Article

Social Media and academic performance in Nigeria: A systematic content analysis of related scholarly publications

Murtada Busair Ahmad,
Ujunwa Stephanie Macdonald-Akano
Adeola Abdulateef Elega

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Abstract
The use of social media has become increasingly prevalent as a means of communication and information dissemination. This study aims to explore the influence of social media on citizens' reactions to security incidents in Tamale. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collected data through online and field surveys as well as in-depth interviews with citizens in Tamale, the largest city in the Northern Region of Ghana. The quantitative analysis, derived from the surveys involving 85 participants, substantiates the study's findings. The data underscores the pivotal role played by social media in shaping citizens' perceptions and reactions to security incidents. A staggering 88.24% engagement rate among survey respondents reflects the widespread adoption of social media within the community. Furthermore, 86.67% of active social media users expressed engagement with innovative features introduced in the last year, highlighting the community's openness to technological advancements. The findings suggest that social media plays a significant role in shaping citizens' perceptions of and reactions to security incidents, such as access to timely information, sharing of the information with others, and facilitating communication to authorities. In addition, the study reveals that social media can amplify fear and panic, and that there are concerns about the accuracy and reliability of information (misinformation) shared on social media. The study recommends for government to consider social media use in addressing security incidents, while also addressing concerns about misinformation and the potential negative effects of social media on citizens' reactions to security incidents.

Keywords: Social media, communication, security citizens, Tamale, misinformation.

Background

Streaming with very high velocity in time and space, information networking seems to have dominated the human psyche in holistic manner. The all-inclusive nature of the virtual interaction is more significantly felt in social media use since the early years of the 21st century. Like other global wonders, social media use has two sides to itself, the commendable and the obnoxious, specifically as far as educational environment is concerned. The existing body of scholarship on social media and academic engagement have come up with conflicting conceptual and empirical explanations from dissimilar perspectives, prompting further research efforts on the two constructs relationship based on some assumptions.

Navigating the existing trends on how interactivity on social media could influence academic engagement from varied perspectives, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) confirmed that social media use has the potential to affect academic performance in different ways. Coming from the background of the survey they conducted in the US, using cognitive load theory and hierarchical multiple regression to control for demographic and social factors, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) still found that engagement with the digital world exerts significant influence on learners' academic performance. They, therefore, pointed out that even though digital interactivity enables accessibility to information, networking, collaboration, and communication among community of users, who share similar goals on the one hand, there is no

gainsaying that a weighty cause of distraction, which most often instigate in a decrease in productivity and attention, on the other hand. While they examined the pattern of relationship between the two constructs, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) reported that using social media can be a significant source of distraction, resulting in a shortened attention span, ineffective time management, and decreased productivity, all of which can have a negative impact on academic success. Correspondingly, Paul, Baker and Cochran (2012) publicized a noteworthy negative correlation between the time spent by students online for social network and their academic performance. Such a negative correlation was found in some research reports that students, who stayed longer on Facebook scored lower on an academic engagement scale (Junco, 2012), that frequency of internet use predicted reduction in effective learning (Rosén & Gustafsson, 2016), that potential association between internet use and lowest performance among Estonian teenagers(Rozgonjuk, Täht &Vassil 2021), and that undergraduates who were heavily exposed to social media performed worse on the academic scale (Calunsag & Calunsag , 2023). Similar scholarly works (Wang, Chen & Liang, 2011; Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Johar, et al., 2021; Tafesse, 2022) reported prediction of inefficient academic performance by high exposure to the digital sphere.

Yet, that is not to say that social media use does not impact meaningfully positive on academic engagement. On the contrary, there are findings supporting significant connection between the two measures. Desmal (2017) reported the significant correlation between social media engagement and purposeful academic performance among students in Bahrain. Morallo (2014) confirmed social networking as significantly accounted for attainment of higher grade in Lyceum of the Philippines, though other variables were reported to have influenced the relationship. This finding is corroborated by another one from Malaysia, confirming exposure to active collaborative learning on social media and the learners' positive performance (Al-Rahmi et al., 2018).

Noteworthy is the pool of mixed results on the two measures' correlation patterns located in some studies. Hamat, Embi, and Hassan (2012) reported mixed findings on the impact of social media use and Malaysian students' academic performance. While it was found that half of the respondents' students actually engaged online for social networking and informal learning, the other half confirmed they engaged online for academic learning albeit, such engagement had no negative bearing on their academic performance. Even though Junco (2012) has been cited earlier as reporting negative correlation between the two constructs, the same source further maintained a middle range position on social media use and academic related experience. Specifically, Junco (2012) submitted that both positive and negative impacts could be affected on academic performance by the digital world engagement. Buttressing the aforementioned, Junco (2012) cited the optimistic example of how social media use have been utilized to galvanize students study groups purposefully to enhance academic performance as well as how digital interactivity has been experienced as a significant source of distraction, resulting in decline in attention to learning.

Mixed results are also documented in other research works. Quite very typical is the outcome of an investigation carried out by Rodríguez and associates (2022) on how internet interactivity might have influenced 6th grade primary school pupils' academic performance in Spain. The research outcome is two-pronged: internet use for learning purpose positively correlated with the pupils' academic performance; on the contrary, there was a negative correlation between internet use for social networks and the dependent measure. The greater the use frequency, the greater the negative correlation (Rodríguez et al., 2022).

Another unique set of diversified findings on the relationship between social media use and academic performance is that which was reported by Michikyan, Subrahmanyam, and Dennis (2015). First, they reported that students with lower GPA's were those who were more actively engaged on Facebook. The strange thing about this finding is the reversal nature of the correlation between the two constructs. That is, students' lower grades emerged as a predictor of their proactive engagement on Facebook. Put differently, the students got engaged with Facebook purposefully for "distraction and entertainment" in a bid "to cope with their frustration", which was ignited by learning complications and inability to "fully engaged in

their study" at college (Michikyan, Subrahmanyam, & Dennis, 2015 p.271). That intellectual weakness of some learners could be a determiner of their social media use is very insightful a research outcome. But Michikyan et al., (2015) did not claim they were the first to come up with such a research result, the result rather resonated an earlier finding reported by Valkenburg and Peter in 2011 that youths' real-life distresses ignite their "online behavior" (Valkenburg & Peter , 2011,).

Diversity of research findings on the atypical patterns of correlation between the two variables has been a concern for research into existing research on them. The contradictory research outcomes might not be unconnected with research designs and methods used. For instance, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) found several problems with the methodological quality of studies on the subject, such as the use of cross-sectional designs, a lack of precise definitions of social media, and differences in how social media use was measured. These methodological problems have been addressed in later research to develop a more nuanced grasp of the connection between social media use and academic achievement. Another perspective on how methods and research design are likely to facilitate specific patterns of results can be seen in Al-Rahmi et al., (2018) as the social media use-learning performance positive correlation are reported to have been factored "satisfaction, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness" after effects of specific demographics have been removed (Al-Rahmi et al., (2018).

Given the power of theory's assumptions to guide the application of statistical techniques on how to investigate patterns of correlation between variables', the pathways along which a set of variables are examined in any study are bound to influence outcomes of any given research. Reasons for diverse results on social media use and academic performance is, therefore, explicable. For instance, the integration of Transactional Distance Theory (TDT) and Bloom's Taxonomy Theory (BTT) as a framework for the study of interconnection between online learning and students' academic achievements on the one hand and between the predictor and students' academic achievements on the other hand necessitated the application of structural equation modelling by Abuhassna et al (2020). In that way, they were able to establish how "the students' background, experience, collaborations, interactions, and autonomy", as moderators or mediators, factored online learning and students' satisfaction positive correlation. Similarly, they were able to establish how "effects of the students' application, remembering, understanding, analyzing, and satisfaction" were on the path to "positively aligned" online learning "with students' academic achievements" (Abuhassna et al., 2020 p.1)

Research designs and methods used for investigating the patterns of relationship between social media use and academic performance have been raised among other concerns in some of the existing meta-analysis or systematic review studies. The mention of few studies will suffice. Kates, Wu, Coryn (2018) is one of the good examples, having selected 39 of 117 initially identified studies that were eligible for inclusion based on three criteria. For literature and empirical search, they used Google Scholar and the Western Michigan University Library database search tools to search for works published on the subject matter over the period of 10 years (2008 to 2017). They found thirty-six (36) of the studies to have reported a negative relationship between the two variables. Only three studies were found to have reported a positive correlation between the two measures. Liu, Kirschner, and Karpinski (2017) conducted a meta-analysis, exploring the relationship between social network use and academic performance as well as using data collected from Google Scholar, ProQuest and six other relevant online academic sources. Out of the initial 1, 254 articles located, only thirty-five articles were found eligible through the systematic processes of inclusion and exclusion and based on six criteria. The study revealed a mixed finding. Mostly, negative correlation was found between social network use and academic performance with higher effects of negativity on the female students. The academic performance was indicated by low GPA of the students. Then again, a positive correlation was found between the independent variable and language test. (Liu, Kirschner & Karpinski, 2017).

Problem Statement and Research Questions

With the empirical submissions in view, the call for replication of a systematic review on this issue of scholarly concern is imperative. It is a common

knowledge that Nigerian scholars have conducted research on impact social media used on students' academic performance and such research works have been published in journals. Most of those works have been displayed in notable research platforms including Web of Science, Scopus, Academia, Google Scholar, and Research Gate. Based on information at hand, we noticed that there was scanty research contribution on the milestones of what Nigerian scholars have published on social media use and academic performance of students, which should serve as a compendium of those works within a specific period. Put differently, there had been rarely no compilations of studies on the impacts of social media use on Nigerian students' academic performance. This study filled the gap in the literature, exploring what Nigerian scholars across disciplines have published on students' use of social media and their academic performance. Therefore, we explored Google Scholar in search of publications on the subject matter, covering a five-year period from 2018 through 2022. We therefore asked:

RQ1: Which social media platforms are predominantly mentioned in the Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance research?

RQ2: What are the research designs applied in the selected publications reviewed?

RQ3: What are the dominant methodological characteristics of Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance research?

RQ4: What is the theoretical distribution of Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance research?

RQ5: Are Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance research more empirically inclined or more conceptually orientated?

RQ6: What are academic disciplines of Nigerian authors who published on social media and academic performance research?

RQ7: What is the number of authors per publication reviewed?

RQ8: What is the distribution of Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance research across Scopus and non-Scopus journals?

RQ8: Are Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance studies equally proportioned across Scopus and non-Scopus journals?

RQ9: What is the percentage of publications reviewed across the five years identified for the study?

RQ 10: Which pattern of correlations is predominantly found in the Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance studies reviewed?

Conceptual Clarifications

Social Media Use

Social Media use has been conceptualized as a social activity and practice anchoring in the use of the Internet for information sourcing and sharing as far as the message system provide the space for content creation and transmission in form of texts, pictures, audio and video in order to "inform and inspire" as well as "influence and incite" , which cannot be ruled out of human's push to towards knowing "about the good, the bad, and the ugly side of people, places, and situations" and which prompts the sharing of "this information with others, often as quickly as possible" (Safko & Brake, 2009, pp.3-4). Therefore, the social media is a prevalent leisure activity space for young people the world over, which provides the opportunity for virtual communities where interests are shared through wide-ranging interactions on numerous and competing channels including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, with the use of computing message systems including mobile phones, computer and similar devices (Ba´nyai , et al., 2017).

Social media primary goals are communication, collaboration, education, and entertainment. Safko and Brake (2009) categorized social media uses as including social networking, publishing, livecasting with audio and video, microblogging, gaming, virtual world, productivity application, aggregators, RSS, search, mobile, and interpersonal.

It should be clarified here that social media might have been synonymously aligned with Web 2.0 on one hand and with social networking on the other hand. The fact of the matter is that they are different entities. While the creation of Web 2.0 has facilitated information generation, sharing, and modification by individual users in a collaborative manner, rather than just viewing it as obtained before 1999, "social media is 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

Contents" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 p. 61). In a nutshell, Web.20 is the platform that enabled the fruition of social media.

The use of social media has accelerated since 2010, with over 4.59 billion proactive users worldwide in 2022 and the population is likely to step-up to some six billion in 2027 (Statista, 2023). This is because social media use has become an integral part of the human society as many individuals and organizations cannot do without the digital sphere interacting for differing purposes, more so in the modern era when Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube have become powerful tools for connecting people, building relationships, and sharing experiences (Kaplan& Haenlein, 2010).

The use of social media has also had significant impacts on various aspects of society including societal opportunities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), learners' engagement (Pimmer et al., ,2014), online dating (Bapna et al., 2016), political discourse (Sharma & Sivakumar , 2023), agricultural messaging (Aliagan eta al, 2023) and other pertinent purposes.

However, social media use has relatively negative implications which are considered as challenges and risks that can be overcome and handled. The *problematics* include invasion of privacy, cyberbullying, misinformation, addiction, and mental health (Seabrook et al., 2017; Kircaburun et al., , 2020).That is why the risks and benefits that come with social media use have become a part of the core issues that prompt critical discourses and empirical inquiries on social media as an attention-grabbing phenomena across academic disciplines.

Academic Performance

Academic performance is contextually conceptualized because it describes the methodical rating of learners in terms of quality of intellectual progress with the use of a standardized test organized from time to time in order to evaluate such progress. Masrom and Usat (2019) defined academic performance as any report indexing students' CGPA/GPA in the past and present because it is the measurement that projects the learning outcomes of a student or a group of them. Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and similar grading statistics are a numeric index or indicator of academic performance at universities and colleges. They are used to measure the whole practical performance of a student across courses or subjects, including classroom exercises, midterm exams, and final semester exams all of which are standardized
(https://ballotpedia.org/Academic_performance).

In the Law Insider (2023), the numeric indicator of a learner performance is called Academic Performance Index or "API", which, *inter alia*, refers to the indicator for ascertaining the performance of students as well as the sustained progress or lack thereof. (https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/academic-performance-index).

Most of the existing studies carried out on Internet use and academic performance correlation looked out for how students had maximized performance based on their scores in different subjects. For instance, de Guevara Rodríguez and associates investigated how Internet use impacted students' scores in four major subjects (de Guevara Rodríguez et al., 2022) in the similar way Rozgonjuk and Vassil (2021), in Estonian, examined the likely correlation of Internet use with students' performance in mathematics test, capitalizing on high and low score variances in three years (Rozgonjuk & Vassil,2021).

Factors of academic performance have been mentioned in the literature. The factors are always included in investigations dealing with social media use and academic performance's correlation. Therein the variables are expected to be included at the research design stage as potential moderators or moderators, especially where multivariate statistical techniques such as hierarchical multiple regression, Anova and, of course, path analysis- a precursor to structural equation modelling.

Significantly mentioned in the literature are contextual variables such as availability of learning materials, the educational experience as well as the socioeconomic status of the parents, food options, home environment, and competence level of the teachers, amongst others (Brew, Nketiah, & Koranteng, 2021). With social media use in the equation, participating in extracurricular activities, cross- gender relationship, and study habit were found to be significant factors of students' academic performance in the research report of Okedigba et al. (2019).

Besides, social media use and academic performance's correlation could also be induced by individual differences and personality traits. Von Stumm et al., (2011) identified what they termed "core determinants" from psychological perspectives, especially "intelligence and effort emerging". They went on to report that even with other supposedly predictors in the equation and regardless of situation, physical or virtual, personal "intelligence" was confirmed as "the single most powerful predictor of academic performance" and that "intellectual curiosity" and "intellectual engagement" could not moderate the relationship (von Stumm et al., 2011, p.574).

Specific evidence from Nigeria between 2018 and 2022

Applying inferential statistic to data gathered by survey at Adegboyega University, Agwi and Ogwueleka (2018) found a substantial inverse association between time spent on social networking sites and academic performance. Likewise, Araoye (2018) reported that the higher the use of social media the higher the decline in the academic scores of some students in the five tertiary institutions studied in a state in the Nigeria's southwest. The same pattern of outcomes was in the investigation carried out in Katsina in the Nigeria's northwest as Umar and Idris (2018) found social media use and the dependent measure to have correlated in the negative direction. A negative correlation was also reported on the two variables in another research conducted in Benue State University (Hussaini et al. 2019). However, a mixed finding, pointing out both negative and positive correlation of the two measures in another research locale, were conveyed by Suleiman (2019).

Found exceptional in the negative correlation of the two measures is Ndubuaku et al., reporting this sort of correlation as having something to do with addiction and mental health. That is, the last two variables moderated the negative relationship of social media use and academic performance (Ndubuaku et al., 2020). Similar results were reported by Olebara and associates in 2021. While they investigated the digital media effects on students' academic activities, mood, and time management ability, Olebara et al. found digital media engagement to have inversely predicted academic activities in that the more the respondents were engaged on social media, the lower their score on academic engagement. This finding indicates a statistically significant correlation between the independent variable and the students' time management ability in the negative direction. That is, as activity of the students online mounted, their ability to manage time dropped (Olebara et al., , 2021).

On the contrary, some other studies conducted in Nigeria found the two measures to be positively related at high level of significant. Investigating the two measures' relationship based on data collected from postgraduate students at the University of Ibadan, Okpadah (2018) found effect of social networking sites on students' academic performance to be positive. Correspondingly, against the background of the concerns in Owerri in the Nigeria's southeast regarding the supposedly potential distraction set off by the digital exposure, Ezeji and Ezeji (2018) investigated and found that social media use significantly predicted the students' positive habits towards learning. In the following year, similar research was conducted in the region by three other scholars (Maduka et al., 2019). They reported the two variables as significantly associated with the female gender more positively influenced by the independent variable Similar positive correlation was reported of the two measures by Emeri (2019) and Ogunbodede and Oribhabor (2022). Ogunbodede et al., (2022) specifically reported that digital resources usage significantly predicted academic performance of students, implying that the higher the digital resources usage, the higher the academic performance of the students they investigated.

Yet, some of the latest findings are mixed ones. For instance, while Bakare and Solomon (2022) found the predictor and academic performance to be significantly associated, they still found that the social media variable could not significantly predict related dependent variables like self-study skills and life-long learning skills. Quite interesting is the mixed findings located in Okereke & Oghenetega (2014). On the one hand, they found a positive correlation between frequency use of social networking for academic purposes and the users' CGPAs ranging from 3.50 to 4.49, on the other hand no statistically significant correlation detected between the amounts of time spent online and the academic success.

Methodology

To address the research problem and answer the research questions, the present study is designed to explore the existing studies, empirical and conceptual, conducted by mass communication scholars and scholars from other social discipline on social media use and student academic performance. Specifically, this study quantitatively described each of the research work explored in terms of the depth of literature reviewed, theoretical frameworks, research methods, research population, sample size, and unit of analysis and findings. The study population comprises 964 journal articles on social media and academic performance published between 2018 and 2022 and displayed on Google Scholar. Inclusion and exclusion techniques were applied to arrive at a sample size of 54 articles for this study.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established for proper selection of relevant journal articles based on three search stages which are: keywords search, data search, and articles scan and selection. Inclusion gauges include the mention of "social media" or "social media platforms" and synonyms like "digital world" "internet use" as well as the mention of "academic performance" and related words like "academic achievement", "semester grades". These keywords must have been mentioned or implied in the papers' title, abstract, keywords, or main text. On the contrary, papers which made no mention of the identified keywords in their titles, abstracts, and main texts were excluded from selection.

Data search was based on four sub-criteria. First, the research works must have been published in English. Second, they must be full-text publications. Three, they must have been published between 2018 and 2022. Four, the publications should be journal articles, book chapters, or dissertations. Therefore, works published in other languages, other than English, and works published in English outside the specified timeframe were excluded. Scan and selection were concentrated on Nigeria-focused research, hence studies covering other locales outside Nigeria were excluded. The selection techniques therefore produced only 54 out of 964 publications within the stated time frame (see Table 1).

With a coding sheet on excel, articles were purposively selected from Google Scholar. The coded items are research titles, publication sources (journal article=3, book chapter=2, dissertation=3); publication years (2022=5, 2021=4, 2020=3, 2019= 2, 2018=1) ; publication outlets (Scopus = 2 , non-Scopus = 1) ; research orientations (empirical=2, conceptual=1) ; research designs (mixed-methods=3, quantitative = 2 , qualitative = 1) ; data collection methods (mixed-methods=5, survey = 4 , content analysis = 3, observation/participation=2, others=1) ; theoretical orientations (communication theories=3, non-communication theories = 2 , no theory=1); number of citation (five and above = 3, four/three =2, two and below = 1) ; author academic disciplines (mass communication/media studies=4, education=3, sciences=2, others= 1) ; number of authors (three authors and above= 3, two authors =2, 1 author=1) ; social media platforms studied (13 and above digital channels =4, 9-12 specific digital channels =3, 5-8 specific digital channels =2, 1-4 specific digital channels= 1). Data computation, cleansing, and presentation was with the use of IBM 23 version of the SPSS.

Table 1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for each stage of search

Search Stage	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Search Results
Keyword Search	•"Social media" or "social media platforms", "digital space" and synonyms. • "Academic performance", "academic achievement", "exam grades". •These keywords must have been mentioned or implied in the articles' titles abstracts, keywords, or main texts.	•Non-mention of social media and synonyms, and non-mention of learning outcomes in terms of CGPA and similar grading measures. •Publications unrelated to social media use and academic performance by Nigerian scholars. • Publications not referencing keywords in title, abstract, or text-body/	964
Database Search	•Written in English •Full text •Published between 2018 and 2022 •journal articles, book chapters, and dissertations.	•Other languages. •Not within the specified timeframe.	326
Article scan and selection	• Nigeria-focused. • Not duplicated and republished as different editions.	• Not Nigeria-focused • Duplicated and repeated papers	54

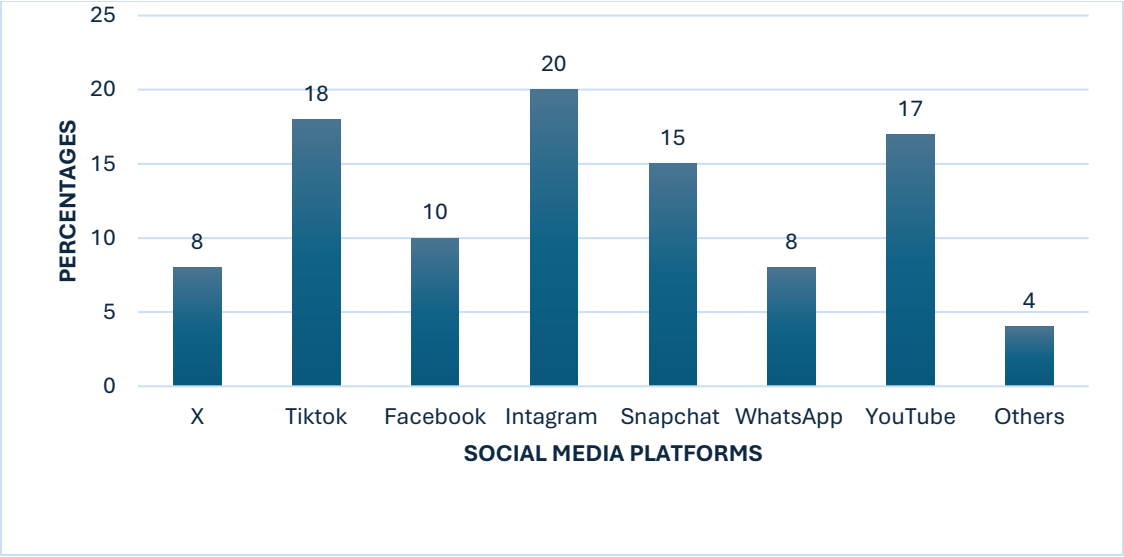

Fig. 1 Proportion of predominantly used social media identified in the studies reviewed.

Figure 1 projects the number of social media platforms used by students for diverse purposes, which are covered in the studies carried out by Nigerian scholars on academic performance. The projection in Figure 1 indicates that Instagram mostly preoccupied students' attention, casting 20% in the scheme of media social media use by students. Tiktok and YouTube ranks second and third, securing 18% and 17 % in that order as documented in the studies systematic reviewed.

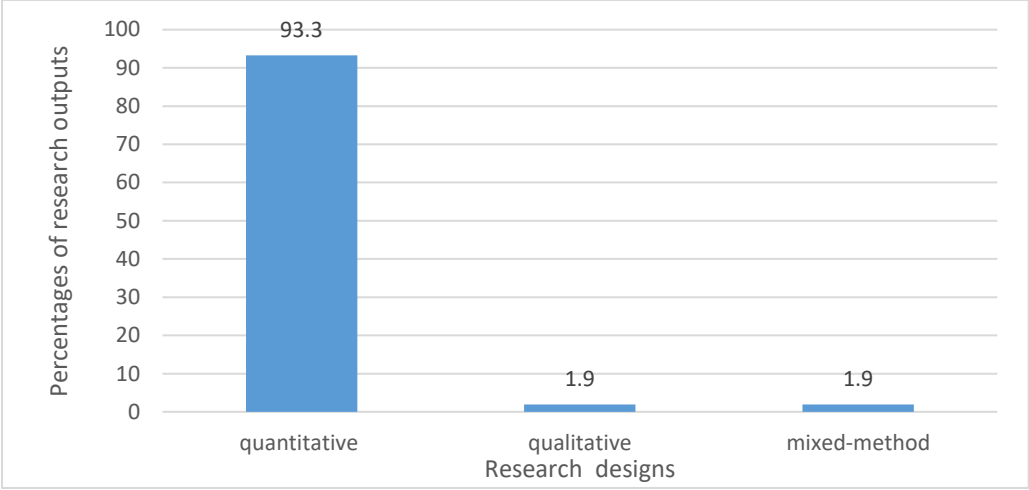

Fig. 2 Research designs applied in the reviewed research articles

Figure 2 represents the research methods applied in the 54 studies reviewed. Therein, it is glaring that quantitative research methods outweigh the qualitative and mixed methods in the whole works systematically reviewed.

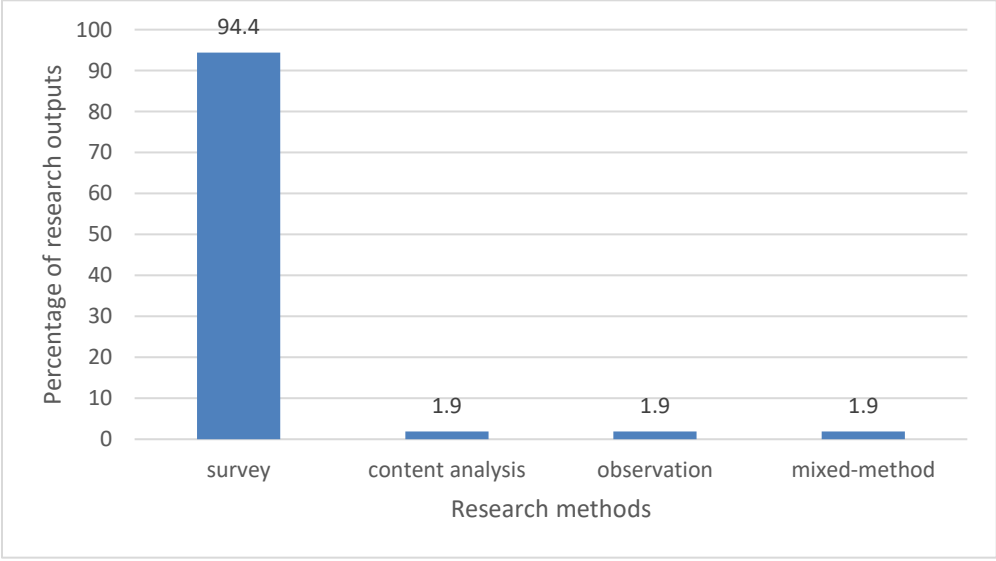

Fig. 3 Data collection methods used for the reviewed studies

Figure 3 shows the distribution of methods or techniques adopted by Nigerian scholars whose works were reviewed. As can be seen, survey got the tallest bar, signifying that most of the research conducted used self-administered questionnaire to elicit divergent responses from different research locales on social media use and academic performance. This finding complements the earlier one indicated in Figure 2.

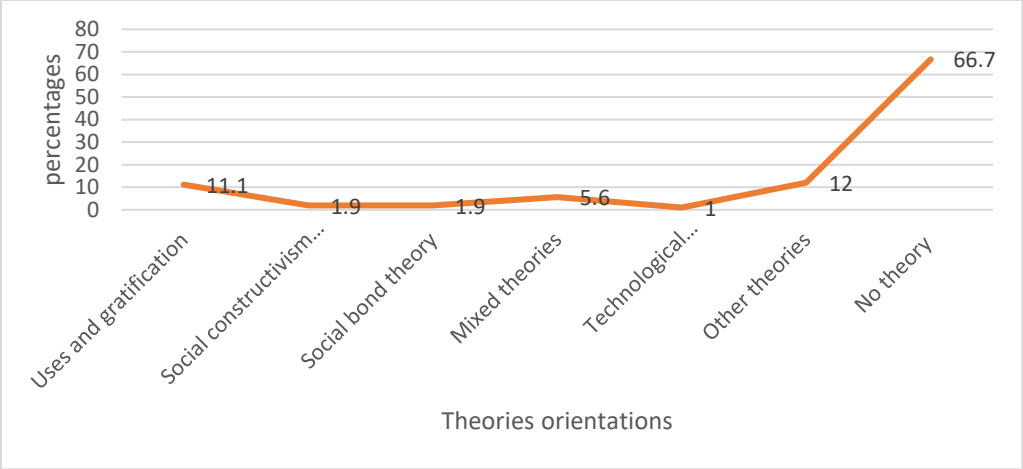

Fig. 4 Theoretical orientation of the reviewed scholarly works

As indicated in Figure 4, most of the research systematically reviewed are not theoretically inclusive. Sixty-seven percent of the whole researched articles included in this review are data-gathering predisposed with some conceptual clarifications and popular submissions in the literature. With what obtained herein, it cannot be disputed that the highest part of remaining forty-three percent coverage of the academic works in this review, which were driven by the theories identified in Table 2 are mass communication ones.

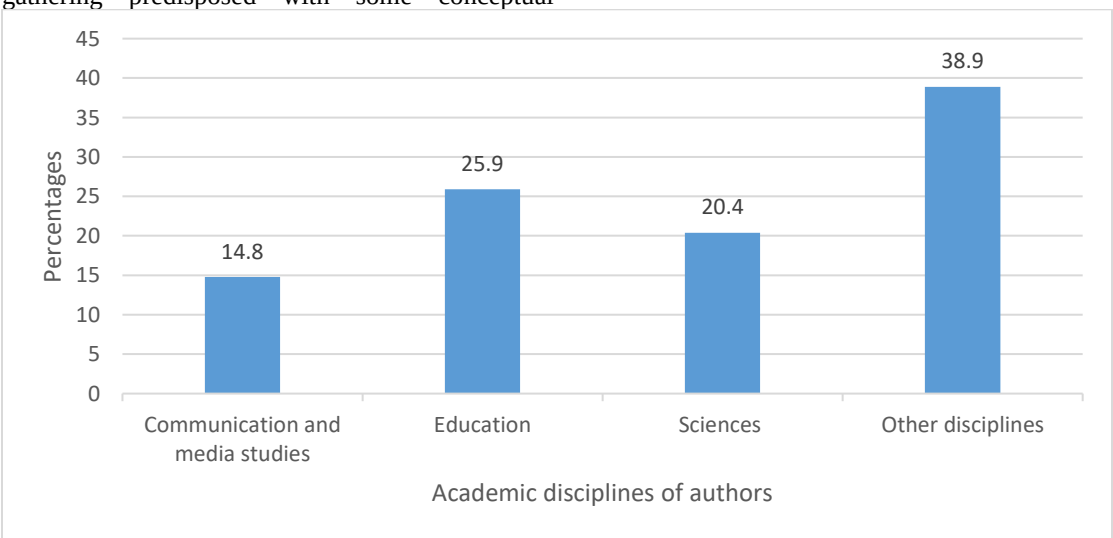

Fig. 5 Academic disciplines of Nigerian authors who published on social media and academic performance research

Academic disciplines of the reviewed articles' authors are exhibited in Figure 6 Apart from the cluster of "other disciplines" in the tallest bar, Education has the largest number of authors (26%), who have published on social media use and academic performance relationship and Science ranked next in terms authors (20%), who have published on the subject matter. The remaining 15% of authors, who have published on the issue come from the field of Communication and Media Studies.

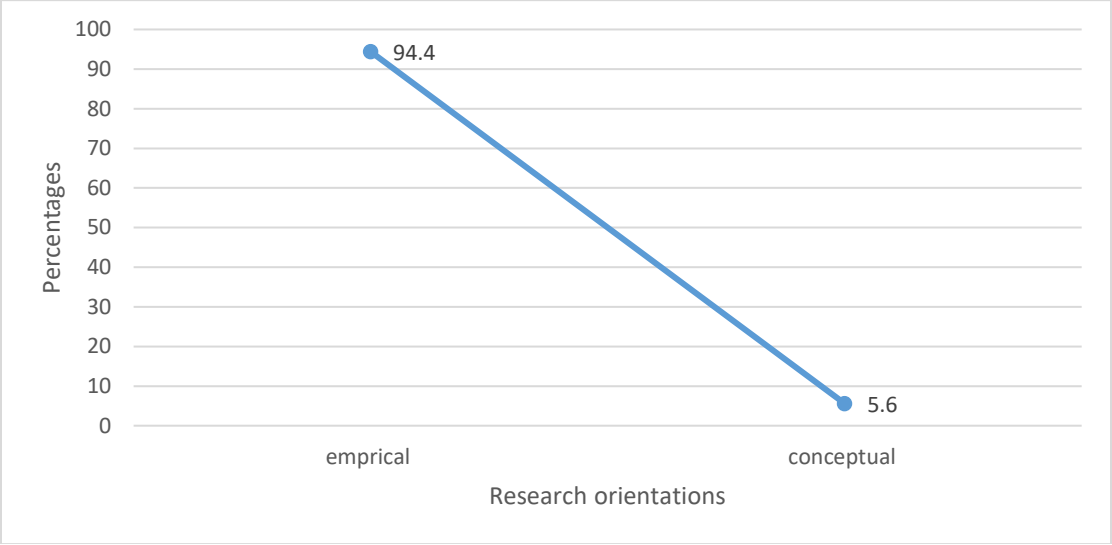

Fig. 6 Empirical and conceptual orientation of the Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance research

In Figure 6, the largest chunks (94%) of the publications reviewed are empirical based. The conceptual publications in the whole scheme are very scanty (6%).

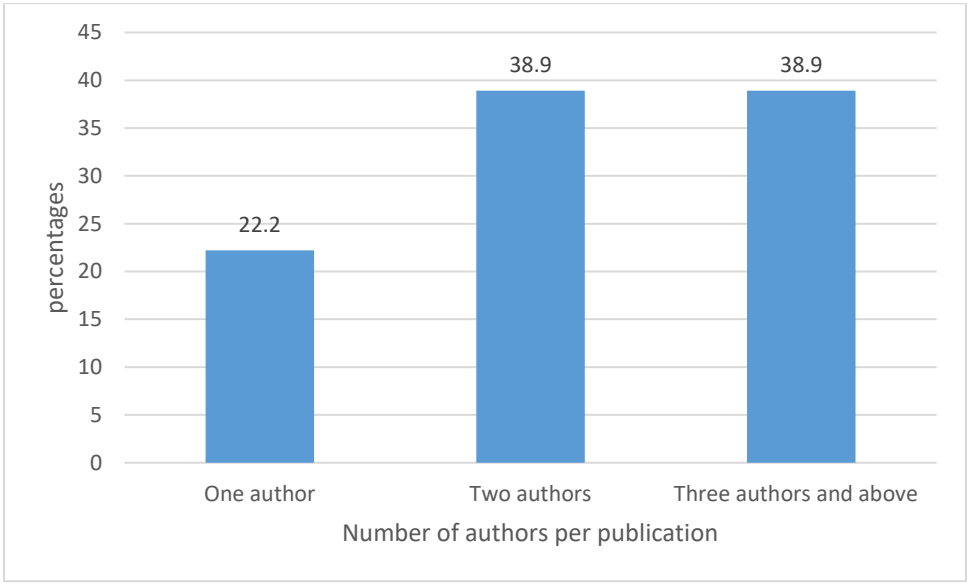

Fig. 7 Number of authors per publication

Figure 7 indicates most of the publications as multiple - authored oriented. Specifically, articles which had two authors constituted 39% of the publications reviewed. Likewise, articles which had three authors also constituted another 39% of the publications reviewed. Articles published by one author made the least percentage (22%).

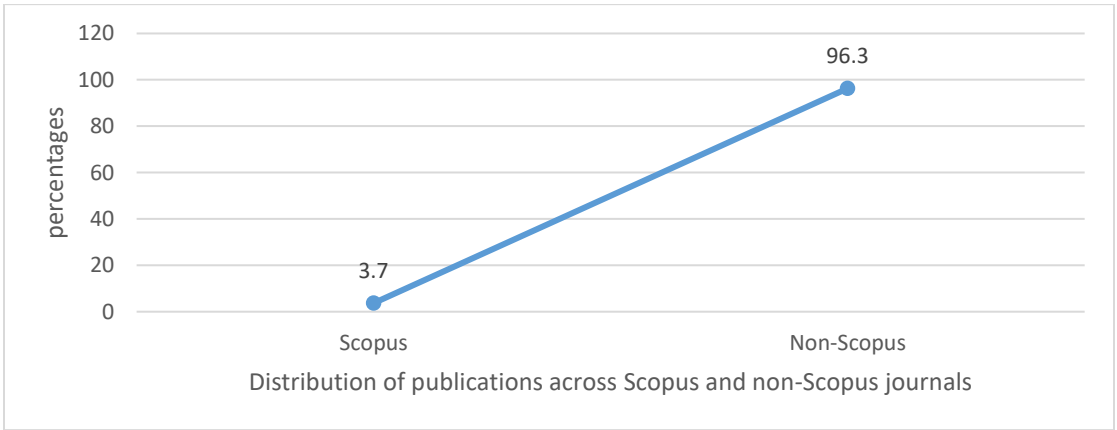

Fig. 8 Distribution of publications across Scopus and non-Scopus journals

As depicted in Figure 8, nearly all the publications systematically reviewed are non-Scopus types as only 4 % of the whole publications on the subject by Nigerian scholars indexed in in Scopus.

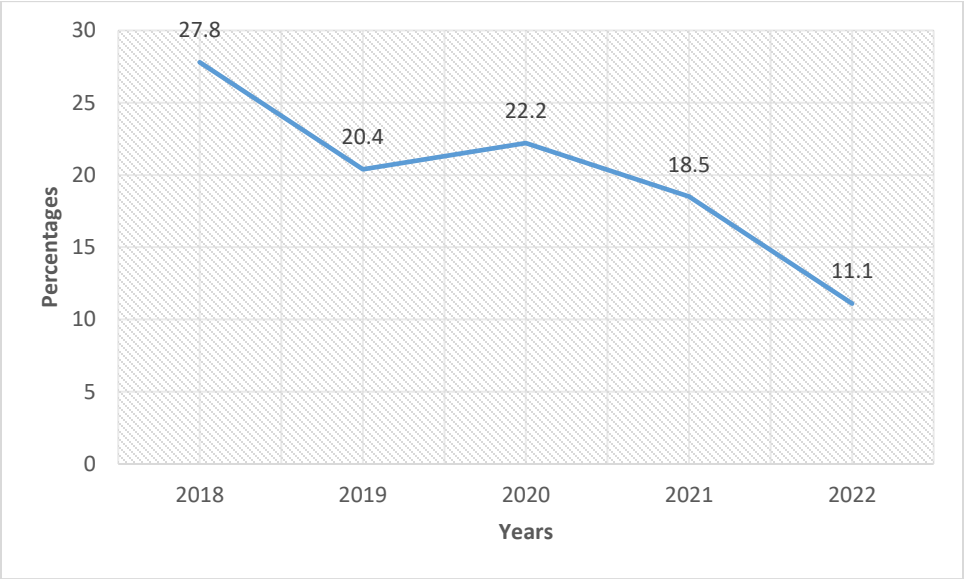

Fig. 9 Proportion of articles displayed on Google scholar year by year

It can be seen in Figure 8.1 that 2018 surpassed the subsequent years in terms of number of on social media use and academic performance reported on Google scholar in the whole five years of the study. The year 2018 had the largest number (28%) of the whole publications in the five years studied. The number of publications on the issue dropped by eight percent in 2019 as 20% articles on the subject was displayed. Thereafter, academic interest in researching the subject mounted in 2020 as the statistics climbed up again with 22% publications on display. The interest on the two phenomena reduced by 2% in 2021 recording 19% publications on the academic digital podium. Against expectation, research interest on the phenomenon decreased throughout 2022 as the publication slope dropped to 11%.

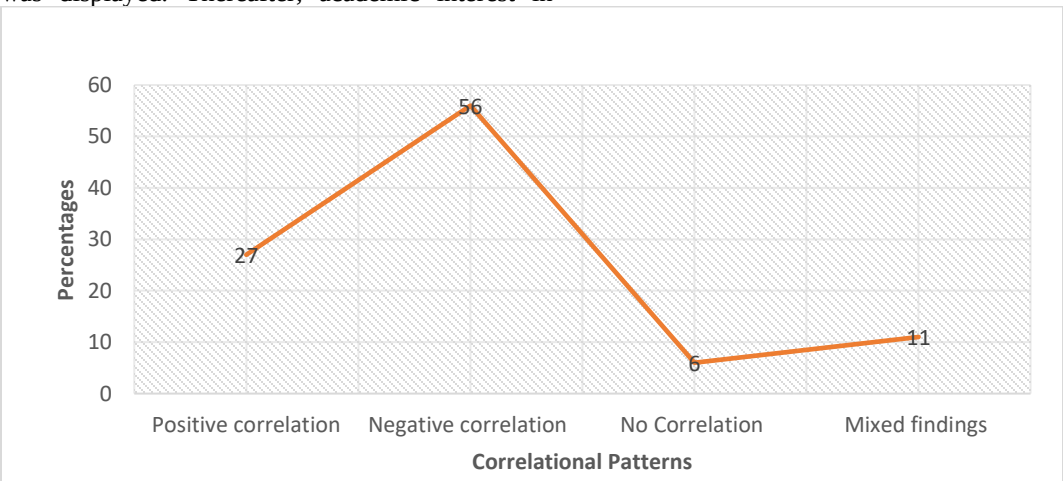

Fig. 10 Correlational patterns of social media use and academic performance

In Figure 9, the two constructs were found to be negatively associated in most of the publications reviewed. On the contrary, the number of publications that reported positive correlation between the two measures are significantly small as the publications constituted only 27% of the whole. Also depicted in Figure 10 are the distribution of works that revealed mixed findings and no correlation.

Discussion of findings

As we stated in the research problem, this study navigates the existing research on social media use and academic performance in Nigeria. We therefore asked pertinent questions, probing the existing literature on the subject matter.

First and foremost, the systematic reviewed publications revealed a remarkable representation of Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, and Snapchat as the digital media platforms that gained greater attention of students far and above Facebook, X and others. This sort of outcomes, which is a response to the first research question, cannot be ignored considering the technological appeal the digital world commands in the life of the young stars and in relation to their academic performance. The significance of this finding is contextually situated in the current debate on the digital media technology that attract the interactive interest of American teens. In their recent survey conducted on social media and technology use among teenagers, Vogels and Gelles-Watnick (2023) reported that YouTube, Instagram, Tiktok and Snapchat are the most frequently used social media channels. Giving the statistics, Vogels and Gelles-Watnick found that two-third of the sample used Tiktok, six-ten used Instagram, while some 60% indicated they cannot do without Snapchat. On the contrary, small percentage of the sample agreed that they still used Twitter (now X), Facebook, WhatsApp, and others. Most importantly, it was found that Tiktok and YouTube has gained strength since 2015, while the interest in Facebook has consistently dropped (Vogels & Gelles-Watnick 2023). Similar research outcome places Tiktok above rival platforms in young adults' choice of social media use in the US, emphasizing users between ages 18 and 34 (Bestvater, 2024). However, our finding goes in different direction from the outcome of some studies. In a global survey conducted, Dixon (2024a) reported Facebook as surpassing other social media platforms, generating some four billion active users in every month and leaving behind competing platforms including Messenger and Instagram at a closer range. This report notwithstanding, another Dixon (2024b) still maintained the popular presence and leading role of Instagram among the US users, including the young adults, numbering 143 million with women constituting 55.7 % and men 44.3%.

Our second and third findings symmetrically came handy. While the second finding was that most of the studies applied quantitative research methods for data gathering and analysis, the third finding projected survey the major data collection method from different research locales. These twin findings, which go with our second and third research questions, cannot be too surprising because of the nature of the issue involved. The issue conditionally called for cross-sectional survey. Therefore, data must have been collected with composite measure questionnaires. It all suggests that research of this interest can hardly be divorced from reality and that must have been the reason the biggest amounts of the publications reviewed are empirically skewed.

We also found most of the reviewed works to be atheoretical. Sixty-seven percent of the whole researched articles included in this review are statistically predisposed with some conceptual clarifications and popular submissions in the literature. Perhaps the scanty use of theories in the whole research we systematically reviewed within the period specified was because most of the works were published by researchers from the fields of Education and Sciences on the one hand. On the other hand, the publications from the field of Mass Communication and Media Studies were not much available in the data base in the five years identified for the systematic review. This is the concern for our fourth research questions.

Aligning with the fourth outcome is the fifth one indicating that most of the studies reviewed are predominantly from the field of Education and Sciences collecting 26% and 20% respectively. Published worked from communication and media studies constituted only 15% of the whole. The remaining 39 % studies in the review are shared by other fields of scholarship including Agriculture, Engineering, Hospitality, and others. This result

originated from the fifth research question that seek to investigate the dominant academic disciplines within Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance research.

Nevertheless, it is remarkable that most of the reviewed works on the subject matter emanated from the fields of education and sciences [see Figure 5], indicating that researchers in the two enclaves consider social media a factor to reckon with in educational research and scientific explanation of internet exposure. It is important to mention herein that social media exposure or internet use, being an indisputably significant part of the modern world, is a concern for every researcher regardless of academic disciplines. This can arguably be confirmed as teaching-learning process is going digital (de Guevara et al., 2022) every now and then. It is also curious, that publications from the field of mass communication are far less to be called "sizeable" compared to others.

We initially expected a higher number of publications to have been produced on the theme of the current study from the field of communication and media compared to what obtained from other disciplines at least because of the concern for media effects explanation, regressing on what media can do "whether intended or not" (McQuail,2010, p.600). Nonetheless, we cannot deny the reality of eclectic nature of scholarship that induces crossbreeding investigation most especially into some societal problems like that discussed in this study. This affirms the submission that "most media effect research has been initiated from outside rather than within the media, especially by social critics, politicians, interest groups, and so on" (McQuail, 2010, p.589) as they study the society in response to media influence.

Moreover, we have found this outcome less amazing because the subject matter of the present research is considerably academic-underpinning one, even though it is theoretically biased for technological determinism and uses and gratifications explanation of media use. Coming from this background, we are not surprised by the sixth outcome of this study revealing the largest chunks (94%) of the publications reviewed as empirical. That is, there was less conceptual articles for the systematic review in the data base in the five selected years for this study. The finding nudged on the sixth research question which probed the orientation of Nigerian-focused social media and academic performance research, specifically whether they were empirical or conceptual.

Another subject of interest that should not disregarded are that *we found* that most of the papers were co-authored and *found* the larger chunk of publications reviewed to have been published in non-Scopus journals. This implies that most publications from Nigeria, including those published by media scholars, may still be domiciled in non-indexed journals and book chapters. Ninety-six percent is too huge a count to ignore for non-indexed articles published on a social phenomenon as remarkable and relevant as that of the present study. Closely aligns with the small number of indexed-journal articles published by Nigerians on this study is the *finding* that the number of publications consistently dropped between 2018 and 2022, particularly after 2020, indicating a slop in research interest in the issue at least from Nigeria. This set of findings go with the seventh, eighth and ninth research questions.

Lastly, we found most of the reviewed publications to have reported negative correlation between the two constructs. To some extent, some of the reviewed studies reported that the two constructs are positively correlated, while mixed findings are less feasible in the entire works systematically reviewed.

The extent of inverse relationship between the two constructs as high as reported in the research reviewed cannot be ignored, given the setback implication it is likely to have for the Nigeria's education setting. The findings could be counted as additional witness to the existing negative assumptions that have been much woven around social media exposure in relation to academic performance of new generation of learners. Consistent with the evidence gathered from the literature, the results substantiate the argument that social media use most often negatively affects academic performance of students in high schools and tertiary institutions. Specifically, the findings are supported by findings, from Spain (Rodríguez et al.,2022) and other similar research locales, which have also reported social media use as a significant predictor of low academic performance like studies by Calunsag and Calunsag (2023) in Philippines, Tafesse (2022) in East Africa, and Johar et al., (2021) in Malaysia. The findings also reechoed the

outcomes of some earlier studies, indicating high exposure to the digital world as a forecaster of weaker performance in examinations and related engagement (Rosén & Gustafsson, 2016; Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Wang et al, 2011; Paul et al, 2012; Junco, 2012 and Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

Likewise, the positive correlation results found for the two measures in some of the works we have reviewed are also backed by similar findings in the existing body of knowledge. Positive correlation has earlier been reported by Danquah, Asiamah, and Fordour (2018) in Ghana, Al-Rahmi et al. (2018) in Malaysia, Desmal (2017) in Bahrain, and Morallo (2014) in the Philippines.

But the negative correlation of the two measures on the one hand and their positive relationship on the other hand, which we have found in the reviewed studies might not be as ordinary as they appear on the surface. The correlational patterns might have been facilitated by some third variables. For instance, Shafiq and Parveen contended that social media use and academic success hung on some underlying mechanisms which cannot be said to have been fully explored. Of course, they found social media's knowledge-sharing capabilities a key moderator in the relationship between social media use and academic performance in the positive direction (Shafiq & Parveen 2023). Even though Radhakanth and Nireesha (2022) reported mixed results on correlation of the two variables, they stated that effective use of the digital space for constructive learning purposes offset any adverse effects. This suggests that 'effective use for constructive learning' could be a significant calculus in the multivariate equation in the search for underlying condition for social media use and academic relationship.

Our findings suggest that coauthored publications dominate Nigeria-focused social and media and academic performance research. This is not necessarily unique to this research area. It is believed to be part of a growing movement in the scientific research community to increase collaboration. As Abramo & D'Angelo (2015) puts it, co-authored publications increase the visibility of research as well as its overall impact.

Conclusion: the two constructs still matter

Although this study is a small sample study, it fills a gap in the literature in that we explored Nigerian scholars' publications regarding social media use by students in tertiary institutions and how such affects their academic performance. We navigated for some big samples, considering the attention given to the issue in the Nigeria's media scholarship. The findings of this study seem to be useful, even though research on social media exposure and academic performance correlation is perceived as over-flogged in some quarters. We tend to differ from the "over-flogging" position considering the domineering status of social media in the world today and the pervasive interests it has secured even recently from scholars across disciplines including medicine (Vali, Parikh, Mohan & Anandh, 2023), sciences (Joseph, 2023), engineering (Naveen & Nagesh, 2017, Radhakanth & Nireesha, 2022), education (Shafiq & Parveen, 2023), management (Calunsag, & Calunsag, 2023). Therein, it is supposed that life in the digital space, regardless of purpose, must have exerted some effects on the learners' performance. Put differently, the colossal presence of the digital media in the life of youth, most especially as a conduit of interactivity amongst them, make research about it very demanding, specifically at the instance of the effects of such use on their learning processes and related matters among which is academic performance.

Be that as it may, the paradoxical tendency of social media use for entertainment and educational convenience put some challenges at the doorstep of young learners at least to be wary of the risk involved (Anderson, 2019). This has an implication for educational research with the view to sensitizing users in the higher education enclave on the dynamics of the technology and the need to adopt matching strategies for use control. With this, it can be argued that digital technology will not cease posing challenges to the academic world – an evidently precursor to friendly adaptive utilization of the technology for constructive learning purposes not only in developing society, but also in the developed world. The puzzling posture of the digital media cannot be overruled though, its deliberate use for academic advancement still saves the day as confirmed by the positive correlation of the two constructs depicted in some of the published articles we have reviewed.

Returning to the Nigeria's scholarship on this issue, we believe that the studies systematically reviewed are quite interesting even though this is a small sample study. More interesting is the diversity of the research outcomes which are similar to findings reported about the measures in studies undertaken in other climes. That is, social media use has predicted poor academic performance as it has determined good academic performance at different point in time, and in the presence of some third variables. As a result, social media exposure may often not be the only acting agent in predicting negative or positive consequences. This speaks about the dynamic nature of the variables in response to social and psychological environment.

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Authors' Bio

Murtada Busair Ahmad is an Associate Professor Department of Mass Communication Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Nile University of Nigeria.

Ujunwa Stephanie Macdonald-Akano is of Department of Mass Communication Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Nile University of Nigeria.

Adeola Abdulateef Elega is of the Department of Mass Communication Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Nile University of Nigeria.

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