

Nigerian Pre-Service Teachers' Perceived Influence of Social Media Platforms On Undergraduates' Behavioural Patterns: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to examine the perceived influence of social media platforms on undergraduates' behavioural patterns through the perspective of preservice teachers. Questionnaires were administered to three hundred and twenty (320) undergraduate students from two state-owned universities in Nigeria. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for the statistical analysis. The findings showed that over 66% of the respondents surveyed said they used popular platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok daily. The result indicates that a significant portion of the undergraduate preservice teachers engages with social media multiple times daily. The study also found some differences in use between male and female students, and in the influence of age and academic levels on their perceived impacts of social media. A few suggestions were made in relation to the findings.

Keywords: Pre-service, teacher, Social Media Platform, Behavioural Pattern, Undergraduate, Nigeria

1. Background to the Study

Social media categorises the different Web-based platforms available for social interactions. These platforms included social networking which involves the use of Facebook, Twitter, etc., video-sharing, e.g. through YouTube or TikTok. Platforms like live streaming and messaging Apps like WhatsApp, Telegram are also included. The growth and development of these social media platforms have been exponential due to the advancement in digital and mobile technologies. The platforms have increased active participation of the young age in Internet use. Social media has become a tool of communication and information dissemination among business organisations and professional bodies.

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According to Otchie and Pedaste (2019), the social media has also been accepted as one of the tools of the Learning Management Systems.

They maintained that the social media is capable of eliminating those unforeseen barriers that can constrain the separation of learning from school and the home, as they make learning possible anywhere, anytime.

Social media users adopt different methods to reach their audience. The users establish social networks and use text messages, videos, live streaming, and photos. They also use social media to initiate discussion forums and share ideas and information. When effectively utilise, social media can promote connection and meaningful communication. Again, people become better informed about current happenings across the world. However, when users get so engrossed with social media, and this affects their behaviour patterns. They quickly develop an addiction, and such a habit can make them have less time to undertake beneficial ventures, thereby affecting their productivity.

Social media has become an essential feature of students' daily routines. Students use social media to communicate and connect with others who share abilities, identities, and interests. It provides an opportunity for creativity and access to critical information (Ezung & Baksh, 2023). Various scholars have investigated the psychosocial effects of social media on students and their influence on behaviours. Scholars like Heinonen, Bartels, and Kaushal (2022) examined the effect of social media on the social behaviour of youth in California and reported an influence on the social behaviour of youth. The platforms offer opportunities for the youth to develop Internet content, share information, gain economic empowerment, and imbibe the culture of others.

Other studies include Kuppuswamy and Narayan's (2019) influence of social media platforms on youth education and Rabia, Adnan, Misbah, Nawaz, Gillani and Arshad (2020) impact of media on students' academic achievement. Akanbi and Theophilus (2014) also investigated the effect of secondary school students' social media usage, self-image, and group behaviour on academic performance. In their study in Enugu State, Nwabueze et.al. (2014) reported that male students' social networking usage significantly differs from their female counterparts.

In another study of undergraduates from Kogi State University, Nigeria, Asemah, Okpanachi, and Edegoh (2013) found that most students have access to social media, and Facebook was the most popular platform. The researchers found high rates of social media use among participants. The study also showed that openness to online entertainment influences undergraduates' social behaviour.

Adegboyega (2020) reported that social media usage among students negatively influenced their social behaviours. The study also found that students' views of the influence of social media on behaviour did not differ across demographic variables of gender, level of education and age. Olayemi (2022), in a study in Lagos State, found that Facebook and WhatsApp were the most common social media accounts used by youth. Most respondents agreed that social media use, negatively influences university students' behaviours and lifestyles.

Undoubtedly, social media has gained wider acceptance and use as the most popular tool among students for information and communication, especially at the higher level. Researchers believe that social media influences the adjustment of conduct among youngsters. While several studies have explored

undergraduates' frequency of usage and attitude towards social media, there is that need for more research evidence regarding the perceived influence of social media on behavioural patterns. In this context, the behavioural patterns relate to undergraduate pre-service teachers' untoward behaviours arising from the use of social media over time. Such behaviours include keeping sleepless nights, less focus and attention on academic matters, cyberbullying fear of not being on the same pedestal with their colleagues who are using social media, and its resultant effects.

It is this gap in the literature and research that drives this study. Therefore, the study investigated the perceived influence of social media on behavioural patterns of undergraduate pre-service teachers using Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, and Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin.

Four research questions were raised and answered in this study. These are:

1. What social media platforms do Nigerian undergraduate pre-service teachers use?
2. Will there be a significant difference in Nigerian undergraduate pre-service teachers' perceived influences of social media platforms on behavioural patterns by gender?
3. Will there be any significant difference in Nigerian undergraduate pre-service teachers' perceived influences of social media platforms on behavioural patterns according to age group?
4. Will there be any significant difference in Nigerian undergraduate pre-service teachers' perceived influence of social media platforms on students' behavioural patterns according to academic level?

2. Methods

Three hundred and twenty (320) undergraduates from two universities, Lagos State University of Education and Olabisi Onabanjo University, were involved in this study. The researchers had an ample opportunity as lecturers in the two universities to reach the respondents as they are undergraduate pre-service teachers running different academic programmes within the universities. This was done through some research assistants. Thus, students from the Faculty of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, and two of the four Colleges in the Epe campus of Lagos State University of Education participated in the study.

The data for this study were collected with a self-administered structured close-ended questionnaire tagged: Preservice Teachers' Perception of Social Media Platforms' Influence on Undergraduates' Behaviour Patterns Questionnaire developed by the researchers. It has three sections- Section A which sought respondents' demographic information such as gender, age, academic level, and institution of the respondent, and was constructed in a close-ended manner whereby the respondents were asked to check their responses. Section B asked about the frequency of use of social media platforms on response scale of (everyday, once a week, once in 2 weeks and not use), and the usage among undergraduates on (Yes, I use it for, I sometime use it for and I do not use it for). Section C contains statements on the perception of social media on behavioural patterns measured by a 4-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Some of the items in this section are: 'social media have been introduced to pornographic web content', 'increase in display of nude selfies among undergraduate', 'social media leads to the coinage and use of different abbreviated words', 'it influences undergraduate sexual acts/style,

‘increases cyber bullying and cyber-crimes among undergraduate students’, ‘it enables us to keep up with trending issues.’”

Content validity of the research instrument was conducted to determine the level of coverage of the research focus by the instrument. It was subjected to a pre-test to check whether the items of the instrument were consistently interpreted. The instrument was then pilot tested with a small sample size of the same undergraduate pre-service teachers. A Cronbach Alpha test was conducted to determine the instrument’s reliability. The results revealed a 0.72 reliability value after the pre-test.

Data were collected through the use of field of assistants who administered the instruments on the sampled undergraduate pre-service teachers in the Faculty of Education of Olabisi Onabanjo University and College of Specialised and Professional Education during large class lecture hours. Permission was sought from each of the lecturers handling these classes. The respondents were given about one hour to respond to the instrument. Completed copies of the questionnaire were collected back by the field assistants and returned for collation and analysis. The data gathered were analysed with the aid of SPSS version 26 software through statistical tools like t-tests, and analysis of variance.

3. Results

Tables 1 to 5 present the findings of the study.

3.1 Respondents' Demographic data

Table 1: Demographic data of respondents

Sex	F (%)
Male	170 (53.1)
Female	150 (46.9)
Age	
Below 18years	56 (17.5)
18-25years	243 (75.9)
26-above	21 (6.6)
Level	
100	61 (19.1)
200	76 (23.7)
300	85 (26.5)
400	98 (30.6)
Faculty/College	
Education-OOU	160(50.0)
Education LASUED	160 (50.0)

Table I describes the demographic characteristics of the respondents. According to Table 1, 46.9% were female, and 53.1% were male. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25 years. 17.5% of the undergraduates were under 18 years, and 6.6% were 26 years old and above. This pattern suggests that participants in the study were young people. Nineteen per cent (19.1%) of the respondents were in the 100 level, 23.7% in 200 level, 26.5% and 30.6% of the respondents in 300 and 400 levels respectively.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of Social Media Platforms Used

	Everyday	Once a week	Once in 2 weeks	Not Use
Facebook	207 (58.0)	13 (4.8)	100 (37.2)	-
Instagram	217 (61.7)	11 (4.1)	92 (34.2)	-
Twitter	189 (51.3)	19 (7.1)	112 (41.6)	-
TikTok	214 (60.6)	33 (12.3)	73 (27.1)	-
WhatsApp	161 (40.9)	59 (21.9)	100 (37.2)	-
YouTube	241 (70.6)	54 (20.1)	25 (9.3)	-
Skype	2 (0.7)	10 (3.7)	92 (34.2)	216 (61.3)
Zoom	6 (2.2)	15 (5.6)	145 (53.9)	154 (38.3)
Telegram	18 (6.7)	38 (14.1)	98 (36.4)	166 (42.8)
LinkedIn	14 (5.2)	25 (9.3)	106 (39.4)	175 (46.1)

Table 2 indicates that 70.6% of the respondents used YouTube, 58.0% used Facebook daily, 4.8% and 37.2% used it once weekly and once in two weeks, respectively. Two-thirds (61.7%) of the participants used Instagram, Twitter by 51.3% and TikTok by 60.6%.

Table 3: Uses of Social Media among Nigerian Pre-service Teachers undergraduates

S/No.		Yes, I use it for	I Sometimes use it for	I do not use it for
1.	Stories, marketing and entertainment	296 (91.0)	19 (7.1)	5 (1.9)
2.	Video games and online video	305 (94.4)	15 (5.6)	0
3.	Facebook, posting, comments	308 (95.5)	12 (3.5)	0
4.	Make funny videos on TikTok	310 (96.2)	10 (3.8)	0
5.	Watch pornographic sites	314 (97.7)	6 (2.3)	0
6.	Use WhatsApp, FB, (formerly Twitter) and Instagram for adverts	306 (97.8)	14 (5.2)	0
7.	Texting and audio chatting with friends and family	313 (97.4)	7 (2.6)	0
8.	Research for educative purposes	309 (96.0)	11 (4.0)	0

Table 3 revealed that the majority, from 91.0% to 97.8% of the undergraduates, used social media platforms for different purposes. These activities include watching pornographic sites, which speaks volume of the level of moral decadence and why the incidence of rape and sexual immorality are shared among the youth. Likewise, the researchers noticed that strategic marketing and entertainment, video games and online games, Facebook posting, comments on TikTok for making funny videos, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), and research/education are the primary purposes of using social media among undergraduate pre-service teachers.

Table 4: Test of Significant Difference of Nigerian Pre-service Teachers Undergraduates' Perception of the Influence of Social Media on Behavioural Patterns by Gender and Institution (Male =170, Female = 150)

Sex	Mean	Std. D	t	Sig.
Male	82.017	11.109	-1.678	.095
Female	84.000	9.901		
Institution				
Olabisi Onabanjo University	83.687	11.03179	1.252	.211
Lagos State University of Education	82.206	10.10952		

Table 4 indicated that female participants differ significantly from male participants' perception of the influence of social media on behavioural patterns ($t(318) = .095$; $p > .05$), with the females having a higher mean score. This result implies that female undergraduates believed that social media influence their behaviour than their male counterparts. However, participants from the two institutions do not differ in their perceptions of the influence of social media on behavioural patterns.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance of Significant Difference of Perception of the Influence of social media on Behavioural Patterns by Age and Academic Level

Age	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	14.644	2	7.322	.065	.937
Within Groups	35761.452	317	112.812		
Total	35776.097	319			
Academic level					
Between Groups	1177.159	2	588.580	5.393	.005
Within Groups	34598.937	317	109.145		
Total	35776.097	319			

Results from Table 5 revealed that no significant difference existed in undergraduate preservice teachers' perception of the influence of social media on students' behavioural patterns across age groups. Be that as it may, a tremendous contrast was noticed across academic levels. The Post-hoc Scheffe Test was applied to investigate the source of the distinction, and the outcome showed that the 300 and 400 levels students differ in their perception of the influence on social media on behavioural patterns.

4. Discussion

This study examined two Nigerian universities undergraduate pre-service teachers' perception of social media influences on their behavioural patterns. The findings showed that more than two-thirds of the respondents who participated in the study frequently use Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube. YouTube was the most used (70.6%), followed by WhatsApp platform. This result agrees with Gurcan's (2015) study, which reported that students regularly use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok.

The implication of this finding is that undergraduate pre-service teachers' usage of these social media platforms is a demonstration of a conviction that just as these platforms are capable of influencing their behaviour patterns, they can also be seen as useful tools for promoting digital learning among students. The popularity of these social media can equally be taken as one major factor that can be explored for teaching and learning among undergraduate pre-service teachers. Along these lines, Vaid and Harari (2021) reported that web-platform like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp are mostly and well-known and frequently patronised among youngsters. The results showed the degree of integration of the various social media platforms in the daily lives of the youth. It is also an evidence of the rate at which youth are following digital technology trends worldwide.

The finding was also noticed to be consistent with the results of Pioniri (2021), who in a study conducted in Serbia, reported that Facebook and Instagram are the most trending social media used by 84 % and 88 % of people who are between 18 and 24 years. Pioniri's finding is a further confirmation of the popularity of these two social media platforms, especially among the youth. This is probably because these two platforms have been available over a period long before the introduction of other platforms like Snapchat, WhatsApp and TikTok. Furthermore, the cost implication of using a platform like YouTube, in terms of high data subscription rates might be responsible for the limited usage of the social media platform.

With a concentration on social media use, it is not impossible to expect that the number of hours spent on the platforms could imply that the students will likely be spending fewer hours on their studies. Sometimes, this habit can affect their sleeping pattern if they spend more time on social media platforms at bedtime. Such habit can eventually adversely affect their health conditions and academic performance.

On what undergraduates do with, and on social media, it was found that the various platforms were always used for stories, marketing, and entertainment, playing of online games, posting/comments. They were also found to use WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for posting comments/likes, making funny videos, placement of brand advertisements, texting/audio chatting with friends and family, and research for educational materials. The findings align with a report by Yahaya and Ayodeji (2019), which stated that 75% of female students use social media many times a day compared to their male counterparts (64%). 83% of female students and 81% of male students use Facebook once a week.

There are some justifications for why female undergraduate students utilise social media more often than their male counterparts. For instance, females will always want to use social media to show off and share the latest photos, video recordings, and looks of themselves with their friends for compliments, appreciation, and possible emulation. The females, especially the young ones, also use social media for unwinding and relaxation most of the time.

However, they differ in the use of other platforms like Twitter and Reddit. Females depend on applications (52%) to get to social media, while males prefer the use of their Personal Computers (PC) and Internet browsers (33%). The result agrees with Akanbi et al.'s (2022) study, which showed that most youths use WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as tools for adverts, text and audio chats with friends and family, watching videos, films, and pornography movies. Other studies (Akoja & Nweneazizi, 2020; Martin, 2018) also reported similar findings that are consistent with the findings of this study. The studies of Akoja & Nweneazizi (2020) and Martin (2018) found that young people use social media primarily for entertainment. Females tend to follow lifestyle relationship influencers.

Again, one of the findings which revealed that young people use social media for promoting entertainment could also be an avenue for introducing some exciting instructional strategies like "Enter-Educate", which is teaching and learning through entertainment in the lecture rooms. This will make learning more meaningful, permanent, and positively influence their behavioural patterns.

This study's findings revealed that male students significantly differ from their female counterparts in their perception of the influence of social media on behaviour. The implication of these findings is that the females are more influenced by the social media than the males. Alnjadat, Hmaid, Samha, Kilani &

Hasswan (2019), in one of their studies, confirmed that female students are more addicted to and influenced by social media than male students. This is true because studies have shown that females spend more time online than their male colleagues.

Our findings however, showed no difference in preservice teachers' perception of social media influence on behaviour according to age groups. This implies that the perceptions of undergraduate pre-service teachers on the influence of social media on students' behaviour patterns across all ages are the same. This finding might be attributed to access to mobile phones. The finding agrees with Adegboyega (2020) who reported a no significant difference in the effect of social media usage on students' behaviour patterns.

Furthermore, we found no significant difference in the respondents' perceptions of the effect of undergraduate preservice teachers' academic level and the influence of social media use on behaviour patterns. This finding is, however, contrary to Akanbi et al.'s study (2022), which reported a significant relationship between preservice teacher undergraduates' academic level and their perception of social media's influence on behaviour patterns.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Thus far, social media has become an integral and essential part of undergraduate life. Undergraduate pre-service teachers in Nigeria were found to commonly use Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and other social networking platforms as evident in one of the findings (over 66% confirmed their use of different social media platforms). Social media is quickly changing the correspondence setting of the present social world. This study concludes that younger people will articulate their thoughts most via virtual channels or media. Their familiarity with web-based entertainment organisations has made such organisations to take advantage of this pattern of development for their potential benefits.

As innovation continues to propel, web-based entertainment has become many individuals' daily schedules. Results obtained and presented in Table 3 on the use of social media confirm this position. Over 90% of the respondents confirmed their usage of social media marketing, posting comments, research for educational purposes, making funny videos on TikTok, texting and audio chatting with friends and family. Individuals are becoming dependent on this innovation consistently. Web-based social platforms have expanded the quality and pace of coordinated effort for undergraduate pre-service teachers. Every day, youths are in touch with these media, mindless of some of its demerits.

The effect of gender on the behavioural patterns of the respondents revealed that female undergraduate preservice teachers believe that social media influence their behaviours more than their male counterparts. No significant difference was found in their perception of the influence of social media on their behavioural patterns across age groups. However, a contrasting finding was noticed across their academic levels, with very significant distinction found between the 300 and 400 level respondents as revealed by the Post-hoc Scheffe test conducted.

Considering the foregoing, it is evident that social media significantly impacted the respondents' social differences. The adolescents, especially the females, for the most part, utilise social media to speak with their loved ones. Social media is essential for them, probably because, having been brought into the world in this period of rising innovation, many of them feel like they cannot do without it. They rely upon it for

different activities like examination, contact with lifelong companions, and getting to know what is happening in their circles, broadly or universally. Some of them tend to be more aggressive in search of material benefits because of the decadent ways of life they see via social media; and this leads them to have the make-easy-money disorder.

Social media platforms have various merits but are also known for their demerits, which affect people negatively. These platforms can mishandle a society by creating avenues for attacking individuals' security and privacy. A few of these platforms can also develop in the students the tendency to become rough and lead them to want to misbehave. While social media permits us to associate every day, abuse by undergraduate pre-service teachers can adversely influence their academics and prosperity. With steady notices and reviving, it is not tricky to thoughtlessly go through hours online instead of zeroing in on academic tasks.

Concentrating on social media and perusing a variety of stories, pictures and videos is connected to more unfortunate mental states in the youth. Looking at arranged features of others' lives can create jealousy, tension, and sadness. In the meantime, the flood of feelings, pictures and recordings can cause the desire for high excitement over valuable exercises. Addiction to social media stresses ideal minutes over commonplace reality, causing the viewers some confidence issues. Steady photograph altering and making the perfect story for the most significant endorsement takes over students' academic work, and this has serious implications for performance in the university.

It is essential to reiterate that utilising social media is valuable, but it should be done in moderation to avoid becoming over-dependent on them. Consequently, undergraduate students must be wary of how much the Web can impact them. They should view the Web as an emotionally supportive network for cooperation rather than a fundamental information source. A balance must be maintained between social media usage and student academic responsibilities.

The study, therefore, recommends educating and encouraging university undergraduates to use social media positively while avoiding the adverse effects. Specifically, undergraduate students must learn the tricks of avoiding hate speeches and broadcasting information whose source(s) are not easily verifiable or cannot be authenticated. The skill of screening available information from any social media platform must be acquired. It should be used to determine the worth of such information before escalating it where necessary.

Furthermore, University authorities must incorporate into their orientation programmes and counselling services for students the importance of time management and self-discipline regarding their interaction with social media platforms. Such programmes and services should focus on educating the students on strategies for cultivating healthy social media habits that will encourage more time for their academic work and fewer hours on social media platforms.

6. Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest for this paper.

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