

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of social media usage on students' performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Three specific purposes, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the 24,006 (10,926 males and 13,080 females) SSS II students in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size of 1,200 was drawn for the study using multi-stage sampling procedure; involving stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. Social Media Usage and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SMUSAPQ) structured by the researchers was used for data collection. The instrument was face-validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha. Data were analyzed using aggregate mean, standard deviation and independent t-test. The findings revealed that social media usage significantly and positively enhances students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also found that the positive influence was consistent across genders, as both male and female students benefit equally, with no significant difference in their mean scores. However, the study concluded that teachers, parents, and school principals should promote responsible and purposeful use of social media by integrating it into instructional processes and fostering digital literacy skills. Based on the findings the study recommended among other that stakeholders promote the constructive and purposeful use of social media as a tool for enhancing students' performance in their academics and overall learning outcomes among both male and female students in public secondary schools in Anambra State by encouraging students to use social media platforms to plan, organize, and monitor their daily academic activities productively.



Keywords: Social Media; Social Media Usage; Students' Academic Performance; Gender; Secondary School.

Introduction

Education is a vital catalyst for economic, socio-cultural, and political development at both individual and national levels. As a driver of progress, it promotes economic growth, enhances sociocultural advancement, and strengthens political institutions. Consequently, education is widely regarded as an indispensable instrument for national development and citizen empowerment. Within this context, education is seen as a foundation for economic expansion, community development, and improved individual welfare. The Nigerian education system is structured into pre-basic, basic, senior secondary and tertiary levels, with secondary education being the focus of this study. Secondary school education in Nigeria refers to post-primary formal education for learners who have completed primary education. It occupies a strategic position in the education sector, as it is at this stage that students consolidate foundational knowledge and acquire values and skills necessary for responsible citizenship. Secondary education also plays a critical role in human capital development by preparing students for higher education and enhancing skills that improve labour productivity. As a result, tertiary institutions and the labour market rely heavily on the quality of outputs from secondary schools. In recognition of this, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) emphasized that secondary education should equip individuals with competencies and skills that enhance their quality of life and enable active participation in economic development. Broadly, secondary school education in Nigeria is essential for promoting dignified living, productive work skills, and sustainable national development. In essence, achieving the objectives of secondary education through quality teaching, adequate resources, and supportive school environments equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary for improved academic performance.

Students' academic performance refers to the extent to which students successfully acquire and apply knowledge and skills in their academic pursuits. It is commonly assessed using indicators such as grades, test scores, academic awards, attendance, participation in extracurricular activities, and other forms of academic recognition. According to Kanu and Ndibe (2023), academic performance reflects a student's level of success in learning and mastering academic content. Students' academic performance is influenced by several factors, including intelligence, motivation, learning style, study habits, parental involvement, school physical environment, teacher quality, and socioeconomic background. To enhance academic performance, students are encouraged to develop effective study habits, set realistic goals, and maintain a positive attitude toward learning (Ugwulashi & Okoli, 2021). More so, collaboration among school management, teachers, and parents plays a vital role in promoting students' academic success, irrespective of the gender; through structured routines, clear academic expectations, and consistent guidance. Gender refers to socially and culturally constructed roles, behaviours, and expectations assigned to individuals based on perceived sex, including norms related to masculinity, femininity, and non-binary identities (Viet, 2021). Unlike biological sex, which is determined by physical attributes such as chromosomes and reproductive anatomy, gender is fluid and shaped by social, cultural, and personal influences. Tripathy and Sahu (2018) further emphasized that gender extends beyond biological or psychological traits and is deeply embedded in social expectations that evolve with cultural change. In this study, gender is conceptualized as the socially constructed roles, behaviours, and expectations assigned to students based on their perceived sex, which influence their access to resources, opportunities, societal roles, and engagement within the school



environment. Empirical studies have examined the influence of social media on students' academic performance. For instance, Odukoya et al. (2021), as well as Eze and Eze (2023), reported that excessive social media use significantly undermines students' academic performance. Conversely, Okonkwo and Nwachukwu (2020) found no significant negative effect, suggesting that purposeful use of social media may enhance academic engagement. These divergent findings indicate a lack of consensus and suggest that contextual factors such as culture, infrastructure, and socio-economic conditions may moderate students' experiences. In Anambra State, where access to digital technology is expanding and students' behavioural patterns are rapidly evolving, these issues remain underexplored. Hence, it was against this background, the present study was considered imperative.

Statement of the Problem

Students' academic performance in secondary schools in Anambra State has become a growing concern, as some learners perform below expected levels in examinations, assignments, and classroom activities. Observations, interviews with teachers and the researchers' experience indicate that extensive time spent on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter); which may disrupt study routines, concentration, and timely completion of academic tasks. Emerging evidence also suggests that the impact of social media on academic performance may differ by gender. If unaddressed, this trend could further erode academic outcomes, highlighting the need for this study to examine how social media usage, moderated by gender, influences students' performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of social media usage on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. the influence of social media usage on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State;
2. the influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State; and
3. the influence of social media usage on female students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of social media usage on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the influence of social media usage on female students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses formulated for the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance:



1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of social media usage on academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant influence of social media usage on female students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, the study was anchored on Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), developed by John Sweller in 1988. CLT provides a framework for understanding how the human brain processes and stores information, emphasizing the limitations of working memory. According to CLT, cognitive architecture comprises long-term memory, where schemas are stored, and working memory, which has limited capacity for new information. The theory identifies three types of cognitive load: intrinsic load, reflecting the complexity of the material; extraneous load, caused by ineffective instructional design; and germane load, associated with the effort to construct and automate schemas. Effective learning requires minimizing extraneous load, managing intrinsic load, and optimizing germane load to enhance comprehension and retention. In this study, excessive social media use increases extraneous load through constant notifications, multimedia content, and multitasking demands, overloading working memory, impairing concentration, comprehension, and time management. CLT thus supports the hypothesis that unregulated social media use negatively affects academic performance by reducing cognitive resources for deep learning and schema construction.

Methods

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. As reported by Ifeakor (2018), a descriptive survey design is a design that aimed to collect data from certain population and describe the data in a systematic manner, and the characteristics features or facts about the population. The study was carried out in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria using public secondary schools. The population of the study consisted of all the 24,006 (10,926 males and 13,080 females) SSS II students in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size of 1,200 (five percent) of the entire population of SSS II students in the six education zones of Anambra State was drawn for the study using multi-stage sampling procedure; involving stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-structured questionnaire titled: "Social Media Usage and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SMUSAPQ). The instrument was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A sought background data of the respondents (students) on their gender. Section B; which was made up of 15 item-statements designed to elicit data on the influence of social media on students' time management academic performance and was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD); weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instruments were validated by three experts in Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering copies of the research instruments to 50 students in public secondary schools in Enugu State; which was not part of the study area through pilot test. The data collected from the pilot test were subjected to internal consistency reliability test using Cronbach Alpha; which yielded coefficients of 0.89 and was deemed adequate for the study. The researchers administered the instrument to the respondents



with the help of six research assistants Out of the 1,200 copies administered, 1,188 copies (593 males and 595 females) were retrieved duly completed, and used for data analysis. This gave a return rate of 99.00%, which the researchers considered very adequate for the study. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) was used to answer the research questions and determines the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views respectively. In determining the agreement level, aggregate mean score was used to ascertain the mean score of teachers' agreement level. For the purpose of this study, the mean score of 2.50 and above was grouped as "Agree" and has positive influence on students' learning outcomes while those with 2.49 and below was grouped as "Disagree". Moreover, in determining the homogeneity or heterogeneity; a low standard deviation of below 1.2; which indicates that the data points (responses) was close to the mean is regarded as homogeneous. A high standard deviation of above 1.2; which means that there was a large variation or spread among the data points and the responses differ significantly from the mean was considered heterogeneous. T-test analysis was used for testing the hypotheses. The p-value was used to determine the significance of the difference for all hypotheses. The decision rule was: a null hypothesis was not accepted where the calculated p-value was less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05); whereas a null hypothesis was accepted where the calculated p-value was greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05). All analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 25.

Results Presentation and Discussions

Analysis of Respondents Personal Data

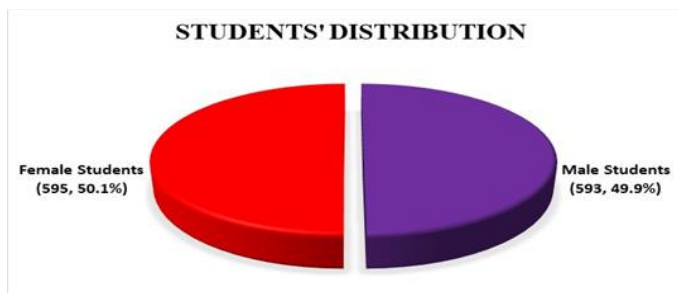


Fig. 1: Analysis of Respondents Personal Data

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Figure 1 revealed the students that participated in answering the copies of the questionnaire in secondary schools in Anambra State. The results indicated that out of 1,188 research participants that provided data for the analysis, 593 (49.9%) of them were male students while 595 (50.1%) were female students in public secondary school in Anambra State. This signifies that more of the female students in public secondary school in Anambra State participated in exercise of providing data for the analysis.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The study answered and tested at 0.05 level of significance the following research questions and hypotheses respectively:

Research Question One: What is the influence of social media usage on students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table One: Mean and standard deviation scores of students on the influence of social media usage on students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

S/N	Item Statements	Male Students = 593		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Frequent use of social media reduces my concentration on my personal studies.	3.46	0.91	Agree
2	Social media encourages me to participate in group assignments.	3.53	0.83	Agree
3	Social media has improved my performance through effective communication with my teachers.	3.46	0.88	Agree
4	My academic performance has dropped since I started using social media.	3.46	0.85	Agree
5	Social media helps me discover online learning resources that aid in my project.	3.46	0.87	Agree
6	I use social media to join academic discussion groups that improve my performance.	3.48	0.92	Agree
7	I search for school-related information on social media to widen my knowledge.	3.18	1.13	Agree
8	Social media improves how I understand some difficult topics.	3.43	0.84	Agree
9	I feel more confident in academics through educational posts on social media.	3.45	0.77	Agree
10	Social media affects my ability to concentrate on academic tasks.	3.26	1.06	Agree
11	I use social media to prepare for my examinations.	3.52	0.85	Agree
12	I often forget to do my homework because of social media.	3.13	1.14	Agree
13	Social media encourages me to explore new topics beyond my school syllabus.	3.47	0.77	Agree
14	I learn new academic skills through educational content on social media.	3.48	0.72	Agree
15	Social media keeps me away from completing assignments on time.	3.21	1.08	Agree
Average		3.40	0.91	Agree

The results of the study presented in Table One, with an aggregate mean score of 3.40 compared to the benchmark mean of 2.50 on a 4.0 scale, reveal that students in public secondary schools in Anambra State generally recognize social media usage as having a positive influence on their academic performance. This implies that social media can serve as an effective tool for facilitating learning, broadening access to information, and fostering academic engagement. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.91 indicates substantive homogeneity in students’ responses, suggesting a reasonable level of consistency in their perceptions.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of social media usage on academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.



Table Two: Summary of the T-Test on the influence of social media usage on academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Source of Variation	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	P-Value	Decision
Male Students	593	3.41	.473	1186	.822	.411	Not Sig.
Female Students	595	3.39	.659				

Two-Sample Statistics

Table Two presents the summary of the t-test analysis on the influence of social media usage on academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The results indicate that the calculated independent t-test was -1.219 with a p-value of 0.223. Considering that the p-value (0.223) is greater than 0.05 significant level, the null hypothesis was retained while the alternative hypothesis was not retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of social media usage on academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This simply means that both the male and female students share same opinion that social media usage has influence on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

The results as displayed in Table One show that students in public secondary schools in Anambra State generally recognize social media usage as having a positive influence on their academic performance. The results as shown in Table Two equally show that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the influence of social media usage on academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. In essence, these results reveal that students in public secondary schools in Anambra State collectively agreed that social media platforms including: WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and X, positively influence their academic performance. The aggregate mean score of 3.40 (SD = 0.91) is well above the neutral decision point of 2.50, indicating a strong consensus that these platforms contribute to learning outcomes. The relatively low standard deviation suggests minimal variation in students’ responses, showing a consistent perception across the population. The p-value of 0.41, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, indicates that the observed agreement is not statistically significant in the inferential sense; however, it remains practically important, as the descriptive data still reflect students’ lived experiences and perceptions.

In affirmation with the findings of the study, Adebayo and Salako (2022) investigated social media and academic performance of secondary school students in Lagos State. Using a descriptive survey design, they found that WhatsApp and Facebook groups significantly enhanced collaborative learning, assignment submissions, and information exchange; which translated into improved academic outcomes. This supports the present study’s finding that social media facilitates academic productivity. Also, Olowe and Adegboye (2021) examined senior secondary school students in Oyo State and reported that Instagram and YouTube educational content improved students’ comprehension of complex science topics, especially when integrated with class lessons. They concluded that social media could be a viable supplementary learning tool, aligning with the perception in Anambra State. Eze and Nwankwo (2020), in a study of Anambra State secondary schools, observed that students using WhatsApp discussion groups performed better in English and Mathematics due to peer-to-peer problem-solving and access to shared study



materials. This provides a direct regional correlation with the current findings. Contradicting the findings of this study, Bature and Musa (2023) studied social media usage among secondary school students in Kano State and found a significant negative correlation between time spent on social media and academic performance. They attributed this to students' excessive engagement with non-academic content, such as entertainment videos and gossip forums, leading to reduced study time and concentration. The difference between the findings could arise from variations in students' digital literacy, cultural attitudes towards education, and availability of structured academic content on social media platforms. While students in Anambra state may be more inclined towards using social media for academic purposes, their counterparts in Kano State might use it predominantly for leisure, resulting in different academic outcomes.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of social media usage on male students' students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table Three: Mean ratings of the influence of social media usage on male students' students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

S/N	Item Statements	Male Students = 593		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Frequent use of social media reduces my concentration on my personal studies.	3.46	0.91	Agree
2	Social media encourages me to participate in group assignments.	3.51	0.84	Agree
3	Social media has improved my performance through effective communication with my teachers.	3.48	0.84	Agree
4	My academic performance has dropped since I started using social media.	3.50	0.78	Agree
5	Social media helps me discover online learning resources that aid in my project.	3.48	0.82	Agree
6	I use social media to join academic discussion groups that improve my performance.	3.50	0.88	Agree
7	I search for school-related information on social media to widen my knowledge.	3.18	1.14	Agree
8	Social media improves how I understand some difficult topics.	3.44	0.79	Agree
9	I feel more confident in academics through educational posts on social media.	3.46	0.73	Agree
10	Social media affects my ability to concentrate on academic tasks.	3.26	1.05	Agree
11	I use social media to prepare for my examinations.	3.54	0.82	Agree
12	I often forget to do my homework because of social media.	3.14	1.14	Agree
13	Social media encourages me to explore new topics beyond my school syllabus.	3.50	0.74	Agree
14	I learn new academic skills through educational content on social media.	3.50	0.71	Agree
15	Social media keeps me away from completing assignments on time.	3.22	1.07	Agree
Average		3.41	0.88	Agree

The results presented in Table Three reveal that male students in public secondary schools in Anambra State recorded an aggregate mean score of 3.41, which is significantly above the benchmark mean of 2.50 on a 4.0 scale. This indicates that they generally agree that social media



usage positively influences their academic performance; which suggests its constructive role in enhancing learning, access to information, and academic engagement. The standard deviation score of 0.88, being relatively low, reflects a high degree of homogeneity in the students' responses, implying consistent perceptions across the sampled male participants.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table Four: Summary of the t-test on the influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	P-Value	Remark
593	3.41	.473	.01943	41.408	0.000	Significant

One-Sample Statistics

The results in Table Ten show the summary of the t-test analysis on the influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The results reveal that the calculated one sample t-test was 41.408 with a p-value of 0.000. In view of the fact that the p-value (0.000) was less than the 0.05 level of significance value, the null hypothesis was not retained while the alternative hypotheses was retained. Hence, there is significant influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This suggested that social media usage have influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

The results as presented in Table Three reveal male students in public secondary schools in Anambra State agree that social media usage positively influences their academic performance. The results as presented in Table Four show that there is significant influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Concurrently, the results from the tables indicate that male students in public secondary schools in Anambra State generally agreed that social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and X positively influence their academic performance, as indicated by an aggregate mean score of 3.41 (SD = 0.88) and a p-value of 0.00 at the 0.05 level of significance. The mean score, being well above the neutral midpoint (2.50), signifies a strong positive perception, while the p-value indicates that this finding is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. This suggests that male students perceive these platforms as beneficial tools for learning, knowledge sharing, and collaboration. WhatsApp groups, for instance, are often used for class discussions, sharing lecture notes, and organizing study schedules. Instagram and Facebook, beyond their social functions, now host educational pages and live classes, while X (formerly Twitter) enables access to trending academic discussions and scholarly content. The standard deviation of 0.88 indicates a moderate spread of responses, meaning that while the majority agreed, there were some differences in the degree of perceived benefit.

In agreement with the study findings, Chukwu et al. (2023) found that social media, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook, significantly improved collaborative learning among senior secondary school boys in Enugu State. Their study reported a positive correlation between social media use for academic purposes and improved examination scores, with students citing easier access to group discussions and shared resources as the main benefits. Adebayo and Yusuf (2022)



in their study discovered that academic-focused use of Instagram and Twitter enhanced research skills and broadened subject knowledge. The authors noted that students used these platforms to follow educational influencers and access tutorial videos, leading to measurable improvements in class performance. Okeke and Uzochukwu (2021) studied male science students in Anambra and found that WhatsApp study groups improved assignment completion rates and exam preparedness. The researchers attributed this to the immediacy of communication and the collaborative problem-solving made possible by the platform. In contrary with the findings of this study, Ibrahim and Musa (2020) investigated male secondary school students in Kano State and found that excessive use of social media, particularly Facebook and Instagram was negatively associated with academic performance. They argued that entertainment-oriented content consumed more time than educational activities, leading to procrastination and reduced study hours. The discrepancy between the present study and Ibrahim and Musa’s (2020) findings could be as a result of contextual and behavioral differences. In Anambra State, male students might be more academically intentional in their use of social media, driven by peer-led study groups and teacher involvement in online platforms. In contrast, the Kano State context may involve lower levels of academic supervision and higher engagement with purely social or entertainment content. Differences in digital literacy, school policies, and access to academic-oriented online communities could also be attributed to the contrasting results.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of social media usage on female students’ students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table Five: Mean ratings of the influence of social media usage on female students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

S/N	Item Statements	Female Students = 595		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Frequent use of social media reduces my concentration on my personal studies.	3.46	0.92	Agree
2	Social media encourages me to participate in group assignments.	3.55	0.82	Agree
3	Social media has improved my performance through effective communication with my teachers.	3.41	0.95	Agree
4	My academic performance has dropped since I started using social media.	3.43	0.91	Agree
5	Social media helps me discover online learning resources that aid in my project.	3.43	0.91	Agree
6	I use social media to join academic discussion groups that improve my performance.	3.45	0.97	Agree
7	I search for school-related information on social media to widen my knowledge.	3.18	1.14	Agree
8	Social media improves how I understand some difficult topics.	3.39	0.89	Agree
9	I feel more confident in academics through educational posts on social media.	3.42	0.82	Agree
10	Social media affects my ability to concentrate on academic tasks.	3.27	1.07	Agree
11	I use social media to prepare for my examinations.	3.50	0.89	Agree
12	I often forget to do my homework because of social media.	3.15	1.15	Agree



13	Social media encourages me to explore new topics beyond my school syllabus.	3.45	0.80	Agree
14	I learn new academic skills through educational content on social media.	3.47	0.73	Agree
15	Social media keeps me away from completing assignments on time.	3.22	1.08	Agree
Average		3.39	0.94	Agree

The results in Table Five indicate that female students in public secondary schools in Anambra State recorded an aggregate mean score of 3.39; which is considerably above the benchmark mean of 2.50 on a 4.0 scale. This indicates female students generally agree that social media usage positively influences their academic performance. The standard deviation score of 0.94 on the other hand reflects low variability in their responses, implying a reasonable level of consistency in perception among the respondents (female students).

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant influence of social media usage on female students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table Six: Summary of the t-test on the influence of social media usage on female students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	P-Value	Remark
595	3.39	.662	.02714	124.745	0.000	Significant

One-Sample Statistics

The t-test analysis results on the influence of social media usage on female students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State presented in Table Six reveal that the calculated one sample t-test was 124.745 with a p-value of 0.000. Given that the p-value (0.000) was less than the 0.05 level of significance value, the null hypothesis was not retained while the alternative hypotheses was retained. Consequently, there is significant influence of social media usage on male students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This suggested that social media usage have influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

The empirical results from Tables Five and Six indicate that female students in public secondary schools in Anambra State generally agreed that social media have a positive and significant influence on their academic performance. This is demonstrated by an aggregate mean score of 3.39 (above the neutral threshold of 2.50), a standard deviation of 0.94 (showing high consensus among respondents), and a p-value of 0.00 at the 0.05 significance level, confirming the result as statistically significant. The relatively high mean score suggests that these platforms are not merely perceived as entertainment tools but as resources for academic enhancement, such as accessing learning materials, engaging in peer discussions, receiving updates from teachers, and participating in academic forums. The low standard deviation points to very few variations in individual experiences, possibly influenced by differences in digital literacy, home internet access, or preferred usage patterns. These findings align with connectivist learning theory; which emphasizes that knowledge acquisition occurs through networks and online interactions. Social



media platforms can facilitate such connections, providing opportunities for collaborative learning, real-time feedback, and access to diverse perspectives.

In accordance with the study findings, Ogunlade et al. (2023) found that Nigerian secondary school students who actively used WhatsApp and Facebook for group discussions, sharing lecture notes, and clarifying difficult concepts reported significantly better academic outcomes, with mean scores above 3.30 and a p -value < 0.05 , supporting the present finding. Nwankwo and Okeke (2022) also reported that female students in Enugu State secondary schools perceived Instagram and WhatsApp as effective for acquiring supplementary learning materials and collaborating on assignments, with a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$) between social media usage and academic performance. Ahmed and Musa (2021) examined senior secondary school students in Abuja and found that moderated social media use for academic purposes had a positive and significant effect on examination scores, especially among female learners, due to higher engagement in peer-to-peer learning groups. Disagreeing with the findings of this Study, Eze and Onuoha (2020), in a study of public secondary schools in Imo State, found that frequent social media use negatively affected students' academic performance, with a mean score of 2.41 (below the neutral point), citing distractions, late-night chatting, and non-academic content as key factors. Possible reasons for disagreement could be as a result of absence of digital guidance. The negative result in Eze and Onuoha's study could be due to a lack of teacher supervision or structured academic engagement on social media. It could also be that the Imo State respondents may have struggled with balancing study time and social media use, leading to diminished academic performance.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that social media usage significantly and positively influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This positive influence was consistent across gender, as both male and female students benefited equally, with no significant difference in their mean scores. When used constructively, social media can serve as an effective educational tool that supports access to relevant learning resources, academic collaboration, and improved learning outcomes for both genders. Based on these findings, the study concluded that teachers, parents, and school principals should promote responsible and purposeful use of social media by integrating it into instructional processes and fostering digital literacy skills. Such efforts would help maximize the educational benefits of social media and enhance students' academic performance irrespective of gender differences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Policy makers should establish state-wide digital education policies that promote the integration of social media tools into teaching and learning programmes in secondary schools, ensuring equitable access and digital literacy training for both male and female students.
2. School principals should encourage and coordinate the supervised use of social media platforms within school activities to support effective teaching, learning engagement, and improved academic performance across genders.
3. Teachers should incorporate social media applications such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and Telegram into instructional strategies to facilitate assignment dissemination, academic discussions, and monitoring of students' learning progress.



4. Students should use social media platforms responsibly to access academic materials, participate in collaborative learning, and engage in activities that support improved academic performance.
5. Parents should guide and monitor their children's use of social media to ensure it is directed toward educational purposes, thereby helping both boys and girls maintain a healthy balance between online engagement and academic responsibilities.

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