude mean score of students towards social media usage on the basis of gender?

**Table 4**

**Result on the Male and Female Students Attitude to the Usage of Social Media**

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean difference.
Male	226	38.23	15.02	
Female	152	38.13	14.65	0.1

Table 4 shows the result on the attitude mean score of students' towards social media usage on the basis of gender in Colleges of Education in North-East, Nigeria. From the result male students have a mean score of 38.23 and a standard deviation of 15.02, while female has a mean score of 38.13 and a standard deviation of 14.65 with a mean difference of 0.1. However, the difference in mean scores is relatively small, suggesting that gender does not have a strong influence on attitude of students to social media usage. This implies that, male and female students have almost same attitude towards social media usage in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria.

**Research Question Five**

What is the social media usage mean scores of the students based-on location (rural or urban)

**Table 5**

**Result on the Urban and Rural school Students Usage of Social Media**

Collegel Location	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean difference.
Urban	315	50.95	11.89	
Rural	63	50.84	12.16	0.11

Table 5 reveals the result on the students' social media usage mean score on the basis of college location in North-East, Nigeria. From the result urban college students have a mean score of 50.95 and a standard deviation of 11.89, while rural school students have a mean score of 50.84 and a standard deviation of 12.16 with a mean difference of 0.11. This implies that, urban and rural school students have almost same social media usage mean score in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria.

**Research Question Six**

What are the attitudes towards social media usage mean scores of the students on the basis of college location (rural or urban)?

**Table 6**

**Result on the Urban and Rural Students Attitude to the Usage of Social Media**

School Location	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean difference.
Urban	315	38.32	15.03	
Rural	63	37.52	14.02	0.8



Table 6 shows the result on the attitude mean score of students towards social media usage on the basis of college location in North-East, Nigeria. From the result urban college students have a mean score of 38.32 and a standard deviation of 15.03, while rural school students have a mean score of 37.52 and a standard deviation of 14.02 with a mean difference of 0.8. This implies that, urban and rural school students have almost same attitude towards social media usage in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria.

## FINDINGS

1. Fifty two out of the 378 students have negative attitude towards social media usage, 196 of them representing 52% have neutral attitude, while 130 students representing 34 % have positive attitude to social media usage. This implies that majority of the students have neutral attitude, followed by positive attitude towards social media usage.
2. majority of the students with low usage of social media have upper credits and distinctions, while majority of students with high usage of social media have pass and fail in their achievement in colleges of education in North East Nigeria
3. The results showed majority of the male students have higher level of social media usage than female students in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria.
4. The results revealed that the difference in mean scores is relatively small, suggesting that gender does not have a strong influence on attitude of students to social media usage. This implies that, male and female students have almost same attitude towards social media usage in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria.
5. the result urban college students have a mean score of 50.95 and a standard deviation of 11.89, while rural school students have a mean score of 50.84 and a standard deviation of 12.16 with a mean difference of 0.11. This implies that, urban and rural school students have almost same social media usage mean score in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria.
6. the result urban college students have a mean score of 38.32 and a standard deviation of 15.03, while rural school students have a mean score of 37.52 and a standard deviation of 14.02 with a mean difference of 0.8. This implies that, urban and rural school students have almost same attitude towards social media usage in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the extensive use of social media among students in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria, particularly on platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. While social media plays a significant role in communication, education, and entertainment, its usage for stress relief and enhancing physical social interactions remains limited. The study also reveals that students generally hold a positive attitude toward social media in education but recognize its potential drawbacks, such as distractions and reduced attention span. Furthermore, the combined effect of social media usage and students' attitudes significantly impacts academic achievement, although neither factor independently shows a strong influence. Gender and location (urban vs. rural) do not significantly affect students' attitudes or social media usage patterns, though urban students are more engaged in social media activities than their rural counterparts. Despite these insights, the study indicates that additional factors, not included in this research, may have a stronger influence on academic achievement.

## Recommendations

1. Promote Responsible Social Media Usage: Institutions should educate students on balancing social media use for academic and personal purposes while minimizing distractions.
2. Enhance Educational Content on Social Media: Colleges should encourage lecturers to integrate educational content into popular platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube to enhance learning.
3. Develop Digital Literacy Programs: Training programs should be introduced to teach students how to effectively use social media for academic purposes.
4. Encourage Structured Use of Social Media in Education: Lecturers should incorporate social media into coursework and assessments to maximize its educational benefits.
5. Promote Awareness of Time Management Strategies: Students should be taught strategies to manage their time efficiently to prevent excessive social media use from affecting their studies.
6. Introduce Guidelines for Social Media Usage in Schools: Educational institutions should provide structured policies on social media use to ensure it enhances, rather than hinders, learning.
7. Incorporate Mental Health Awareness into Social Media Training: Programs should address the potential psychological effects of excessive social media use, including stress and anxiety.
8. Conduct Workshops on the Positive and Negative Impacts of Social Media: Educators should engage students in discussions on both the benefits and risks of social media use.
9. Monitor and Evaluate the Impact of Social Media Policies: Institutions should regularly assess the effectiveness of policies implemented to regulate social media usage.
10. Develop Mobile Applications for Academic Purposes: Schools and educational bodies should create customized apps that integrate social media elements while focusing on education.

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