

Perception, Gender and Social Media Usage by Students of Tertiary Institutions in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Studies have indicated increased use of the social media by students for varied purposes. The students also have different perception of the social media. However, such studies are scanty with reference to students in the higher institutions of learning in Delta State, Nigeria. Therefore, this study examined the perception and gender of students of tertiary institutions of learning in Delta State, Nigeria and their pattern of the social media usage. The study was guided by Uses and Gratification theory, which emphasizes why people use the media and the gratification they derive from the usage. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 5382 respondents across six institutions. Simple random technique was used to select the institutions. The individual respondents were subsequently selected randomly. The data were analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypotheses were tested at $P < 0.05$ level of significance. The finding showed that the students use the social media primarily for 14 different purposes. They use only 4.38% of the 253 social media. They use social media frequently and they have positive perception of them; there is significant relationship between the students’ perception and their usage of the social media. There is no significant relationship between gender and the students’ usage of the social media. The study recommends that the authorities of the institutions should formulate and implement productive ICT policies and enlighten the students on how to use the social media for positive and productive purposes.

Keywords: Social media, Perception, Usage pattern; Institutions of higher learning, Mainstream Media

1.0. Introduction

The social media are basically Internet social networking sites that connect people together for a variety of purposes. The purposes range from friendship, chatting, courtship, commerce, education to mass communication. The social network/media which started in 1999 with HR.com have grown to over 253 social media sites globally. The social media include Facebook, Youtube, Bebo, MySpace, Flickr and Twitter, etc. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) regard the social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The social media are tools used for information dissemination, especially among friends and colleagues who are not media practitioners but are connected through the Internet. (Eid & Al-Jabri 2016, Ford & Ravansari, 2017). Dedanne emphasizes that the death of the Pop Star, Michael Jackson, in June 2009 was first announced and made known by users of the social media. In Nigeria the major media houses use the social media. People use them to get new friends; find old friends and relatives; advertise themselves online; react to mass media publications; post stories and opinions; chat with friends; mobilize the masses for mass actions; advertise products; send political campaign messages; get information about current occurrences; and for opinion survey. Many of these users are students Junco (2011) observes that many students use the social media for purposes such as interacting with friends, studying, and status conferral among other purposes.

However, the operation of the social media has met with a lot of complaints, especially in the area of accuracy and credibility; falsehood; online promiscuity/prostitution; blackmail, anonymity; forgery; online fraud (419); and impersonation. Different people thus have different perception of the social media and use them for different purposes - some virtuous and others vicious. There is belief that students use the social media negatively and devote much time to them unnecessarily.

1.1. Statement of Problem

The social media have been adopted by different people for different purposes. Some of the purposes for which the social media are used are noble while others are regarded as vicious. Some authorities such Dedanne (2009) Leach (2009) Hu, Manikonda, Kambhampati (2014). Tsai, Chang, Chang, Chang (2017) believe that the youths, especially students of institution of higher learning use the social media mainly for both positive and negative purposes. He postulates that many students have negative perception of social media and use them basically for negative purposes. This situation may also apply to the students of the higher institutions of learning in Delta State.

For instance, Adomi (2006) found that students of universities in Nigeria use the social media for different purposes, both positive and negative, and many of them may have wrong perception of the social media. Salaam (2003) fears that the proportion of students of Nigerian universities who uses the so Internet is inadequate, thus many of them may not be benefitting from advantages of the social media. This may not be a healthy situation considering the important role of the social media in modern society. Such perception and usage would amount to deviation from fundamental philosophical foundation of the social media. The followings therefore, are the objectives of the study.

1.1.1. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to determine:

- i. the primary purposes for which the students use the social media;
- ii. how many hours spent daily by the students in using the social media;
- iii. the students perception of the social media;
- iv. the relationship between gender and the students' usage of the social media; and
- v. the relationship between the students' perception and their use of social media

1.1.2. Research Questions

The following research questions and hypotheses were therefore formulated to guide the study.

- i. What are the primary purposes for which the students use the social media?
- ii. What are the preferred social media used by the students?
- iii. How many hours spent daily by the students in using the social media?
- iv. What is the students' perception of the social media?

1.1.3. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to address the objectives of this study:

- i. There is no significant relationship between gender and the students' usage of the social media.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between the students' perception and their use of Social media

2.0. Theoretical Framework

The *Uses and Gratification theory* which explains reasons which explains which explains why people use the media served as the theoretical guide. Blumler and Katz (1974) who propounded the theory, explain that the theory is concerned with who uses the media; how he uses the media and the gratification he gets or intends to get from using the mass media. The theory suggests that the user of the media plays significant and active role in the selection of media to use, the content of the media to be used and how to use them. The theory posits that the media users seek out the media that best fulfill their individual needs. Uses and gratifications theory assumes that the user has alternate choices to satisfy their need. The theory focuses more attention on the audience, rather than on the actual message itself by asking "what people do with media" rather than "what media does to people". The theory regards the audience as very active and not passive thus they have the discretion in determining their choices of the media based on their expectation. The theory is significant to this study, because the work examines the pattern of social media usage by the students.

2.1. Literature Review

People use social network sites for a variety of reasons such as ease of use, sharing the continuously increasing information, establishing and maintaining spontaneous social contacts and relationships, supporting informal learning practices with interaction and communication and facilitating delivery of education (Mazman and Usuel, 2011, Anderson, 2009). Social media are characterized as Web 2.0 resources that emphasize active participation, connectivity, collaboration, and sharing of knowledge and ideas among users. Social media resources can be divided into three distinct categories. While one category emphasizes content sharing and organizing sites like Delicious, Digg, Flickr, YouTube, and RSS readers, the second category encompasses content creation and editing websites such Blogger, Google Docs, Wikipedia, and WordPress. The third category includes social network sites (SNS) like Facebook, Ning, MySpace and Instagram among other, that serve as online communities that enable users to connect with old and new friends, and share ideas and resource (McLoughlin and Lee, 2007).

Social media are also used by many media houses for information gathering and dissemination. For instance, CNN dedicates a program *i Report* mainly to stories sourced from the social media. Originally the stories might

not have been meant directly for CNN. Leach (2009) writes that digital media, and the emerging use of social media, are exponentially expanding the reach of journalism, and this presents the practitioners and the audience, with opportunities and dilemmas.

Leach explains that Journalism's reliance on the tools of social media is evident already through social media users' participation information gathering and dissemination. Consider the coverage of the post-election protests in Iran. With journalists banished or silenced by the Iranian government, news organizations and Web sites relied on showing random snippets of video or text messages or tweets sent from people witnessing the protests on the streets of Tehran. The organization and coverage of the recent revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East (NAME) especially Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria illuminate how individual political beliefs and the mass media goals now intersect with social media's tools. However, there is still the question of accuracy and credibility.

The use of the social media is very popular among students. Junco (2011) found that Facebook is the most preferred social media among students. The reasons for their preference are: all their friends/classmates are on Facebook and ease of use. Ito et al. (2008) Curran and Lennon (2011) explain that college students prefer to be connected at all times to their friends and family through social media. Social media encourage genuine feedback among the students, thus the social media encourage the formation of users' community. Users benefit enormously from news prompting and contributions from the social media subscribers. (Picard, 2009; Gordon, 2009, Hagerty, 2009, Alkan and Bardakci (2017).

Corroborating the above view, MacMillan (2009) explains that the social media connect the users to all parts of the world where social media subscribers actively exist. Contrarily, Palfreman (2009) fears the growth and popularity of the social media and the likely effect on the law and ethics guiding public communication. Palfreman observes that the activities of the social media can have serious negative consequence on conventional practices in the society. Many people connect to social network sites daily and use the social media to connect to different people and groups for different purposes. The purpose of such social media connections varies (Joinson, 2008; Lenhart, 2009, Arouri 2015). However, many of the people who use the social media are students of higher institutions of learning (Manca and Ranieri 2016, Akakandelwa and Walubita, 2018, Dumpit and Fernandez, 2017).

Nandez and Borrego (2013) in their study of the use of social networks for academic purposes by students found that in addition to academic use, students use the social media for various other purposes. The students use the social media to do their assignments, carry out researches, communicate among themselves and communicate with their lecturers. The findings of Tartari (2015) corroborated the finding of Nandez and Borrego. Tartari found that students in institutions of higher learning use the social media for different purposes. They use the social media to supplement what they are taught in the conventional classroom. They also use them for entertainment, social connections and social engagements. Students have much interest in the use of the social media. The question which many researchers try to answer is the proportion of the usage dedicate to academic purpose. Erkan and Huseyin (2017) found in their study on the purpose of students' social media use and determining their perspectives on education, that students use the social media to source information for academic purpose, use the social media to share academic information among themselves, use them to interact academically with their lecturers and use the social media to improve the cooperative learning with other students. Many studies have shown that apart from using the social media for academic purpose, students use them for several other purposes. For instance, Lenhart and Madden (2009) found that students use the social media to communicate with their friends regularly. Akindehin and Akindehin (2011) also found that students use the social media significantly for entertainment. They use them to play music, watch movies, play games and engage in other types of entertainment

Studies have shown that students spend considerable quantum of their time using the social media. Findings by Kaufman and Christakis (2008), Abramson (2011), Muthui & Sirera (2017) show that on daily basis students spend much of their time using the social media. Findings from a study by Alnjadat, Hmaid, Samha, Kilani and Hasswan (2019) on gender variations in social media usage and academic performance among the students of University of Sharjah, showed that the students spend between 2 – 3 hours daily on the social media. The students use much of their time using the social media for different reasons. Some of them spend their time on the social media for academic purpose while others use them for different reasons such as entertainment, online window shopping and actual shopping, making friends, communicating with friends, fellow students and family members, and several other purposes.

Rutherford (2010) found that students use the social media frequently. In different studies by Heiberger and Harper (2008), Tufekci, (2008) Sultan and Christian (2014), found positive correlation between social media use and college students engagement. Underwood, Kerlin and Farrington-Flint (2011) explain that using social media like Facebook and Twitter have become part and parcel of modern adolescence. 90% of all American teens have used social media, three-quarters of them have a social net-working site, and nearly one in three teens visits their social networking profile several times a day or more. These young users who are also students have positive perception of the social media. Ito, et al (2010) and Turkle (2011), established positive relationship between social media use and their perception of the social media. Smith and Caruso (2010) found that the use Facebook among

college students has increased in the past few years.

People of different ages use the social media for different purposes. However, studies have shown that university students seem to use the social media more than other age groups (Miller and Melton, 2015).

Smith and Caruso (2010) and Meşe1 and Aydın (2019) maintain further that different people use the social media for different purposes. Some of these purposes are productive and positive while others are negative. They also found out in their study that there is significant relationship between the users' perception and his usage of any information and communication technology, including the social media. The implication is that those who have positive perception of the social media are more likely to use the social media than those who have negative perception of the social media.

Aiyebilehin and Omekwu (2019) explain that students, librarians and members of the university community in Nigeria have positive perception of the social media. They predicated this perception on the ease of use and the usefulness of the social media. Aleksandrova and Parusheva (2019) also found that students in higher institutions of learning have positive perception of the social media and they use. Dumpit and Fernandez (2017) also found a correlation between perception and ease of use subjective norm and perceived playfulness and use of the social media by students in institutions of higher learning.

Many studies have shown a strong relationship between perception and students' use of the social media. For instance, Alamri (2019) conducted a study on undergraduate students' perceptions toward social media usage and academic performance among students in Saudi Arabia and found significant relationship between perception and students' social media use. The students were found to have positive perception of the social media and they actually use the social media for different purpose. Elsaadani (2012) and Al-Zahrani (2015) also found significant relationship between perception and students' use of the social media.

Students have very favourable perception of the social media. Different studies have been conducted to ascertain how students perceive the social media. Most, if not all, of such studies indicate that students perceive the social media favourably. They regard them as functional and credible companions and tools for performing several functions. Some of such studies include the ones by Thompson and Loughheed (2012), and Chen & Bryer (2012), Alshareef (2013), Neier and Tuncay (2015), Al-Sharqi & Hashim (2016). They found in their different studies that students have favourable perception of the social media.

Rutherford (2010) found social media to be very useful to students in their learning, social relations and other fields of human endeavours. As a result, the students have positive perception of the social media and they use them for different purpose. Their usage of social media range from scholarship, social connections and relationship, games and entertainment, entrepreneurship, marketing, cultural projection, talent exhibition, among several other uses. Rutherford also found out that the students use the social media very frequently.

On the relationship between gender and social media usage, Hargittai (2007) found that gender plays significant role in the use of the social media. The finding indicated that more women than men use the social media. The findings of Joinson (2008) corroborate those of Hargittai which indicated that women are more likely to use the social media such as Facebook or MySpace while the male are more likely to use LinkedIn. His findings suggest that female users are much more predisposed to social media. The implication of the finding is that there is significant relationship between the social media and the gender of the users.

Junco, Merson, Salter (2010) found a significant relationship between gender and the use of social media by students in the United State of America. Similarly, Guimaraes (2014) found that female users of the social media in the United States of America are more inclined to using Facebook. The study found that women use the social media more than men do. Corroborating the findings Junco *et al.* (2010) and Guimaraes (2014), Al-Sharqi and Hashim (2016) found a significant correlation between gender and social media usage. Gender seems to play significant role in students' use of the social media. Studies that support this position include those by Abdelraheem (2013), Gok (2015), Alkaabi, Albion and Redmond (2017) and Alnjadat (2019). They found significant correlation between gender and social media usage by students.

Madden and Zickuhr (2011) found that among Internet users, social networking sites are most popular with women. Hampton, et.al. (2011) also found that social networking site users were mainly female. Mazman and Usluel (2011) also found that gender is a significant factor in the use of social media, with more females using the social media. Nicole, et al (2012) found significant relationship between college students' perception and their usage of the social media. They have positive perception of the social media and thus use them adequately and frequently.

In a nutshell, the social media have become adopted by many people who use them for different purposes. Perception and gender may also be important determinant in the usage of the social media. There is also the fear that despite the wide acceptance of the social media, the social media may breed or encourage certain deviance and outright evil in the society.

3.0. Methods

The entire population of students in higher institutions of learning in Delta State constituted the population of the

study. There are approximately 140,000 students in the institutions. The institutions are: Delta State University, Abraka; Novena University, Oguma; University of the Western Delta, Oghara; Michael and Cecilia Ibru University, Agbarha- Otor, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbado, Delta State Polytechnic, Oghara; Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwash-Uku; Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro; Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba; College of Education, Agbor; College of Education, Warri; College of Physical Health, Mosogar; College of Health Technology, Ufoma and College of Marine Technology, Burutu. Six thousand students were selected as the sample to represent 6 of the 12 institutions. One thousand respondents were selected from each of the sampled institutions. Two institutions were chosen from each of the three senatorial districts in the state. They are Delta State University, Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic, Oghara (Delta Central); Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwash-Uku and College of Education, Agbor (Delta North); and Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro and College of Education, Warri (Delta South). The institutions were selected through simple random sampling. The individual samples were selected randomly on the basis of gender equality. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data gathering. In measuring the reliability of the research instrument, the SPSS version 20 was used and a cronbach alpha reliability of 0.88 was obtained which indicated that the research instrument had a strong reliability. Trained research assistants helped to administer the instrument. Descriptive data analysis was used for the research questions while regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. A total of 6000 copies of the questionnaire were administered. However, 5382 were returned which accounted for a return rate of (89.88%).

The data obtained for the study were analyzed, using quantitative approach. Additionally, we used descriptive statistics for the research questions. On the other hand, regression analysis was used to test correlation between variables in the hypotheses. In the regression analysis we were mainly concerned with t values, f values and beta values. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level. To ensure scientific precision and accuracy, the analysis was carried out using SPSS version 20.

4.0. Findings and Discussion

Research Question One: “What are the primary purposes for which the students use the social media?” The answer to this research question is addressed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of Pattern of Students’ Usage of the Social Media

Gender	Chat	Find friends	Make New friends	Flirt	Exchanging messages	Gossips	Journalistic Purpose	Spread Rumour	Contribute to public discussions	Impersonate	Black Mail	Advertise self profile	Academic Purpose	Other uses	Total
Male Students	301 (11.28%)	266 (9.97%)	278 (10.42%)	352 (13.19%)	355 (13.30%)	168 (6.29%)	103 (3.86%)	142 (5.32%)	289 (10.83%)	15 (.56%)	11 (.41%)	215 (8.06%)	163 (6.11%)	11 (.41%)	2669 (49.59%)
Female Students	407 (15%)	279 (10.28%)	336 (12.38%)	429 (15.74%)	382 (14.08)	181 (6.67%)	31 (1.14%)	145 (5.34%)	102 (3.76%)	6 (0.22%)	3 (0.11%)	333 (12.27%)	67 (2.47%)	12 (0.44%)	2713 (50.41%)
Total	708 (13.15%)	545 (10.13%)	614 (11.41%)	781 (14.51%)	737 (13.69%)	349 (6.48%)	134 (2.49%)	287 (5.33%)	391 (7.24%)	21 (0.39%)	14 (0.26%)	548 (10.18%)	230 (4.27%)	23 (0.43%)	5382

The findings show that 49% male students use social media while 50.41% female use social media. The students use social primarily for the following purposes in other of preference: flirting – 14.51%; exchanging message - 13.6%; make new friends – 11.41%; advertise self profile – 10.18%; find friends – 10.13%; contribute to public discussions – 7.24%; gossips - 6.48%; spread rumour – 5.33%; academic purpose - 4.27%; journalistic purpose – 2.49%; other unspecified uses – 0.43%; impersonation – 0.39%; and blackmail – 0.26%. The findings are line with those of Mazman and Usluel (2011); Anderson (2009) which showed that social media users use them for different purposes.

Research Question Two:

“What are the preferred social media used by the students?” The answer to this research question is addressed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Distribution Students' Preference for the Social Media

Gender	Facebook	Twitter	MySpace	2Go	Flickr	LinkedIn	You tube	My Life	Ibibo	Badoo	Bebo	Others	Total
Male Students	1221 (45.74%)	279 (10.45%)	103 (3.86%)	372 (6.91%)	93 (1.73%)	141 (2.62%)	269 (5.00%)	67 (1.24%)	21 (0.39%)	62 (1.15%)	41 (0.76%)	00	2669
Female Students	114 (41.06%)	468 (17.25%)	45 (1.66%)	323 (11.91%)	86 (3.17%)	216 (7.6%)	294 (10.84%)	54 (1.99%)	17 (0.63%)	57 (2.10%)	39 (1.44%)	00	2713
Total	2334 (43.37%)	747 (13.88%)	148 (2.75%)	695 (12.91%)	179 (3.33%)	357 (6.63%)	563 (10.46%)	121 (2.25%)	38 (0.71%)	119 (2.21%)	80 (1.49%)	00	5382

The findings indicate that the students have the following order of preference for the social media: Facebook (45.74%); Twitter (10.45 %); 2G0 (6.91%); YouTube (5.00 %); MySpace (3.86%); Linkeld (2.62%); Flickr (1.73%); MyLife (1.26%); Badoo (1.15%); Bebo (0.76%); and Ibibo (0.39%) None of the students uses any of the rest 247 social media. They do not have preference for any other social media than the 11 list above. This suggests that the students use only 11 (4.38%) of the 253 social media available worldwide. The findings are line with Junco (2011) findings that suggested that Facebook is the most preferred social media among students.

Research Question Three: How many hours spent daily by the students in using the social media?

Table 3: Number of hours spent daily by the students using the social media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 1-2 hours daily	1260	23.4	23.4
3 - 4 hours daily	3225	59.9	59.9
5 - 6 hours daily	734	13.6	13.6
7 - 8 hours daily	132	2.5	2.5
8 hours and above daily	31	.6	.6
Total	5382	100.0	100.0

The result in the table above shows that more of the respondents (59.9%) spend between 3 – 4 hours daily; 23.4% reported that they use the social media between 1-2 hours daily; and 13.6% said they use them between 5 – 6 hours daily. Meanwhile, 2.5% and .6% of the respondents reported that they use the social media between 7 – 8 daily and 8 hours daily respectively. This result implies that most of the respondents use the social media between 2 – 3 hours daily.

The finding agrees with those of Joinson, (2008); Lenhart, (2009); Rutherford (2010) and Nicole, et al (2012) which indicated that students use social media frequently for different purposes.

Research Question Four: What is the students' perception of the social media?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Positive	5176	96.2	96.2
Neutral	172	3.2	3.2
Negative	34	.6	.6
Total	5382	100.0	100.0

The result indicates that majority of the respondents (96.2%) said they have positive perception of the social media. A total of 3.2% reported having neutral perception about the social media while .6% reported having negative perception of the social media. The implication of the finding is that most of the respondents have positive perception of the social media.

The finding is thus in line with the findings of Smith and Caruso (2010) and Nicole, et al (2012) which indicated that people generally have positive perception of the social media.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between gender and the students' usage of the social media.

Table 5: Relationship and Regression Analysis of Gender and the Students' use of social media

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	48.401	1	48.401	200.756	.000 ^b
	Residual	1297.096	5380	.241		
	Total	1345.497	5381			

a. Dependent Variable: Gender of the respondents

b. Predictors: (Constant), Usage of the social media by the respondents

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.305	.015		85.511	.000	1.275	1.335
	Usage of the social media by the respondents	.160	.011	.190	14.169	.000	.138	.182

The t test output of 85.511 and 14.169 are very significant at 1% level of significance. The size of the standard error (.015 and .011) is very significantly small implies that our result is very robust and the t value also validates the high level of significance of the result. The constant is positive and significant at 1% which means that apart from the gender of the respondents there are other factors that contributed to the high level of significance obtained by this study. Furthermore the Beta (0.190) implies that there is a significant correlation between gender (either male or female) and social media usage by the respondents. The overall F critical (200.756) which is significant at 1% is an indication of the overall goodness of the overall model. Finally, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between gender and the students' usage of the social media is not rejected. The findings are in line with the findings of Hargittai (2007), Joinson (2008), Madden and Zickuhr (2011), Hampton et.al. (2011) and Mazman and Usluel (2011) whose findings indicate that there is significant relationship between gender and social media usage.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between the students' perception and their use of Social media

Table 6: Relationship and Regression Analysis of the Students' Perception of Social Media and their Usage of Social Media.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.735	1	30.735	620.329	.000 ^b
	Residual	266.562	5380	.050		
	Total	297.298	5381			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' perception of Social Media

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social media usage by students

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.827	.009		89.371	.000	.809	.845
	Social media usage by students	.174	.007	.322	24.906	.000	.160	.187

The t test outputs of 89.371 and 24.906 are very significant at 1% level of significance. The size of the standard error (.009 and .007) is very significantly small implies that the result is very good and the t value (89.371 and 24.906) also validates the high level of significance of the result. The constant (students' perception of the social media) is positive and significant at 1% which means that apart from the gender of the respondents there are other factors that contributed to the high level of significance obtained by this study. Furthermore the Beta (.322) implies that there is a significant correlation between gender (either male or female) and social media usage by the respondents. The overall F critical (620.329) which is significant at 1% is an indication of the overall goodness of the overall model. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between perception and the students' usage of the social media is not rejected.

The finding is in line with the finding of Nicole, et al (2012) which suggests that there is significant relationship between perception and social media use.

5.0. Summary

The social media have become very important in both interpersonal and mass communication globally. The students in the institutions of higher learning in Delta State of Nigeria are adequately exposed to the social media and they use them frequently, though they are exposed to only 4.38% of the 253 social media. The students also have positive perception of the social media and use them for different purposes. There is significant correlation between gender and the students' usage of the social media. Furthermore, there is significant relationship between the students' perception of the social media and their usage of the social media.

5.1. Conclusion

The study set out to investigate the students' pattern of social media usage. Five research questions were used to seek answers to the research problem. We used both parametric and non-parametric data analysis for the research questions and the hypothesis respectively. Based on the findings, we could conclude that the students in institutions of higher learning in Delta state use the social media extensively for different purposes which range from academic, entertainment, social interactions and engagement to commerce.

Additionally, we found that the students spend good number of hours daily using the social media. We also concluded that the students have very favourable perception of the social media and this favourable perception has a significant positive correlation with their usage of the social media. In essence, they use the social media significantly. Additionally, we could conclude from the study that there is a significant correlation between gender and media usage among students of higher institutions learning in Delta State.

5.2. Recommendations

The students should be encouraged by their lecturers and the appropriate authorities to get exposed to more of the social media which serve other important purposes in addition to the ones they are already hooked to. The authorities of the institutions should formulate and implement functional ICT policies and enlighten the students to use the social media for positive and productive purposes. The students should also be encouraged by their institutions and the appropriate government departments to channel their use of the social media to better and more productive purposes. The authorities of the institutions, information technology (IT) bodies, the mass media and the government should organize awareness campaigns on the use of the social media in order to encourage the students to get more exposed to the social media and to use them more positively and productively.

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