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Undergraduate students' use of social media in school: A need for regulatory policies in Nigerian universities

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Social media/networks have proven to improve learning and overall students' progress in their programs when properly used. However, social media have been strongly criticized for its strong negative impacts on students' performance in their studies. This study, therefore, explored the regulatory policy options to effectively manage students' use of social media/networks in Nigerian universities. The study used a mixed-method design for the collection of appropriate data to address the objectives. The population of the study include all the undergraduate students in Nigerian universities and seven top administrative staff of the universities who often get involved in policy dialogue, policy crafting and policy implementation. To collect both quantitative and qualitative data, both online and off-line open-ended interviews were conducted for undergraduate students of which 498 valid responses were retrieved. For the seven top university administrative staff, open-ended semi-structured interviews were conducted in their offices during fieldwork for data collection. The validity and trustworthiness of the instruments for quantitative and qualitative data collection respectively were determined by three experts. The reliability of the instrument measured using Cronbach's alpha is 0.87. The collected qualitative data which had been recorded were transcribed and analyzed using text analysis and frequency query cloud with the help of Atlas.ti. Findings from analyzed data show the major challenges confronting students in the use of social media, abuses of social media, and was also found that there are no existing regulations or policies controlling the use of social media/networks in Nigerian universities. The study recommended the enactment of social media regulatory policies in Nigerian universities. **Keywords:** network, Nigerian universities, regulatory policies, social media, students

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the World Wide Web (Web 2.0) and design technologies, namely Facebook, WhatsApp, podcasts, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, blogs etc., has redefined digital communication by bringing into it effective and efficient ways to communicate with millions of people in real-time. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) have applications in the education sector. Educational institutions use them for various purposes ranging from the dissemination of information to the community to the facilitation of teaching and learning in the classrooms and outside of the classrooms. Social networks/media have facilitated collaborations and cooperation among teachers, students, and students and students, especially at the higher education level. Students and their teachers intensively communicate online, sharing data, pictures, presentations, learning tasks, lecture sessions, tutorials, assignments, and submission of completed work. The majority of students use ICT devices namely iPhones, laptops, iPads, smartphones etc., with which they access the Internet to communicate with one another and with their teachers (Badri et al., 2017; Latif et al., 2019; Tayo et al., 2019). ICT penetration is relatively high among university undergraduates and their skills and knowledge in the use of the Internet have increased tremendously. Statistics from International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2018) show that at the end of 2018, 3.9 billion people were online. ITU (2017) shows that 830 million youths (80% of the youth population in 104 countries) were online. These youths can access the Internet and social media using their hand-held devices that are so convenient to carry about anywhere.

It has been shown that the use of social media/social networks for academic purposes improves students' learning outcomes in terms of positive attitudes to their learning tasks, improved collaboration, and cooperation in problem-solving and timely program completion rates, (Greenhow & Askari, 2017). However, the use of social networks/media by students has been criticized

for having negative influences on students' academic productivity, retention of information, addiction to fiddling with ICT devices, poor writing skills, low mastery of the language of communication, inattentiveness in class, distractions, abuses, the Internet fraud, spending of too much time on pornography, entertainment programs etc., (Badri et al., 2017). Students unwittingly waste excessive time browsing pleasure/leisure programs to the neglect of their assigned tasks and academic work. Furthermore, studies have shown that social media is responsible for huge misinformation about the various issues in today's society, (Chen et al., 2022). It can also cost employees their jobs, and even job seekers may lose an opportunity to get jobs (Robards & Graf, 2022). Students have been caught using social media to cheat in examinations, as well as blackmail one another without good reasons. Students can easily get addicted to using social media, resulting to the neglect of their academic work on campus. These are some examples of abuses or wrong uses of social media by students, and these abuses affect their academic performance in school (Loh et al., 2021; Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

The use of social networks/media among students to socialize with friends or peer groups is prominent in Nigerian universities (Ajike & Nwakoby, 2016; Asogwa et al., 2015; Eke et al., 2014). Available literature has no information on any institutional regulations on the use of social media in Nigerian public universities (Ajike & Nwakoby, 2016). This unregulated social media environment implies that abuses or malicious uses can be a serious issue among students, staff, and the institution itself. These abuses are bound to create many problems for students in their learning and general well-being in school. Therefore, this study explores the need to create regulatory policies necessary for students' effective and appropriate use of social media/networks in Nigerian universities.

Research Questions

The study specifically answered the following questions:

1. What are the challenges students experience in their effort to use social media/networks for academic purposes?
2. What are the undesirable impacts of the use of social media/networks on students' academic life in school?
3. What regulations on students' use of social media/networks are in place in Nigerian universities?
4. What regulatory policy options are necessary for more beneficial use of social media/networks by students in Nigerian universities?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted the mixed research method, specifically the exploratory sequential design to investigate the use of social media by undergraduate students in Nigerian universities. The procedure involves gathering both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions. The qualitative data were collected first using interviews and focus group discussions to explore the general phenomenon of the problem, then followed by quantitative data collection and analysis to explain relationships found in the qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). According to Creswell (2012), the mixed-method approach helps researchers to gain a more complete picture of the research issue as compared to any standalone quantitative or qualitative study because it integrates the benefits of both approaches. The two methods were used sequentially, starting with interviews before administering questionnaires. The mixed method approach is adopted in this study to expand and strengthen this study's conclusion (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

Population and Sample

The population of the study included all the undergraduate students in Nigerian universities and top university administrative staff who are in a position to craft and implement policies in the universities. To collect qualitative data, a total of 138 off-line and 360 online open-ended interview responses were obtained from a sample of 498 undergraduate students in Nigerian universities, across all six geopolitical zones of the country. Also, seven top administrative staff were interviewed through semi-structured open-ended interview questions. The top administrative staff interviewed include ICT directors, DVCs academic, Dean students' Affairs Departments, and Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments. The interviewed administrators were purposively selected because they were considered to have a lot of information concerning the issues being investigated, considering their positions in the university administration and contacts with students and their concerns.

Data Collection

The instruments for data collection were interview protocols and questionnaires. The instruments were validated against the research objectives by three experts, two from the Department of Science Education and one from the Department of Computer and Robotics Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability estimate of the questionnaire was estimated using the Cronbach Alpha method since the questionnaire was on a 5-point scale. The reliability estimate was found to be 0.87. The trustworthiness of the interview protocols was determined to ensure that the researchers' findings are worth paying attention to (Elo et al., 2014).

Both off-line and online close-ended questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from undergraduate students. The online version used Google Forms while the off-line version was hard copies of the questionnaire. This was sent to undergraduate students in all six geo-political zones of the country. The hardcopy version of the questionnaires were retrieved on completion by the respondents while the Google Form version were submitted online on completion by the respondents.

Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data which had been recorded were transcribed and analysed using text analysis with the help of Atlas.ti. The transcribed data were coded, categorized, and themed. The frequency query cloud was used to help in making sense of the coded transcripts. Means ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (SD) of scores were used for quantitative data analysis with help of the statistical package for social science (SPSS). Since the instrument was on a 5-point rating scale, real limits were used for decision making by dividing the means response into three intervals thus: $\frac{5-1}{3}=\frac{4}{3}=1.33$ (Mohammed, 2016). Therefore, the real limits are 1.00-2.33 (not severe), 2.34-3.66 (moderately severe), and 3.67-5.00 (very severe). All participants in the interview remained anonymous and pseudonyms were used to represent their names in this research. All other ethical considerations for research writing were strictly adhered to.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study based on the research questions guiding the study.

Challenges Students Experience Using Social Media/Networks in Universities

The qualitative findings from this study showed that undergraduate students experienced several challenges in their use of social media/networks in their universities. Word-cloud analysis was used for analyzing the opinion of the respondents verbally expressed. The word-cloud for the findings on challenges students experience using social media/networks in Nigerian universities are presented in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Word-cloud on challenges students experience using social media/networks in Nigerian universities (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

In the word-cloud in **Figure 1**, the larger a word size, the more its frequency of occurrence. These codes connect to respondents' responses to interview questions. Such terms as "poor network", "lack of free Wi-Fi" or "no Wi-Fi", "data consumption", "lack of adequate time to go through messages and time consuming", "no money to buy data", "it possess a distraction sometimes in respects to academics", "lack of constant electricity to power phones" among others were used by respondents. This result is indicating that one challenge which undergraduate students experienced in using social media in school is the problem of poor networks. Other challenges include the high cost of accessing the Internet, and social media distracting students from carrying out some of their academic activities.

Findings of the interview with top administrative staff in the university suggest other challenges to using social media including an increased rate of examination malpractices involving the use of social media like SMS and WhatsApp, distraction to students' learning as they're often seen pressing their phones for none academic purposes such as engaging in watching of films and videos, music, online pecuniary activities for fast money, online fraud, wrong use of time and data, and other activities that can potentially de-market the university. The following transcript captured from interviews with some top administrative staff are:

> … it has also caused some damages when it is not well used, like exam malpractice, it encourages them to find a smart way to do malpractice (RESP1).

Another respondent has this to say:

> As a Dean, I move around the campus sometimes and often see clusters of students surfing the Internet and I have devised some jovial method of finding out what actually are students surfing in the net? You will be amazed that most times it has nothing to do with their academic work! Some watch movies, some watch football matches, some get engrossed with all manner of rubbish on the Internet (RESP6).

RESP6 went further to state that:

> One of the negatives associated with this abuse which is directed at students is the wrong use of time and data. The students of 'this university' have access to data (free Wi-Fi from the university), so they end up using the data to do things unconnected with their academics, and it leads to poor performance and wasting of time.

These findings from qualitative data necessitated the collection of quantitative data for further analysis and refinement of the qualitative findings. The means and standard deviation of scores of the respondents to the challenges students experience using social media/networks in Nigerian universities are presented in **Table 1**.

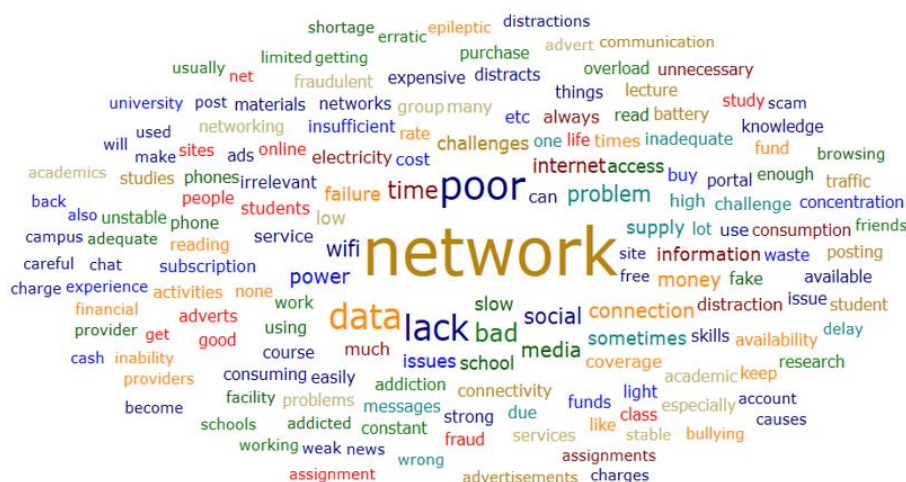**Table 1.** Mean & standard deviation of scores on challenges students experience using social media/networks in Nigeria universities

S/N	Statement of challenges students experience	n	$\bar{x}$	Standard deviation	Remark
1	My poor skills in the use of social media/networks	473	2.42	1.37	Moderately severe
2	Lack of enough time to read or even see all I have in the media	478	3.01	1.27	Moderately severe
3	Lack of money to buy data as much as I need for social media	477	3.64	1.25	Moderately severe
4	Erratic services by the network providers	472	3.62	1.15	Moderately severe
5	Weak/poor networks from network providers	477	3.71	1.16	Very severe
6	Information overload in the social network	477	3.48	1.19	Moderately severe
7	Distractions from unsolicited sources of information from social media/networks	476	3.66	1.19	Moderately severe
8	Too many adverts delaying & distorting my use of the media & consuming my data	473	3.60	1.25	Moderately severe
9	Bullying/threats by someone on the platform	470	2.24	1.37	Not severe
10	Blackmail and Intimidation by someone on the platform	472	2.17	1.41	Not severe
11	Antisocial language used by some members of the platform	472	2.65	1.34	Moderately severe
12	Social media/networks are highly addicting and causes waste of much time	472	3.26	1.37	Moderately severe
13	Difficulty concentrating on my academic work due to social media	471	2.63	1.40	Moderately severe
14	Watching of pornography	462	2.07	1.46	Not severe
15	Financial fraud in the cyberspace	468	2.81	1.58	Moderately severe
16	Addiction to social media/networks	468	2.82	1.46	Moderately severe
17	Wasting of much money buying data used for negative activities	430	2.76	1.59	Moderately severe
Cluster mean and standard deviation			**2.99**	**0.78**	**Moderately severe**

Note. 1.00-2.33: Not severe; 2.34-3.66: Moderately severe; & 3.67-5.00: Very severe

Results in **Table 1** show that respondents considered item 5 (weak/poor networks) as "very severe" challenges; items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17 "moderately severe" challenges, while items 9, 10, and 14 were considered "not severe" challenges in using social media in Nigerian universities. A cluster mean of 2.99 indicates that overall, the challenges are moderate in students' use of social networks/media in universities.

These quantitative results appear to have validated the qualitative findings which have shown that the major challenges to students' use of social media include weak/poor network, lack of free Wi-Fi or no Wi-Fi, data consumption, lack of adequate time to go through messages and time consumption, lack of funds to buy data, distraction to academic work, unstable electricity to power smartphones and computers. Others include blackmail and intimidation by someone on the platform, watching pornography, and financial fraud in cyberspace among others. Manca and Ranieri (2016) had similar results and grouped them into three thus: cultural constraints, pedagogical issues, and institutional constraints. These constraints relate to challenges that are influenced by society, individual constraints, or lack of skills in using social media for learning purposes and other challenges that are under the control of the university such as poor internet connectivity, electricity, and lack of will to control the contents the students can have access to. Also, Latif et al. (2019) identified the negative aspects of social media to include addiction, distraction and maintenance and privacy concerns.

The Most Undesirable Effects of Use of Social Media/Networks on Students in Nigerian Universities

Findings in **Figure 2** show the word-cloud output of students' responses to open-ended interview questions on the most undesirable effects of the use of social media/networks on students in Nigerian universities.

Figure 2. Word-cloud output on the most undesirable effects of use of social media/networks on students in Nigerian universities (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

Findings in **Figure 2** present the following codes lack (118 counts), time (113), addiction (86), concentration (70), distraction (67), money (62), pornography (51), data (50), waste (46), depression (17), fraud (36), nude, intimidation, seduce, among others. These codes relate to lack of focus, lack of concentration, watching pornography, taking more time, waste of time, full-time distraction leading to misplacement of priority, and poor academic performance among others. This finding indicates that the use of social media/networks distracts students from focusing on their studies. Another undesirable effect of the use of social media/networks by students is that it encourages immorality amongst students. Watching pornography, depression, involving in cybercrimes, and bullying among others are some of the major findings from this study.

Further investigation through semi-structured interview questions with top administrative staff of universities presents their experiences as captured in the following transcripts:

> It affects the academic performance of students negatively, it takes their time, the screen time of students is so much that you discover that students generally spent not less than ten to 15 hours on the screen watching videos, chatting … the time they are supposed to use for their study … (RESP5).

This shows that the use of social media affects students' academic performance negatively, it also takes their precious time that they should have used for studying.

A respondent also has this say:

> Some of them have shared information that is not meant for the public domain about their persons or about other entities that are close to them thereby giving out personal information, privacy was not respected in so many instances, and that brought about so much disrepute to individuals and corporate bodies like the university (RESP1).

Also, a respondent opined that:

> Some students might leave off what they are supposed to do on social media to pursue unnecessary things, particularly when you think of those involved in the Internet fraud (the so-called yahoo boys) and also pornography watchers. Stealing from people, trying to exploit people engage students using social networks (what is called yahoo yahoo) (RESP2).

> It also leads to retardation of brain development; students get into the unreal world, what I mean is fantasies, and these ideas of getting rich quick syndrome most times is painted in a very attractive manner on the Internet and our students are now attracted to it, and it leads to a lot of vices (RESP6).

The above transcripts show that the most undesirable effects of the use of social media on students in universities include sharing of information that is not meant for the public domain, abuse of fellow students, waste of precious time meant for academic activities, causing disrepute to individuals and university as a whole, watching of pornographic materials which leads to other immoral activities in the university's campus among others. This result agrees with Tayo et al. (2019) that found distractions and writing and spelling skilling deficiency as some negative influences of social media on undergraduate students. Badri et al. (2017) show that social media has negative influences on students' academic productivity as it leads to distractions, abuses, poor writing skills online fraud, watching pornographic content, phone addiction, and the Internet addiction among others. Mao (2014) had similar findings and further reported that students lack conceptual understanding of the use of social media for learning, hence they use it in undesirable ways. Similarly, Loh et al. (2021) identified the undesirable effect of social media in learning institutions to include social media activities overload, information overload, life inversion, privacy issues, technostress, and exhaustion among others.

Abuses or Wrong Uses of Social Media/Networks by Students in Universities

To determine the abuses or wrong uses of social media/networks by students in Nigerian universities, the word-cloud of the interview transcript was queried and presented in **Figure 3**. Findings in **Figure 3** show that the most prominent abuse among undergraduate students is watching pornographic content, these have a frequency count of 148. Other wrong uses of social media/networks with high frequencies of occurrences include cyber fraud, cyberbullying, scamming, online sex, cybercrime, blackmailing, examination malpractices, addiction, hacking, prostitution/dating, lack of concentration, and sexual harassment, among others. Details could be seen from the major emergent codes in the word-cloud in **Figure 3**.
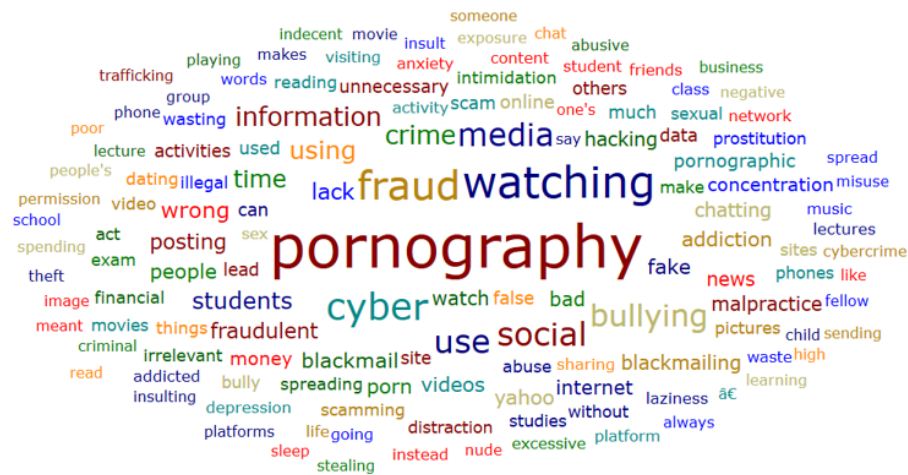
Figure 3. Word-cloud on abuses or wrong uses of social media/networks by students in Nigerian universities (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

Also, findings from the interview with top administrative staff illuminated the abuses or wrong uses of social media/networks by students in Nigerian universities. Some transcripts on this issue are presented below:

> For some time now we have been battling with the image of the university because a woman abused the social network and brought the university into bad light by uploading some dirty corners of the hostel and accusing them of culpable negligence. In this way, she brought the university in a bad light, despite all the efforts the university is making to ensure that the hostels that are neath. The hostels were built in the early 60s and 70s and need sustained maintenance. The woman failed to recognize the ongoing rehabilitation but embarrassed the university by uploading dirty corners of the hostel without asking questions to any university authority (RESP2).

The above transcript clearly shows how social media is wrongly used in bringing disrepute to Nigerian universities. RESP2 see any use of social media in a way that brings disrepute to the university or individuals as a wrong use or abuse of social media within the university.

Similarly, RESP4 also responded that students do use social media in a way that embarrasses the university:

> The students have also embarrassed our university or brought the university to disrepute by publishing events or pictures that did not happen in our university but claimed they happen in our university. A student fought another student outside here, some people published the video of the scuffle and alleged that the event happened in "our university". And there was a time kidnappers kidnapped some people, and they were killed, one of them was a student of a particular institution, yet it was claimed that students from our university committed the crime (RESP4).

RESP3 stated that

> The major problems we experience with students' abuse of social media come up due to students' publishing calculated blatant lies, fabrications, unverified information, destructive information against one another and sometimes against their lecturers or the university itself. They also get involved in cybercrimes and examination malpractices using social media/networks. These abuses come in different forms and contexts such that tracking them is a bit difficult. Due to inexperience or wicked disposition, some students may create fake news which may snowball in any direction out of their control. They think it is funny, but it is not.

Another respondent also spoke of a situation that brought their university to disrepute when a video of some dancing nude girl was published and went viral on social media. The victim nearly committed suicide.

RESP3 put it this way:

> Remember the young lady that dance half-naked in a dancing style called "twerk" by students. That incident became a very serious embarrassment to the university because some people started castigating the university administration as if the administration organized twerk dancing for girls in a hostel. I will say that was a big issue and the case is still on, because a committee was set up to investigate what happened and make recommendations on preventing future occurrence of such ugly incidents in the university (RESP3).

The respondents show that most of these wrong uses or abuses of social media have to do with students recording themselves, behaving in an undesirable manner that is not expected of a university student and unwittingly sharing it via various social media. According to RESP1, this is disturbing to the university:

> We have had instances of students behaving in a manner that is anti-social of them in the hostels or campus areas and other students recording them and putting them up on social media. Because the students are associated with the

university, their actions or activities can be embarrassing to the university which is striving to mold their character, knowledge, and skills.

Another wrong use or abuse of social networks/media identified by RESP1 among students was aiding and abetting examination malpractices:

> … students are being prevented from going into exams halls with their phones because of the abuse of the phones during exams. They snap questions or screenshot computer-based exams questions and send them to their friends who are outside, and this action constitutes aiding and abetting malpractices (RESP1).

Other abuses/wrong uses of social media among students have to do with activities that de-market the universities:

> There are instances when people will just do photoshop, cook up something about a university, and claim certain things about the university, to that extent, it is demarketing the university (RESP5).

From the above transcripts of the interview with students and top administrative staff, the following were identified as the abuses or wrong uses of social media/networks by the university students: Use of social media for fraudulent activities, watching of pornographic content, cyberbullying, examination malpractices, hacking, prostitution, lack of concentration, sexual harassment, and projecting the image of universities in a bad light. This result agrees with Nwafor et al. (2022) who found that social media use tends to influence young people into substance abuse and other wrongdoings. Jatmiko et al. (2020) also reported cases of harassment and gender-based violence when using social media. Tayo et al. (2019) found the Internet addiction, distraction, antisocial behavior, and cyberbullying as some of the undesirable effects of social media use among undergraduate students. Similarly, Etodike et al. (2018) showed that there was a significant correlation between the use/abuse of social media networks and the associated vulnerability to sexual risk behavior of undergraduate students. Etodike et al. (2018) went further to suggest that stakeholders should regulate youths' positive use of social media networks while every effort must be made to discourage them from abusing it.

University Regulations on Students' Use of Social Media/Networks

This section tries to identify existing regulations in Nigerian universities which are aimed at controlling the abuses or wrong uses of social networks/media within their campuses. Findings from the interview with top administrative staff show that there is no policy or regulation on the ground concerning the use of social media in Nigerian universities. The findings revealed that some universities only used regulations in students' handbooks which were designed primarily for students' general code of conduct and behavior within the university. These students' handbooks do not contain specific regulations or policies on the use of social media within the universities, possibly because the evolution of social media within the university community in Nigeria is perceived as an innovation that may require time for them to develop. The existing regulations did not predict the influence of social media on the life of the students, the university community, and the image of the university. The various universities are only learning about the various impacts of students' use and abuse of social media and reacting to the observations to stem the negative impact and create conducive learning environments in Nigerian universities. Most of the sample universities are beginning to develop new students' regulations (through committees some of which have already been set up) that would capture the new issues related to abuses of social media by students. Some responses were:

> While there is no approved social media policy for now, efforts are being made to put one in place. The reason for these policies is to preserve the integrity of the universities so that people cannot just damage the image of the university for nothing (RESP2).

Another respondent stated:

> I will not say there is any specific regulation tied to social media, but we have several regulations that could guide students' conduct which also can be applied to social media abuse (RESP3).

RESP1 further raised the issue of giving students an orientation to report any case of abuse against them or some other persons:

> ... students have been informed during orientation to report anything they perceive as abusive use of social media against them or against some other person within the university community to the appropriate unit in the university which could be the students' affairs or the security unit as the case may be, and once this is done, the university has put machinery in place to try the abuser and counsel the abused (RESP1).

According to RESP4:

> The university has seen the need for students' regulation on use of social media. There is a committee that is currently working on the regulation now, but they have not submitted their report to the University Senate.

RESP5 however, did not even see the need for a regulatory policy on the use of social media within the university:

> While I am not aware of any regulatory policy on social media use in the university and I do not think the university should go on and check that because there are policies already established by the Nigerian Government on how you should use

social media and how not to use it. It clearly stated, if you're not sure about particular content, do not share, once you share it, it is your own… so, I do not think the university should have a special regulation on that (RESP 5).

In the opinion of RESP 5, since there is a national policy on the use of social media, the university can domesticate that.

The findings of this study have shown that there is no existing regulation or policy on the use of social media in Nigerian universities. It appears that social media/networks are so new in Nigerian higher education that existing students' regulations did not envisage their impacts; hence they failed to cover students' use or abuse of social media. This finding is at variance with what is obtainable in some developed nations of Europe where many universities have policies regulating students' use of social media/networks. For example, University of Huddersfield has a policy on social media to help students understand the reputational, legal, and ethical implications of social media usage and what happens when it is misused, intentionally and otherwise (University of Huddersfield, 2020). One of the guidelines relating to the use of social media in the university requires students not to declare, imply or indicate that their contents or views are representative of those of the university. Similarly, University of Houston (2022), the University of Liverpool (Carr, 2019) and others have policies regulating students' use of social media within the universities.

However, results from developing countries show no evidence of regulation or policies to regulate students' use of social media (Eke et al., 2014; Etodike et al., 2018; Nwafor et al., 2022; Tayo et al., 2019).

Suggested Policy Options That Universities Should Implement for Improved, More Purposeful, and Productive Use of Social Media/Networks by Students

Findings from the open-ended interview with students on suggested regulatory policies for their universities, for improved and more purposeful and productive use of social media/networks, are presented in this section. The word-cloud in **Figure 4** gives a general picture of the findings.

Figure 4. Word-cloud on suggested regulations or policies that universities should implement for improved, more purposeful, and productive use of social media/networks by students (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

A careful analysis of this code in the findings in **Figure 4** shows that most of the students suggested that the university management should install technology in all lectures venue that would limit students to calls and text messages only while blocking other social media or apps that cause distractions. However, others are of the view that implementing a regulatory policy on the use of social media in school will not be an easy task. For example, one participant has this to say "*Truly, it might not be easy to regulate students' activities on social media* …" Another student suggested thus "*time limit should be set as to when they should use the social networks*". These responses from undergraduate students do not seem feasible as they are not well thought out.

Responses from top university administrative staff also suggest that it will be difficult to implement regulations or policies that curb the abuses or wrong uses of social media within the university

But it is difficult to prevent people from abusing other people through social media because you do not know beforehand who the abuser are or who will be abused (RESP1).

Because of this difficulty, it was suggested that orientation should be given to students on the appropriate uses of social media/networks in school to enable them to know when they are in error and the possible consequences of such errors.

One important option is education and enlightenment of students because most of them do not even know they abuse social media usage. If they do not know the lines not to cross, people will cross them without knowing. So, the importance of orientation and educating students on responsible use of social media cannot be overemphasized. So, you teach them and orient them on the right uses of social media right from the beginning. So, they understand what constitutes an abuse of social media and the consequences of over-stepping their bounds in the use of social media (RESP 1).

Still on the importance of orientation, RESP 3 opined:

> We can create awareness and orientation by trying to change the mindset of the students. And then also do the needful because more often than not they react to societal demands, so there are certain things that could be changed and then could change their mindset (RESP3).

Another respondent suggested that some staff of the ICT and public relations unit should be constituted to carry out the task of monitoring what students post on social media, identifying the sources and ascertaining if such posts are injurious to the university.

> In implementing these policy options, for instance, there should be some personnel in both public relations outfit and the ICT that will monitor all the materials that are posted on social media, and to identify the sources. For instance, if you watch our portal on the website during admission, you will see some people who perpetrate cybercrime, trying to attach one thing or the other to our website, trying to woo intending candidates to call so and so line to gain admission, contact so and so person to get admission into medicine. So, the ICT will be responsible for monitoring and knocking out such individuals, such as not to scam intending candidates (RESP2).

Others have also called for sanctions against abusers of social media within the university

> A student caught should be sanctioned or expelled or surcharged even or sue to the court of law to serve as a deterrent to future abuses of social media (RESP4).

This also suggests setting disciplinary committees that would be saddled with the responsibility of trying and enforcing disciplinary actions on defaulters in the use of social media.

> Any user of social media that infringes on the right of another or institution must carry some level of penalty (RESP6).

Furthermore, RESP6 suggested that the policy must be firm and fair and should encourage students to use social media positively to enhance their academic outcomes:

> Our policies must be firm and fair, to ensure that users stick to the rules, first, to allow our university and students to compete favorably in the data market, the policies should allow positive interaction between students and the university (RESP6).

The interaction with students and top administrative staff on regulations or policies against the abuses of social networks/media in universities suggests that it will be very difficult to regulate students' activities on social media. However, the following was suggested to regulate students' use of social media/networks within the university: organizing orientation programs for students on right and wrong uses of social media within the university, the staff of the ICT and public relations unit should be empowered to monitor students' wrong uses of social media. This agrees with Tayo et al. (2019) who recommended that awareness programs related to social media usage should be arranged at the institutional, faculty and departmental levels, to enlighten students on the impact of the Internet addiction and prevent them from chances of falling prey to the harmful impacts of social media. Tayo et al. (2019) also suggested that parents should regularly monitor their children's activities on social media to curb their excesses. The Dos and Don'ts in the use of social media/networks by students should be an important content of students' regulation, especially as students use social media in perpetrating examination frauds of different types. Just as in University of Huddersfield such regulation or policy on students' use of social media would help students understand the reputational, legal, and ethical implications of abuse of social media and the consequences of such abuses, especially when it is intentional (University of Huddersfield, 2020).

Also, the formation of disciplinary committees for enforcing these regulations and policies was suggested. Abuse of social media within the university should be punished through expulsion, suspension or rustication, and surcharges, depending on the gravity of the abuse. For the policy to be effective, it must be firm and fair to ensure that users stick to the rules as clearly stated in the students' handbook of the university.

In a study, Eke et al. (2014) suggested that both the university authority and the Directorate of Information and Communications Technology should come up with regulatory policies that will guide all users of social media, including students in their universities. The regulatory policies could include enlightenment and sensitization activities through seminars and workshops. Enacting university regulations banning students' use of phones during lectures and examinations is worth trying. It will also be useful to create general courses for all students in each university on appropriate or inappropriate uses of social media so that students can be guided. Furthermore, existing related literature all points to a need for regulatory policy to guide students' negative use of social media and also protect them from abuses of social media. In sum, the policy options suggested in this study include:

1.	Education and awareness for all students, especially new intakes.
2.	Orientation programs on effective uses of social media for academic purposes and abuses that should be avoided.
3.	Establish youth-friendly centers in all universities to handle cases of abuse of social media by students.
4.	Universities to use billboards to enlighten students on areas of abuse of social media that must be avoided and the consequences of offences.
5.	All policies on the use of social media are to be included in students' handbooks and regulations so that all students must be AWARE of the policies.

6. Students must commit to abide by social media policies during matriculation ceremonies.

7. Students who infringe policies on the use of social media have to be sanctioned fairly and firmly in accordance with the level of infringement.

8. The policy must encourage the use of social media for academic purposes mainly.

CONCLUSION

Social media/networks have proven to be effective teaching and learning tools, however, these tools that are used purposefully for academic and other forms of healthy social interaction are being abused and wrongly or maliciously used. In this study, we have investigated the challenges students experience using social media, the undesirable effects of the use of social media on students, abuses, or wrong uses of social media among students in universities, the regulatory policies on students' use of social media/network and the suggested regulation or policies for purposeful and productive use of social media by students.

Findings from this study showed that the major challenges to students' use of social media include weak/poor network, lack of free Wi-Fi or no Wi-Fi, social media is high in data consumption, lack of adequate time to go through messages and social media is high in time consumption, lack of funds to buy data, distraction to academic work, unstable electricity to power smartphones and computers. Other challenges include blackmail and intimidation by someone on the platform, watching pornography, dating sites, and financial fraud in cyberspace among others. The undesirable effects of the use of social media on students in universities were identified to include sharing of information that is not meant for the public domain to the public, abuse of fellow students, waste of precious time meant for academic activities, causing disrepute to individuals and university as a whole, watching of pornographic materials which leads to other immoral activities in the university campus, among others.

The findings of this study also show that there are currently no regulatory policies on students' use of social media to guide students in their universities on social networks, however, some universities are in the process of developing. Also, universities are relying on existing students' codes of conduct in students' handbooks to enforce some regulations that are relevant to abuses of opportunities. This code of conduct is not updated to capture the current trend in some technologies, involving the abuses or wrong uses of social media/networks. Some suggested regulations or policies against students' wrong use or abuse of social media in universities include organizing orientation programs for students against the wrong use or abuse of social media, empowering staff of the ICT directorate and those of the public relations unit to monitor students' wrong uses of social media. Also, the formation of disciplinary committees to implement these regulations and policies was suggested. Furthermore, it was opined that abusers of social media within the university should be punished through expulsion, rustication, and surcharges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Considering the benefits of social media/networks in our universities, the universities should make it a priority to provide adequate bandwidth for stronger internet connectivity.

2. The university should liaise with various network providers on how they could provide affordable data to university campuses.

3. Each university should try and enact social media/network regulations and policies that are aimed at curbing the abuses of social media while encouraging academic use of social media.

4. The punishment for a wrong use or abuse of social media could include sanctions such as expulsion from school, rustication, surcharging and any other punishment that seems appropriate by the disciplinary committee.

5. Regular orientations should be organized to create awareness among students on what constitutes abuse or wrong use of social media, and the corresponding punishment for such offences.

Limitations of the Study

Only 498 students and seven top administrative staff of Nigerian universities participated in this study. Getting access to interviewing top administrative staff was a very difficult task as they are always very busy, from one meeting or assignment to another.

Suggestions for Further Study

1. A similar study should be carried out with a larger sample which is representative of the Nigerian university population.

2. An experimental study could be carried out to compare the academic achievement of students whose universities have social media regulations with those without social media regulations.

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