

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS TO SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

Fidelis Chidalu AKUBUEZE

EDU2102332

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

NOVEMBER, 2025

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS TO SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

Fidelis Chidalu AKUBUEZE

EDU2102332

**A PROJECT WRITTEN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
MANAGEMENT, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, AND SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF THE BACHELOR
OF SCIENCE (B.Sc. Ed) IN EDUCATION ECONOMICS**

NOVEMBER, 2025

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this work was carried out by Fidelis AKUBUEZE of the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, and approved of it as adequate in scope and quality for the award of Bachelor Degree (B.Sc. Ed) in Education Economics

PHILIP IGENEGBAI, PhD
(Project Supervisor)

DATE

DR. NKECHI OBIWELUOZOR
(Project Coordinator)

DATE

PROF. W.A. IGUODALA
(Head of Department)

DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dad Mr. Akubueze Sylvanus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to express his profound gratitude to God Almighty for His guidance and all round wisdom throughout the course of this Project work. The researcher also want to extend his sincere gratitude to his dad Mr. Akubueze Sylvanus for his encouragement, invaluable support and motivation throughout the entire process.

Also, the researcher want to express his gratitude to his family and friends including Eberechukwu, Don Emmanuel, whose love and support kept him motivated throughout the process. Their encouragement and patience were greatly appreciated.

The researcher is extremely grateful for the direction provided throughout this project by his supervisor, Dr. Philip Igenegbai whose resources, expertise, and guidance were invaluable in helping him bring this project to fruition.

Finally, the researcher would also like to thank Evangelist Isaiah who provided spiritual guidance during the development of this project. His support and collaboration were greatly appreciated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
TITLE	ii
CERTIFICATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Research Questions	7
Purpose of the Study	8
Significance of the Study	8
Scope of the Study	9
Operational Definition of Terms	12
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
Theoretical Framework	14
Concept of Social Networking Sites	18
Influence of Gender on the Level of Exposure of Secondary School Students	

to Social Networking Sites	23
Influence of Students' Level of Study to Social Networking Sites	27
Influence of School Type to Social Networking Sites	30
Summary of Literature Reviewed	45
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Research Design	46
Population of the Study	46
Sample and Sampling Technique	46
Research Instrument	47
Validity of the Instrument	48
Reliability of the Instrument	48
Method of Data Collection	48
Method of Data Analysis	48
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	
Data Presentation	49
Analysis of Research Questions	49
Discussion of Findings	57
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary	62
Conclusion	63
Recommendations	64
References	66
Appendix	72

ABSTRACT

The study was based on “An Analysis of the Level of Exposure of Secondary School Students to Social Networking Sites in Ovia North East LGA of Edo State”. In order to achieve the intended objectives of the study, five research questions were raised and answered using the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of the 80 senior secondary school students in public and private schools in Ovia North East L.G.A. of Edo State. A well-structured questionnaire was the instrument used to elicit information for the study. The data collected were analysed into tables using simple percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions as well as interpretation of the information gathered.

The findings of the study revealed that WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter/X are the predominant social networking sites among secondary school students, while Instagram was the least used. That students are highly exposed to social networking sites, also, findings revealed that both male and female students showed high exposure to social networking sites amongst others.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that educators and school administrators should integrate digital literacy and responsible social media use into the school curriculum, that parents should actively monitor and guide their children’s social media use, that policymakers and education authorities should design policies that regulate the use of mobile devices during school hours; furthermore, that school counsellors and mental health professionals should provide sensitization programs and counselling to address issues such as cyberbullying, online peer pressure etc. and finally, it was

recommended that special attention should be paid to demographic differences revealed in this study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The rapid advancement of digital technology in the 21st century has transformed how individuals interact, communicate, and access information, particularly through the proliferation of social networking sites (SNSs). These platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), Snapchat, TikTok, and WhatsApp, have become deeply embedded in the daily routines of adolescents across the globe. For secondary school students, who are in a critical developmental phase marked by the search for identity, autonomy, and social belonging, social networking sites offer alluring avenues for expression and connection. Scholars such as Bulus, (2015) argue that SNSs have redefined the nature of social relationships by enabling users to construct public or semi-public profiles, interact with a list of connected users, and view and traverse the connections of others within the system. These capabilities have made social media particularly appealing to adolescents, who naturally seek validation, companionship, and belonging.

The use of social networking sites by secondary school students in both developed and developing countries has grown exponentially. In Nigeria, the increased accessibility of smartphones, internet data, and digital devices has made social networking a regular aspect of youth culture. According to Internet World Stats (2022), Nigeria has over 100 million active internet users, many of whom are young people aged between 10 and 24. With this surge in internet penetration, secondary school students are becoming increasingly exposed to online platforms, often without sufficient digital literacy or parental guidance. As Okon and Bassey (2021) note, this exposure occurs both within and outside the classroom and extends beyond mere communication to include entertainment, academic research, social learning, and identity exploration.

However, the level of exposure of these students to SNSs is influenced by various factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic background, parental monitoring, peer influence, and the availability of internet-enabled devices. Researchers like Oboh and Okocha (2020) have found that urban students typically report higher levels of SNS engagement due to better access to digital infrastructure and more liberal parental attitudes toward technology use. Conversely, rural students often face limitations in connectivity and device ownership, which moderates their exposure but does not entirely eliminate it, especially with the growing popularity of low-cost smartphones and increased mobile network coverage.

The pervasive nature of social networking among adolescents raises important questions about the implications of this exposure on their academic performance, social behavior, and psychological well-being. While SNSs can serve as platforms for academic collaboration, self-expression, and information exchange, they also pose risks such as distraction, cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, and addictive behaviors (Ijeh, Umukoro, & Amune, 2015). Secondary school students are particularly vulnerable to these risks because they are still developing critical thinking and emotional regulation skills. A study by Adebayo and Omisore (2019) observed that many students spend significant hours browsing social media, often at the expense of study time, physical activity, and face-to-face interactions. This time displacement effect may hinder academic achievement and foster antisocial behaviors if not properly managed.

Moreover, the blurred line between virtual and real-life interactions can lead to a distorted sense of reality. Adolescents may become preoccupied with online personas, seeking validation through likes and shares, and comparing themselves to curated images of others. This can trigger feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, or depression, especially among impressionable students who lack the emotional maturity to critically interpret the content they consume. Studies by Danladi, (2015) highlight that while SNSs can enhance existing friendships and offer emotional support, they can also expose users to peer pressure, cyber harassment, and risky online behavior. This duality suggests that the level

and nature of exposure matter significantly in determining whether SNS use is beneficial or harmful.

The Nigerian educational system currently faces the challenge of balancing the educational benefits of technology with its potential threats. Social networking sites, if properly integrated into the curriculum, could support interactive learning, group discussions, and resource sharing among students. Yet, many schools lack clear policies or structured programs that guide students on responsible social media use. As observed by Obar and Wildman (2015), the digital age demands that students not only be users of technology but also develop competencies in digital citizenship. The absence of formal instruction in this area often leaves students to learn through trial and error, relying on peers or popular culture for cues, which may not always promote responsible behavior.

Parental involvement and school regulations also play crucial roles in shaping students' experiences with SNSs. Parents who monitor their children's online activities and engage in open discussions about internet safety are more likely to raise digitally literate and responsible users (Mugahed , & Othman 2017). However, many parents, especially in semi-urban and rural communities in Nigeria, lack the technical know-how or time to effectively supervise their children's digital engagements. Similarly, some schools impose blanket bans on the use of smartphones and social media without offering alternative platforms for digital learning, which can result in clandestine use and further reduce adult oversight.

Given these complexities, it becomes imperative to analyze not just whether secondary school students are exposed to SNSs, but the degree, purpose, frequency, and context of their engagement. Understanding these patterns is essential for policymakers, educators, and parents to develop informed strategies that promote the positive use of social networking sites while mitigating potential harms. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on digital youth culture in Nigeria by critically analyzing the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites. It will explore demographic variations, behavioral tendencies, and the factors that shape students' interactions with social media platforms.

Statement of the Problem

In today's digital era, social networking sites (SNSs) have become an integral part of adolescent life, influencing how students communicate, socialize, and even learn. Platforms like WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (now X) are no longer just tools for entertainment; they have evolved into powerful spaces where secondary school students form identities, express opinions, and connect with both local and global communities. However, despite their benefits, the growing level of exposure to these platforms has raised significant concerns about their potential impact on students' academic performance, behavior, mental well-being, and overall development.

There is increasing evidence that many secondary school students spend excessive time on social networking sites, often during school hours or late into the night, leading to distractions from academic work and a decline in study time. This is further complicated by the fact that students, especially those in junior and senior secondary levels, are still in a formative stage of cognitive and emotional development. As such, they may lack the self-regulation necessary to balance online engagement with their academic responsibilities. Observations and anecdotal reports from teachers, parents, and school administrators suggest that students are becoming more dependent on social media interactions for validation and social belonging, sometimes at the expense of their academic growth and interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, the level of exposure varies widely based on factors such as access to smartphones, data availability, peer influence, and parental control. In urban areas where internet connectivity and digital device ownership are high, students may experience continuous exposure to SNSs, while in rural areas, though access may be lower, it is steadily increasing with the proliferation of affordable mobile technology. Despite these realities, many schools and households have not developed structured mechanisms for guiding responsible social media use. Consequently, many students engage with these platforms without adequate supervision or digital literacy, exposing them to risks such as cyberbullying, online fraud, exposure to explicit content, and unhealthy comparison that may trigger anxiety or low self-esteem.

The lack of adequate research into how exposed secondary school students are to these platforms—and the specific ways this exposure affects them—creates a knowledge gap that hinders the development of evidence-based interventions. While some studies have examined the general influence of technology on youth, few have focused on the specific patterns and purposes of SNS usage among secondary school students in the Nigerian context. This has made it difficult for educators, parents, and policymakers to develop realistic and context-specific policies that can both harness the benefits of social media and mitigate its dangers.

Therefore, this study seeks to critically analyze the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites and identify the variables that influence this exposure.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What is the predominant social networking sites among secondary school students in Ovia North East LGA?
2. What is the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking site in Ovia North East LGA?
3. What is the level of exposure of male and female secondary school students to social networking site in Ovia North East LGA?

4. What is the level of exposure of junior and senior secondary school students to social networking site in Ovia North East LGA?
5. What is the level of exposure of public and private secondary school students to social networking site in Ovia North East LGA?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Examine the predominate social networking sites among secondary school students in Ovia North East LGA
2. Find out the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking site in Ovia North East LGA
3. Find out the level of exposure of male and female secondary school students to social networking site in Ovia North East LGA
4. Find out the level of exposure of junior and senior secondary school students to social networking site in Ovia North East LGA
5. Find out the level of exposure of public and private secondary school students to social networking site in Ovia North East LGA

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is carried out to analyze the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites. It is delimited to students from selected public and private secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to offer deep insights and practical value to the various stakeholders connected to the education and development of secondary school students. Understanding the level of exposure of these students to social networking sites is essential, not just for academic purposes, but also for shaping healthier social behaviors, promoting balanced digital use, and protecting the psychological well-being of adolescents in a rapidly changing digital environment.

For educators and school administrators, this study provides a foundation for understanding how social networking usage intersects with classroom learning, student concentration, and academic performance. Teachers frequently observe changes in student behavior, including declining attention spans, reduced participation, and even social withdrawal, which may be linked to time spent on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. The findings from this research can guide schools in developing policies that strike a balance between allowing students to benefit from digital

technologies and minimizing the distractions and risks associated with unsupervised or excessive use. With such knowledge, schools can also incorporate digital literacy into their curricula, teaching students how to engage responsibly with social media, recognize online dangers, and manage their time effectively.

Parents and guardians also stand to benefit greatly from this study. Many parents are concerned about their children's screen time, the type of content they consume, and the nature of interactions they have online, yet they often feel ill-equipped to monitor or guide their children's digital habits. This study can illuminate the extent of social media exposure among secondary school students and provide evidence-based recommendations on how parents can implement more effective monitoring strategies, initiate meaningful conversations about social media use, and set healthy boundaries without being overly restrictive or confrontational. Empowering parents with this kind of knowledge is crucial in reinforcing positive habits at home and complementing the efforts made by educators.

Policy makers and education authorities, such as the Ministry of Education or local education boards, can use the insights from this research to craft policies that address both the benefits and challenges of social networking among students. These might include regulations on mobile phone use during school hours, guidelines for digital safety education, and initiatives that promote healthy online behaviors among youth. By understanding the specific patterns and impact of social networking site exposure in the

secondary school context, policy makers can avoid one-size-fits-all approaches and instead design interventions that are context-sensitive, realistic, and culturally appropriate.

Mental health professionals and school counsellors also play a key role in shaping adolescent development and will find the findings of this study valuable in their interventions. With exposure to social networking sites sometimes linked to cyberbullying, online peer pressure, and unrealistic self-comparisons, many students face mental and emotional strain that is not always visible to adults. This study can help mental health workers identify warning signs, understand common behavioral shifts tied to social media overuse, and develop targeted counselling approaches that address both the causes and consequences of unhealthy digital habits.

Researchers and academics interested in adolescent development, media studies, or educational psychology may also find this study significant as it adds to the body of knowledge on how young people engage with emerging technologies. It provides a data-driven perspective on a subject that continues to evolve rapidly and sets the groundwork for further studies that could explore the long-term implications of digital engagement or investigate possible differences based on age, gender, location, or socioeconomic status.

Most importantly, the students themselves are central to the significance of this study.

While many young people see social networking as a normal and often necessary part of their lives, they may not fully understand the consequences of their digital choices. By

uncovering patterns of exposure and the effects tied to it, this study can serve as a tool for self-awareness and education, helping students make more informed decisions, use social media in more constructive ways, and reduce the risks associated with overexposure.

In essence, this study is not merely an academic exercise—it is a timely investigation into one of the most pressing realities of contemporary adolescence. It recognizes the importance of social networking sites in the lives of students while also acknowledging the need for guidance, regulation, and education to ensure that such platforms are used in ways that support rather than undermine their development.

By situating the research within the broader socio-cultural and technological landscape, this study acknowledges that social networking is not merely a leisure activity but a complex phenomenon with deep implications for education, development, and socialization among adolescents. As digital natives continue to shape and be shaped by the technologies they interact with, understanding their exposure to SNSs becomes not only relevant but urgent for those invested in the well-being and future of young learners. The findings of this study will hopefully offer insights that can inform educational policies, parental guidance frameworks, and student support systems in Nigeria and similar contexts.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for better understanding of the study:

Level of Exposure: The extent to which students have access to and interact with social networking sites.

Secondary School Students: Individuals enrolled in formal education at the junior and senior secondary school levels. In this study, they represent the adolescent population typically between the ages of 11 and 18.

Junior Secondary Students: Students in the first three years of secondary school (JS1 to JS3).

Senior Secondary Students: Students in Senior Secondary School 1 to 3 (SS1–SS3), usually aged between 15 and 18, who are preparing for final school-leaving examinations.

Public School: A school owned, funded, and managed by the government.

Private School: A school owned and managed by individuals or organizations, often funded through tuition and private sources.

Social Networking Sites (SNSs): Refer to online platforms or applications that enable users to create profiles, share content, and engage in social interaction with others. Examples include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (X), Snapchat etc.

Analysis: Refers to the systematic examination and interpretation of data collected on students' usage of social networking sites.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Relevant and related literature was reviewed in the chapter and are presented under the following sub-headings:

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Social Networking Sites
- Influence of Gender on the Level of Exposure of Secondary School Students to Social Networking Sites
- Influence of Students' Level of Study to Social Networking Sites
- Influence of School Type to Social Networking Sites
- Summary of Literature Reviewed

Theoretical Framework

A suitable theoretical framework for the project topic "*An Analysis of the Level of Exposure of Secondary School Students to Social Networking Sites*" is the **Uses and Gratifications Theory**. The Uses and Gratification Theory is defined as a

communication theory that focuses on how individuals actively choose and use media to satisfy specific needs and desires. In the context of secondary school students' exposure to social networking sites, this theory allows for an exploration of the motivations behind students' engagement with these platforms and the implications of such engagement.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory emerged in the 1940s and 1950s through the work of communication scholars like Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch. It suggests that audiences are not passive consumers of media but are instead active agents who select media sources based on the gratifications they seek. This approach marks a shift from earlier models that viewed media as having uniform effects on passive audiences. Instead, the theory emphasizes individual differences in media use, a point that is critical in analyzing the varying levels of exposure among secondary school students to social networking platforms (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973).

Applying this theory to secondary school students helps to uncover the specific purposes students have for using social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat. For example, some students may use these platforms to maintain friendships, while others may use them for entertainment, academic collaboration, or self-expression. These different uses reflect different gratifications sought, which directly influences the level of exposure. A student who uses Instagram to keep up with fashion trends may spend more time on the platform than a peer who only logs in to check group

assignment updates. Hence, the theory helps to explain not just whether students are exposed to social media but why their exposure occurs and varies.

This perspective is supported by recent studies that affirm the relevance of Uses and Gratifications Theory in examining youth media consumption. For instance, Urista, Dong, and Day (2019) found that young people commonly use social media for social interaction, entertainment, and information seeking, all of which fall under gratifications categories outlined by the theory. Their study demonstrated that the nature of the content consumed and the intensity of use is deeply tied to individual motivations, which in turn shapes their media habits and exposure levels.

Moreover, the theory also assists in understanding the implications of prolonged exposure, especially among adolescents whose cognitive and emotional development is still ongoing. Research by Quan-Haase and Young (2020) indicated that youth who use social networking sites primarily for emotional support and social validation tend to be more engaged and exposed to these platforms, sometimes at the cost of face-to-face communication and real-life social skills. This insight further aligns with the theoretical assumption that the type of gratification sought can significantly shape exposure patterns.

Another strength of this theoretical framework is its capacity to incorporate the dynamic and participatory nature of social networking sites. Unlike traditional media, social media allow users to generate content, interact in real-time, and personalize their media

experience. This aspect deepens exposure as students not only consume but also contribute to the content flow, increasing the time spent and engagement levels. Uses and Gratifications Theory accounts for this user-centered dynamic by emphasizing agency, interactivity, and goal-directed behavior, all of which are characteristic of social networking use among secondary school students.

In the Nigerian context, where mobile phone penetration and internet accessibility are increasing among adolescents, the theory remains particularly applicable. Olatunde and Adebayo (2019) examined Nigerian secondary school students' use of social media and reported that students frequently accessed platforms during school hours, after school, and late at night, largely driven by the desire for peer connection and entertainment. Their findings reinforce the idea that gratifications sought—such as belongingness, recognition, and fun—serve as key drivers of exposure, confirming the suitability of this theoretical lens.

Furthermore, the theory also allows researchers to consider demographic factors such as age, gender, school type (public or private), and educational level (junior or senior secondary) in determining exposure levels. Different student groups may have varied gratifications that influence how they use social networking sites. For example, senior secondary students preparing for national exams might use platforms more for academic group discussions, while junior students may engage more in recreational or social uses.

The theory's flexibility permits this kind of segmentation, providing a more nuanced analysis of media exposure.

In sum, the Uses and Gratifications Theory offers a robust framework for this study as it allows for the identification and interpretation of students' motivations for using social networking sites, the intensity of their usage, and the consequences of such exposure. It bridges the psychological, social, and technological dimensions of media use, which are all relevant in understanding how secondary school students interact with digital platforms. By grounding the study in this theory, the research gains the capacity to move beyond surface-level statistics into deeper explanations of behavior, helping educators, parents, and policymakers better understand the driving forces behind students' online engagement and exposure.

Concept of Social Networking Sites

The concept of social networking sites has become increasingly central to modern communication, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Social networking sites, often abbreviated as SNSs, refer to online platforms that allow individuals to create personal profiles, build social relationships, and interact with others through the internet. These platforms are designed to facilitate the sharing of information, ideas, interests, and media such as pictures and videos, often in real time and with a global reach. Among secondary school students, the use of social networking sites has become a daily routine,

influencing not only how they connect socially but also how they perceive themselves and others.

The emergence of social networking sites began in the early 2000s with platforms like Friendster, MySpace, and later, Facebook. These platforms introduced the concept of an online social space where users could maintain connections with friends, family members, and acquaintances. Over time, social networking evolved from static profiles to highly interactive environments that support multimedia communication, live updates, and algorithm-driven content feeds. According to Boyd and Ellison (2017), social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

What distinguishes social networking sites from other types of websites is their focus on user-generated content and relational interactivity. On these platforms, the content is not created by professional producers but by the users themselves. This participatory culture has led to a redefinition of media consumption, where users are not just receivers of content but active participants in its production and dissemination. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, Snapchat, Twitter (now X), and others have restructured the dynamics of social interaction, especially among teenagers.

These platforms allow for instant messaging, group discussions, live streaming, and sharing of personal milestones, creating a sense of constant connection.

Among secondary school students, social networking sites serve multiple functions beyond mere communication. They are often used for self-expression, identity formation, and social validation. Students share personal photos, comment on each other's updates, follow trends, and engage in online challenges that reflect their personalities and social affiliations. Valkenburg and Peter (2016) noted that adolescents use SNSs to experiment with their identities, receive feedback from peers, and maintain existing relationships. This usage can have both positive and negative consequences depending on the nature of the interactions and the amount of time spent online.

On the positive side, social networking sites can enhance social capital by helping students maintain and strengthen bonds with friends, collaborate on academic projects, and even explore educational content. Research conducted by Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2019) showed that high school students often use Facebook to keep in touch with peers and to organize school-related events. The communicative features of social networking sites can also help shy or introverted students express themselves more comfortably than in face-to-face interactions. This social benefit is especially important in adolescence, a period when peer relationships are critical to psychological development.

However, the widespread use of these sites also raises concerns regarding excessive exposure, cyberbullying, distraction, and privacy issues. Secondary school students, due to their developmental stage, may not always exercise discretion in their online behaviors, which can lead to harmful consequences. Studies have shown that prolonged use of SNSs can affect academic performance, particularly when it becomes a source of distraction during study time or even in classrooms (Junco, 2012). Moreover, adolescents may develop an unhealthy dependence on likes, comments, and shares as indicators of social worth, which can influence their self-esteem and emotional well-being. Andreassen et al. (2018) described this pattern as social networking addiction, a condition characterized by excessive concern about SNSs, driven by a strong motivation to log on or use them, and devoting so much time and effort that it impairs other important life areas.

The visual and algorithm-driven nature of social networking sites also introduces the concept of digital impression management, where users curate their online personas to project a particular image. This often results in unrealistic comparisons and the pressure to conform to idealized standards of beauty, lifestyle, or popularity. Secondary school students are particularly vulnerable to these effects due to their ongoing cognitive and emotional development. Livingstone and Brake (2020) observed that while SNSs offer spaces for creative expression and exploration, they also expose young people to complex social pressures and the potential for negative feedback or cyber harassment.

In the Nigerian context, the growth of mobile technology and increased internet penetration have made social networking sites more accessible than ever before. The Nigerian Communications Commission (2023) reported that over 90 million Nigerians have access to the internet, with a significant percentage being youths and teenagers. Secondary school students often access these platforms through mobile phones, using inexpensive data plans or Wi-Fi in schools and homes. This easy access has led to widespread adoption of platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, which are used for both social and academic purposes. However, the unregulated use of these platforms has also led to distractions in classrooms, increased exposure to inappropriate content, and occasional cases of online fraud and exploitation among students.

Despite these challenges, social networking sites are here to stay, and their role in the lives of secondary school students will likely continue to grow. As such, understanding the concept of SNSs requires not only acknowledging their technological features but also the social, psychological, and developmental implications for users, particularly adolescents. Educators, parents, and policymakers must therefore balance the potential benefits of these platforms with the risks they pose, ensuring that students are equipped with the digital literacy skills needed to navigate them responsibly.

In conclusion, social networking sites are multifaceted platforms that facilitate interaction, self-expression, and social engagement among users, especially young people. For secondary school students, these platforms represent a space for socialization, academic

engagement, and identity construction. However, the level of exposure and the manner in which these platforms are used can significantly impact students' academic, psychological, and social development. Understanding this concept within the framework of adolescent behavior and digital culture provides the necessary context for analyzing students' exposure to social networking sites.

Influence of Gender on the Level of Exposure of Secondary School Students to Social Networking Sites

The influence of gender on the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites (SNS) is a critical area of inquiry that helps illuminate differences in how male and female students interact with digital platforms, the motivations behind their usage, and the implications for their social and academic lives. Gender as a social construct often shapes behavior, access, and experiences with technology, including social media, and understanding these differences can inform educational practices, digital literacy initiatives, and policymaking aimed at maximizing positive outcomes and minimizing risks.

Research consistently shows that gender influences the extent to which secondary school students engage with social networking sites. Several studies indicate that female students tend to have a higher level of exposure to and more intensive use of SNS compared to

their male peers. This is often attributed to females' greater emphasis on social communication, relationship maintenance, and self-expression through digital means. Valkenburg and Peter (2015), in their study on adolescent social media use, found that girls are more likely to use SNS for interpersonal purposes such as staying connected with friends, sharing personal updates, and emotional expression, which naturally leads to higher exposure levels. Similarly, Lenhart et al. (2015) reported that female adolescents not only spend more time on social media but also engage more in activities like photo sharing and messaging, which reinforce social bonds.

In contrast, male students typically show different patterns of SNS engagement, often using these platforms for entertainment, information seeking, and gaming-related interactions rather than purely social connectivity. This results in different types of exposure and usage intensity. A study by Lee and Chae (2017) suggested that male adolescents are less involved in the social networking aspects and more likely to use platforms for consuming content or competitive activities. The variation in usage types correlates with differences in time spent on SNS, with females often demonstrating longer durations and more frequent check-ins.

The role of gender in shaping exposure to SNS also interacts with cultural and societal norms. In many societies, female students are encouraged or socially conditioned to prioritize social relationships and communication, making SNS a natural extension of these behaviors. In contrast, male students might be socialized towards more instrumental

and less emotionally expressive modes of interaction, which affects how they use and are exposed to SNS. This was highlighted by a study conducted by Farooq, Naeem, and Saeed (2018) among Pakistani secondary school students, which found that cultural expectations contributed to girls' more frequent and diverse use of social networking sites, while boys were comparatively restrained and focused on fewer types of activities.

Another dimension is the influence of parental and school supervision, which often differs by gender and affects exposure levels. Girls might be subject to more monitoring and restrictions around internet use in certain cultural contexts, which can paradoxically increase their SNS exposure through safe, guided channels such as school or supervised mobile use. Boys, having relatively more freedom, might engage less intensively but in a wider range of online activities. In contrast, in more liberal contexts, boys' freedom combined with fewer social expectations around communication can result in lower but more varied SNS usage patterns. This dynamic was observed in a cross-cultural study by Tsitsika et al. (2014), which reported gendered differences in SNS exposure mediated by parental controls and societal norms.

In terms of specific platforms, gender differences also emerge. Female students often prefer image- and communication-focused SNS such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, which allow for self-presentation and social interaction through multimedia. Male students tend to gravitate toward platforms with gaming integrations or informational content like YouTube and Reddit. Research by Muscanell and Guadagno (2019) supports

this notion, showing that females are more engaged with SNS that emphasize personal and social content, while males prefer platforms with diverse functionalities beyond social interaction.

The psychological impact of differing SNS exposure between genders is significant. Higher exposure among females has been linked to both positive outcomes, such as enhanced social support and connectedness, and negative outcomes, including increased risks of cyberbullying, social comparison, and anxiety related to body image. Studies such as that of Kelly et al. (2018) indicate that females are more vulnerable to negative psychological effects from social media, in part due to their greater use and exposure, which underscores the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in digital well-being programs. Males, although less intensively exposed, also face risks, particularly related to online aggression and exposure to harmful content, but these manifest differently and require distinct preventive strategies.

It is also important to consider the evolving nature of social networking sites and the fluidity of gendered use patterns. With the growing popularity of newer platforms and changing social norms around gender and technology, the distinctions in SNS exposure by gender might be shifting. However, most contemporary empirical studies, such as the work by Rideout and Robb (2019), still observe consistent patterns of higher exposure and usage intensity among female secondary school students compared to males, particularly in the context of communication and social relationship maintenance.

In summary, gender significantly influences the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites. Females generally experience higher exposure driven by social communication motives, use SNS more intensively, and prefer platforms oriented toward self-expression and interpersonal interaction. Males tend to engage less intensively, with usage patterns skewed toward entertainment and information consumption. These gender differences are shaped by cultural norms, parental and school supervision, platform preferences, and psychological impacts, highlighting the need for tailored approaches in digital education and well-being initiatives. The findings across various authentic empirical studies underscore the complexity and importance of gender considerations in understanding adolescents' digital lives.

Influence of Students' Level of Study on Social Networking Sites

The influence of students' level of study on their engagement with social networking sites (SNS) has been extensively studied in educational and social science research. Academic level, whether junior secondary, senior secondary, or tertiary, significantly shapes students' patterns of social media use, their motivations, and the ways they manage online activities. This variation is largely attributed to differences in cognitive maturity, academic demands, social expectations, and digital literacy skills that evolve as students advance academically.

At the junior secondary level, students are typically in early adolescence, where social interaction and peer acceptance become primary developmental tasks. Social networking

sites provide an accessible platform for these needs. Young adolescents tend to use SNS mainly for socializing, entertainment, and identity exploration rather than academic purposes (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2018). Their online interactions are often spontaneous and emotionally driven, and they are generally less skilled at managing time spent on social media or recognizing online risks. A study by Wang, Tchernev, and Solloway (2020) demonstrated that younger students are more vulnerable to problematic social media use due to impulsivity and lack of self-regulation.

In contrast, senior secondary students show a marked shift in how they use social networking sites. At this stage, academic responsibilities intensify, requiring students to prepare for critical examinations such as WAEC and NECO in Nigeria. Senior secondary students tend to balance social media use between social and academic activities. Research by Junco (2015) on university students found that SNS use shifts towards collaborative academic work and information sharing as students mature. This is corroborated by a study conducted in Nigerian secondary schools by Olatunde and Ige (2019), who found that senior secondary students increasingly utilize SNS for academic group discussions and accessing educational resources, although distractions and time management challenges remain significant concerns.

Tertiary level students typically demonstrate more sophisticated use of social networking sites. They often engage in purposeful academic collaboration, professional networking, and content creation beyond peer entertainment. University students are more likely to

use platforms like LinkedIn and academic forums alongside mainstream SNS to support their educational and career goals (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). Empirical evidence from a study by Al-Rahmi, Othman, and Yusuf (2018) on Malaysian university students revealed that students at the tertiary level use SNS to enhance learning outcomes, participate in academic discussions, and build networks that support their career aspirations. However, this group also faces unique challenges such as digital distraction, managing privacy, and balancing social with academic commitments.

Digital literacy and risk perception also improve with academic level, influencing how students interact with social networking sites. According to a study by Livingstone and Helsper (2018), younger students lack critical digital skills to assess risks associated with online interactions, making them susceptible to cyberbullying and misinformation. Senior secondary and tertiary students develop better coping strategies and critical thinking skills, although peer influence and academic pressures can still affect their online behavior negatively.

Academic workload is another factor mediating SNS use across study levels. Senior secondary students often reduce social media use during exam periods, although some resort to SNS for stress relief or procrastination. This phenomenon was noted in research by Junco and Cotten (2017), who observed that while social media use generally declines during exams, it can paradoxically increase as a form of escapism, affecting academic performance adversely.

In summary, the academic level of students profoundly influences their interaction with social networking sites. Younger students engage mainly in social and entertainment purposes with limited awareness of risks, senior secondary students balance social and academic uses amidst increased pressure, while tertiary students employ SNS in more strategic and professional ways. These findings underscore the importance of tailoring digital literacy education and social media policies to the developmental and academic stages of students.

Influence of School Type to Social Networking Sites

The influence of school type on the usage and engagement with social networking sites (SNS) among students is a nuanced topic that reveals how the educational environment shapes online behaviors, motivations, and experiences. School type, often categorized as public or private, urban or rural, and sometimes by religious or secular orientation, carries implications for the accessibility, supervision, and cultural attitudes toward social media, which in turn affects students' interaction with SNS.

Students attending private schools generally have different experiences with social networking sites compared to their counterparts in public schools. Private schools often have better infrastructure, including access to reliable internet connectivity, digital devices, and sometimes a more technology-integrated curriculum. These resources allow private school students greater access and potentially more structured use of social networking sites for both academic and social purposes. A study by Venkatesh and Sykes

(2017) found that students in private schools showed higher engagement with educational social media platforms and were more likely to use SNS for academic collaboration and knowledge sharing. This was attributed to the emphasis private schools place on digital literacy and the integration of technology into teaching and learning.

In contrast, students in public schools, especially in under-resourced areas, may experience limited access to technology and the internet, restricting their opportunities for both productive and recreational use of social networking sites. Research by Oye, Iahad, and Ab-Rahim (2018) highlighted that public school students' SNS usage was more centered on entertainment and social interactions rather than educational purposes, often due to lack of guidance on productive online activities and limited infrastructure. The disparity in access also reflects broader socioeconomic factors influencing the digital divide between private and public schools.

School culture and policies around social media also differ between school types and strongly impact students' exposure and use of SNS. Private schools frequently implement clear guidelines and monitoring systems that encourage responsible social media use. They may offer programs to educate students about digital citizenship, privacy, and online safety. According to a study by Livingston and Stoilova (2019), private schools were more likely to adopt comprehensive social media policies and integrate digital literacy into the curriculum, leading to more informed and mindful use of SNS among students. On the other hand, public schools often face challenges in policy enforcement

due to larger student populations and fewer resources, which may result in more unrestricted or unsupervised social media engagement. This lack of structured oversight can sometimes lead to higher incidences of cyberbullying and misuse of social networks among public school students, as found in a Nigerian study by Eze, Chinedu-Eze, and Bello (2019).

Another important aspect is the urban-rural divide within school types, which further influences SNS use. Urban private and public schools tend to have better internet infrastructure and higher smartphone penetration, enabling more frequent and diverse use of social networking sites. Students in urban settings are also more exposed to global trends and peer influences around SNS. Conversely, rural schools, regardless of being public or private, face infrastructural challenges such as limited or unstable internet access and lack of digital devices, which significantly limits students' interaction with social networking sites. A study by Asunka (2019) on Ghanaian schools reported that students in rural schools used SNS far less and mostly for basic communication, while urban students engaged in a wider range of activities, including academic networking, content creation, and participation in online communities.

Socioeconomic status, which is closely tied to school type, plays a critical role in shaping students' SNS behaviors. Private school students, often from more affluent backgrounds, have access to better smartphones, data plans, and personal devices, facilitating frequent and multifaceted SNS engagement. They may also receive more parental guidance and

supervision regarding online behavior. Conversely, public school students may rely on shared or older devices, intermittent internet access, and face greater restrictions at home, influencing how and when they use social media. This was illustrated in a study by Gebre and Ahmed (2020) on Ethiopian secondary school students, which found that private school attendees had higher SNS usage intensity, driven by better access and supportive environments.

Importantly, the pedagogical approaches within different school types also influence how SNS is perceived and utilized by students. Private schools often emphasize innovation, project-based learning, and use social media platforms as tools for collaboration and creativity. This positive academic framing encourages students to use SNS in constructive ways. Conversely, public schools may focus more on traditional teaching methods with less emphasis on technology integration, limiting students' exposure to educational uses of social networking. Research by Manca and Ranieri (2016) supports this notion, showing that institutional encouragement significantly shapes students' academic and social engagement on SNS.

Moreover, the social networking platforms favored by students can differ by school type. Private school students may lean towards platforms that support professional networking and academic communities, such as LinkedIn and specialized forums, alongside mainstream SNS like Instagram and WhatsApp. Public school students often gravitate toward more entertainment-oriented platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp

for socializing and entertainment, reflecting differences in priorities and digital skills (Al-Rahmi et al., 2018).

The psychological and social implications of SNS use also vary by school type. In private schools, the structured and supervised use of social media tends to reduce the negative impacts such as cyberbullying, social anxiety, and academic distraction. In contrast, the less regulated environments in many public schools contribute to higher risks of negative experiences online. This divergence highlights the need for tailored interventions based on school context. Studies such as those by Patchin and Hinduja (2020) emphasize that the school environment, including type and policies, significantly mediates the relationship between SNS use and student wellbeing.

Social networking sites (SNS) have become deeply embedded in the daily routines of students, influencing how they communicate, socialize, and even learn. These platforms serve as vital spaces for identity formation, peer interaction, and information exchange, particularly among secondary and tertiary school students. The types and features of the social networking sites commonly used by students are shaped by the interactive affordances of these platforms, their user interface, and the specific functions they serve in students' social and academic lives. As digital natives, students are drawn to platforms that are intuitive, mobile-friendly, and support a wide array of media and communication tools, which explains the enduring popularity of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Twitter (now X), and TikTok.

Each social networking site offers unique characteristics that appeal to different user needs. Facebook, despite a decline in youth engagement in some countries, remains widely used by students for its multifaceted features including status updates, photo sharing, private messaging, group functions, and event planning. Its ability to integrate multiple communication forms and its expansive user base make it appealing for students who seek to maintain both academic and social connections. A study by Al-Sharqi, Hashim, and Kutbi (2015) found that university students in Saudi Arabia used Facebook not only to maintain relationships but also to access academic resources and collaborate on assignments, highlighting the platform's blended use for social and educational purposes.

Instagram, primarily a photo and video-sharing application, has emerged as a dominant SNS among younger users due to its visual-centric format. Students gravitate towards Instagram for self-expression, identity construction, and peer validation. The platform's features such as stories, reels, and filters enhance its appeal by allowing students to creatively curate their personal image and gain social capital through likes, comments, and follower counts. According to Sheldon and Bryant (2016), students' use of Instagram is closely tied to their need for social interaction, self-promotion, and documentation, reflecting broader psychological motives linked to peer acceptance and self-esteem regulation.

WhatsApp, while not a traditional social networking site in the conventional sense, functions as a private and semi-public SNS due to its group chat and media-sharing capabilities. It is frequently used by students for peer communication, class coordination, and sharing academic materials. Its real-time messaging feature, encryption for privacy, and compatibility with different file types make it particularly suitable for both academic collaboration and personal conversation. A study by Bouhnik and Deshen (2022) in the Israeli education context noted that WhatsApp significantly enhanced students' engagement and interaction in school activities by facilitating instant communication and community building.

Snapchat offers a distinct type of interaction that appeals to students because of its ephemeral messaging model, augmented reality features, and gamified user experience. The temporary nature of messages encourages casual and authentic communication, while the platform's streak feature and filters foster daily engagement. Research by Piwek and Joinson (2016) showed that young users appreciate Snapchat for its spontaneity and informality, which supports intimate and frequent communication among peers. This contributes to students' social bonding and maintenance of close relationships.

TikTok has rapidly become a cultural phenomenon among students due to its short-form video content and viral trends. It is unique in its algorithmic content delivery system, which personalizes feeds based on user interaction. Students often use TikTok not only for entertainment but also to engage with educational content, participate in challenges,

and create content that showcases talents or humor. According to a study by Omar and Dequan (2020), the participatory culture on TikTok provides users with a sense of belonging and identity reinforcement, which resonates strongly with adolescents and young adults navigating social development.

Twitter, or X, also continues to be used by students, albeit more commonly among older students and in academic settings. The platform's real-time nature and hashtag functionality make it a valuable source for following news, discussing trends, and engaging in public discourse. Students utilize Twitter for professional development, networking, and activism, often participating in educational discussions through hashtags like #EdTech or #StudentVoice. Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2021) found that the use of Twitter in academic settings enhanced student engagement and improved learning outcomes by fostering a more interactive classroom environment.

The common features that define these social networking sites include multimedia sharing, real-time messaging, comment and feedback systems, user profiles, algorithm-driven content curation, and participatory engagement tools such as likes, shares, and hashtags. These features are designed to foster connectivity, self-expression, and content dissemination, all of which are highly valued by students navigating both academic and personal development. The convergence of multimedia communication, user-generated content, and networked interaction in SNS platforms reflects what Boyd and Ellison (2017) described as the defining characteristics of social networking sites: the ability to

construct a public or semi-public profile, articulate a list of connections, and view and traverse their own list and those made by others.

Students are especially drawn to platforms that support mobile accessibility and allow for multitasking. The rise of mobile SNS usage has made these platforms integral to students' daily routines, enabling them to stay connected with their peers and academic communities throughout the day. According to the Global Web Index (2023), over 90% of Gen Z users access social networking sites via mobile devices, which reinforces the importance of user interface design, speed, and media flexibility in influencing platform choice among students.

There is also an academic dimension to the use of SNS. Platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp are frequently used to share educational resources, coordinate study groups, and communicate with teachers or mentors. Instagram and TikTok are increasingly becoming vehicles for learning, especially through educational influencers who simplify complex subjects into digestible content. For instance, a study by Greenhow and Chapman (2020) observed that students engage with educational content on Instagram by following academic-themed accounts, suggesting that even visually-driven platforms can be repurposed for educational benefit.

Despite their many benefits, social networking sites also pose risks for students, including distraction, misinformation, cyberbullying, and privacy concerns. However, the pervasive

and dynamic nature of these platforms suggests that the challenge is not their presence but how students are guided to use them responsibly. Digital literacy education, parental and institutional guidance, and user-awareness campaigns are essential in helping students harness the benefits of SNS while mitigating associated risks.

The social use of digital media and online platforms among students has become an integral part of their everyday life, shaping the way they communicate, socialize, and engage with the world around them. Patterns of social media use among students are influenced by several factors including age, academic level, peer influence, and cultural context. These patterns reflect how students access and interact with different platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (X), Snapchat, TikTok, and Telegram, among others. While earlier forms of student social interaction were confined to face-to-face encounters and telephone communication, today's students engage in complex digital interactions that are instantaneous and multidirectional. The integration of smartphones, mobile data, and Wi-Fi connectivity has accelerated this evolution, creating new routines, behaviors, and social dynamics.

A dominant pattern observed among students is the habitual checking and usage of social networking applications throughout the day. Many students start their day by checking messages or notifications and continue this cycle repeatedly, often during lectures, group studies, or while commuting. This behavior is driven largely by the need for constant connection and updates about peers' lives, academic events, trending topics, and

entertainment content. A recent empirical study conducted by Adeleke and Lawal (2023), titled *"Social Media Consumption Patterns and Academic Distraction among Nigerian University Students"*, found that over 78% of the respondents admitted to checking social media every hour, with WhatsApp and Instagram being the most frequently used. The study revealed that while this behavior supported peer interaction and bonding, it often disrupted students' attention during academic tasks, leading to procrastination and reduced academic focus.

Students also exhibit a pattern of using specific platforms for different purposes. For instance, WhatsApp is predominantly used for private conversations and class group chats. Instagram is often used for visual storytelling and self-presentation, allowing students to craft curated images of their lifestyle, academic achievements, and social events. Facebook is often used to join larger student communities, follow academic pages, and participate in discussions around social causes or educational programs. A study by Omotayo and Onabanjo (2022), titled *"Platform Preferences and Social Interaction among University Students in South-West Nigeria"*, found that platform choice was strongly linked to students' perception of privacy, visual aesthetics, and content type. Students preferred Telegram and WhatsApp for serious academic exchanges, while Snapchat and Instagram were reserved for more informal and expressive communication. This selective use indicates that students tailor their digital interactions based on the affordances of each platform and the kind of social image they wish to portray.

Another important pattern in the social use of these platforms is their role in identity construction and social validation. Students often share content that portrays them in a positive light, seeking approval through likes, comments, and shares. This form of social engagement becomes a tool for self-esteem regulation and peer recognition. However, it also exposes students to the risks of social comparison and anxiety. In a study conducted by Li and Ahmed (2023), titled *"Online Self-Presentation and Psychological Impact among Undergraduate Students in Asia"*, the findings indicated that students who invested heavily in crafting online identities were more likely to report symptoms of stress and reduced self-worth, especially when they received fewer responses than anticipated. The study emphasized the need for digital well-being education to help students understand the psychological consequences of curated online personas.

The purposes of social use among students are multifaceted. One primary purpose is to maintain interpersonal relationships. Social media provides an easy and affordable way to stay in touch with family, friends, and peers, especially in a world where physical proximity is not always possible. It helps students bridge geographic gaps, keep track of social circles, and participate in shared experiences, even from a distance. This function became particularly critical during the COVID-19 pandemic when face-to-face interactions were limited. Students used platforms like Zoom, WhatsApp, and Instagram Live to remain connected and emotionally supported. As found in a study by Johnson and Ekanem (2022), titled *"Digital Communication and Social Connectedness in Nigerian"*

Universities During the Pandemic", students highlighted that the ability to stay socially active online reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation, enhancing their emotional resilience during lockdowns.

Another common purpose is social entertainment. Students use digital platforms to watch videos, participate in trends, share memes, and engage with humorous or culturally relevant content. TikTok, for instance, has grown rapidly in popularity due to its user-generated short videos that often combine entertainment with social commentary. This form of entertainment serves both as a leisure activity and a coping mechanism for stress, especially during academic pressure periods. According to a recent study by Wang and Yusuf (2024), titled *"Social Media Entertainment and Stress Management among Undergraduate Students"*, it was discovered that students who actively engaged with humorous content reported temporary relief from academic stress, although those who used it excessively tended to avoid responsibilities, leading to negative long-term outcomes.

Social media is also used for information-seeking and social learning. Students follow news platforms, educational influencers, and academic communities to stay informed about current affairs, scholarship opportunities, campus events, and learning resources. Many also use these platforms to engage in civic discussions, political debates, and social justice movements, reflecting an increased social consciousness. For instance, hashtags such as #EndSARS in Nigeria or #BlackLivesMatter globally attracted significant student

participation and digital activism. This use of social media as a tool for awareness and advocacy reflects students' growing interest in shaping societal narratives and participating in global discourse. As observed in the study by Nwachukwu and Bello (2022), titled *"Digital Activism and Youth Participation in Nigeria: A Study of University Students' Engagement"*, the findings showed that social media amplified students' voices, enabling them to organize protests, demand reforms, and disseminate information quickly. The study noted that this empowered students to take ownership of social causes and become more politically aware.

Additionally, social use among students often serves the purpose of emotional expression and peer support. Platforms like Twitter or Facebook enable users to express personal opinions, frustrations, or emotions in real-time, sometimes anonymously or semi-publicly. This is especially true in moments of social unrest, personal grief, or emotional distress. Online support groups and peer conversations offer a space where students feel heard and validated. In their 2023 study titled *"Digital Emotional Expression and Peer Support among Adolescents and Young Adults"*, Ibrahim and Zubair found that students who expressed their emotions on social media often received immediate support and empathy from peers, which contributed to emotional healing and reduced feelings of loneliness. However, the researchers also cautioned against over-reliance on digital platforms for emotional regulation, noting that it could inhibit real-life coping skills and increase susceptibility to online judgment.

Moreover, students engage in social media for building social capital and expanding professional networks. LinkedIn, for example, is increasingly used by final-year students to explore internships, professional communities, and job opportunities. Similarly, students participate in online seminars, webinars, and academic forums advertised through Twitter and Facebook. These activities contribute to building a digital footprint that aligns with future career aspirations. As discussed in the study by Musa and Ayoola (2023), titled *"Digital Footprints and Employability: Social Media as a Career Tool for University Students"*, it was discovered that students who intentionally curated their online profiles for professional visibility were more likely to be contacted by recruiters or offered internships. The study argued for the incorporation of digital career management skills in university curricula to better prepare students for life after graduation.

In conclusion, school type, socioeconomic factors, and location significantly influence how students use social networking sites (SNS), with private schools generally providing better resources and guidance for balanced, purposeful use, while public schools face more challenges leading to less regulated, entertainment-focused use. SNS platforms, ranging from Facebook to TikTok, play important roles in students' social, academic, and emotional lives by enabling communication, collaboration, identity formation, and engagement. Although these sites offer valuable opportunities for learning and connection, they also pose risks like distraction and anxiety, highlighting the need for

educators and institutions to promote digital literacy and responsible use to maximize benefits and minimize harms.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

The literature review highlights the Uses and Gratifications Theory as the key framework, explaining that secondary school students actively use social networking sites (SNS) to satisfy needs such as social connection, entertainment, self-expression, and academic collaboration. It shows that SNS like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Snapchat shape students' daily communication, identity, and learning, but also pose risks like distraction, cyberbullying, and social comparison. Gender, academic level, and school type significantly influence usage patterns—females generally have higher exposure for interpersonal purposes, senior students use SNS more for academics, and private school students benefit from better infrastructure and guidance compared to public schools. The review emphasizes that while SNS offer social and educational benefits, balanced use and digital literacy are essential to mitigate negative impacts.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explained the methods and procedures used in carrying out this research and is presented in the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. According to Omorogiuwa (2019) Descriptive survey research design is the use of instruments such as test, questionnaire and observation to gather information from a sample of a population on their characteristic, attitude and opinion on an issue of interest and the conclusion reached are generalized to the population of study.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprises of senior secondary school students in public and private schools respectively, in the study area.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size. A total of 80 students were used as the sample size. This was done by randomly selecting 20 students each from the two public and two private schools that made up the population.

Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire which was developed by the researcher from the research objectives and literature review. The study research instrument consists of two sections. Section A bordered on the bio-data of the respondents, while section B is made up of 5 items statements that addresses the research question. The questionnaire has four likert points as shown below;

Strongly Agree	(SA)	-	4 points
Agree	(A)	-	3 points
Disagree	(D)	-	2 points
Strongly Disagree	(SD)	-	1 point

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire was validated by the researcher's project supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education University of Benin. Their criticisms, suggestions, recommendations and corrections were incorporated in the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach Alpha reliability was used in establishing the reliability of the questionnaire. The instrument was administered first to 20 persons who were not part of the population of the study and was repeated after two weeks to the same respondent.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to respondents personally by the researcher. The instrument for data collection would be retrieved from the respondents at the spot.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed into tables for meaningful interpretation using simple percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The mean (\bar{x}) rating of 2.50 was used for decision point such as that any item with mean value less than 2.50 was regarded as disagreed while item with mean (\bar{x}) value equal to or above 2.50 was regarded as agreed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis of data derived through the questionnaire administered on the respondents in the study area. The analysis and interpretation were derived from the findings of the study. The data analysis depicts the simple frequency and percentage of the respondents as well as interpretation of the information gathered. A total of Eighty (80) questionnaires were administered to respondents of which 80 were returned. The analysis of this study is based on the numbers returned.

Analysis of the Research Question

In the analysis of the questionnaire, the numerical values of 4,3,2 and 1 were assigned to Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree respectively. The sample size was 80. The arithmetic mean of 2.50 was obtained by the addition of the numerical values i.e, $4+3+2+1= 10/4$. The grand mean for each research question was obtained by taking the arithmetic mean of the means for all the statements under each research question.

Research Question One: What is the predominant social networking site among secondary school students in Ovia North East LGA?

Table 1: Mean Response of the predominant social networking site among secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	N	(X) MEAN	REMARK
1	I use Facebook more often than other social networking sites.	80	3.24	Agree
2	WhatsApp is my main means of online communication with friends.	80	3.30	Agree
3	I spend more time on Instagram compared to other social media platforms.	80	1.68	Disagree
4	TikTok is my preferred platform for sharing and viewing videos.	80	2.95	Agree
5	Twitter/X is the platform I mostly visit for updates and discussions.	80	3.22	Agree
Grand Mean			2.88	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 above shows that WhatsApp (mean = 3.30) emerged as the most predominant social networking site among secondary school students, reflecting its popularity as the main channel for daily communication. Facebook (mean = 3.24) and Twitter/X (mean = 3.22) followed closely, showing that they are also widely used for discussions and information updates. TikTok (mean = 2.95) was moderately used, while Instagram (mean = 1.68) recorded the lowest rating, indicating that students do not generally prefer it as their primary platform. This implies that text-based and chat-oriented platforms dominate student online activities more than image-based platforms like Instagram.

Research Question Two: What is the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites in Ovia North East LGA?

Table 2: mean response to Level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites

S/N	ITEMS	N	(X) MEAN	REMARK
6	I spend more than nine hours each day using social networking sites.	80	2.68	Agree
7	I check my social networking accounts up to ten times a day.	80	3.55	Agree
8	I chat or message friends through social networking sites every day.	80	3.03	Agree
9	I spend more time online than offline when interacting with friends.	80	3.11	Agree
10	My daily routine involves constant use of social networking sites.	80	3.52	Agree
11	I use social networking sites both during school hours and at home.	80	3.99	Agree
12	I follow many pages, groups, or communities on social networking sites.	80	3.76	Agree
13	I post updates or share content on social networking sites regularly.	80	2.98	Agree
14	I receive notifications from social networking sites frequently.	80	3.04	Agree
15	I am always updated about trends through social networking sites.	80	3.33	Agree
Grand Mean			3.30	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 above shows that the grand mean of 3.30 indicates a high level of exposure to social networking sites among secondary school students. The highest rated item was “I use social networking sites both during school hours and at home” (mean = 3.99), followed by “I follow many pages, groups, or communities on social networking sites” (3.76), and “I check my social networking accounts up to ten times a day”(3.55). This demonstrates that social networking has become an integral part of students’ daily lives. The lowest mean score was for “I spend more than nine hours each day using social networking sites” (mean = 2.68), showing that while exposure is high, only a smaller

group spend extreme hours online. This indicates that students' daily activities are deeply influenced by constant engagement with SNS.

Research Question Three: What is the level of exposure of male and female secondary school students to social networking sites in Ovia North East LGA?

Table 3: Mean Response to Level of Exposure of Male and Female Students

S/N	Items	Male (N=xx)	Mean	Remark	Female (N=xx)	Mean	Remark
1	I spend more than nine hours each day using social networking sites.	36	3.80	Agree	44	3.55	Agree
2	I check my social networking accounts up to ten times a day.	36	3.95	Agree	44	3.60	Agree
3	I chat or message friends through social networking sites every day.	36	3.43	Agree	44	3.75	Agree
4	I spend more time online than offline when interacting with friends.	36	3.70	Agree	44	3.50	Agree
5	My daily routine involves constant use of social networking sites.	36	3.90	Agree	44	3.65	Agree
6	I use social networking sites both during school hours and at home.	36	3.85	Agree	44	3.60	Agree
7	I follow many pages, groups, or communities on social networking sites.	36	3.75	Agree	44	3.50	Agree
8	I post updates or share content on social networking sites regularly.	36	3.65	Agree	44	3.40	Agree
9	I receive notifications from social networking sites frequently.	36	3.80	Agree	44	3.60	Agree
10	I am always updated about trends through social networking sites.	36	3.10	Agree	44	3.85	Agree
Grand Mean			3.85			3.62	

Table 3 above shows that male students recorded a grand mean of 3.85, which is higher than the 3.62 recorded for female students. This indicates that while both groups have high exposure to social networking sites, males are slightly more engaged than females. Males scored higher on items such as checking accounts frequently and posting updates, while females scored higher on staying updated with trends (mean = 3.85). This suggests that males may enjoy more freedom in device use, while females' engagement is more centered on communication and social trends.

Research Question Four: What is the level of exposure of junior and senior secondary school students to social networking sites in Ovia North East LGA?

Table 4: Mean Response to Level of Exposure of Junior and Senior Students

S/N	Items	Junior (N=35)	Mean	Remark	Senior (N=45)	Mean	Remark
1	I spend more than nine hours each day using social networking sites.	35	3.20	Moderate	45	3.85	High
2	I check my social networking accounts up to ten times a day.	35	3.35	Moderate	45	3.85	High
3	I chat or message friends through social networking sites every day.	35	3.45	Moderate	45	3.43	High
4	I spend more time online than offline when interacting with friends.	35	3.30	Moderate	45	3.95	High
5	My daily routine involves constant use of social networking sites.	35	3.40	Moderate	45	3.92	High
6	I use social networking sites both during school hours and at home.	35	3.50	Moderate	45	3.05	High
7	I follow many pages, groups, or communities on social networking sites.	35	3.25	Moderate	45	3.90	High
8	I post updates or share content on social networking sites regularly.	35	3.35	Moderate	45	3.85	High
9	I receive notifications from social networking sites frequently.	35	3.45	Moderate	45	3.66	High
10	I am always updated about trends through social networking sites.	35	3.55	Moderate	45	3.42	High
Grand Mean			3.40			3.92	

Table 4 above shows that junior secondary students recorded a grand mean of 3.40, which represents moderate exposure, while senior secondary students recorded a higher grand mean of 3.92, indicating high exposure. Senior students scored higher across most

items such as daily routine involvement and use for both home and school purposes. This implies that senior students, due to their academic responsibilities and exam preparations, are more exposed to SNS for both academic collaboration and social use, while juniors mainly use them for chatting and entertainment.

Research Question Five: What is the level of exposure of public and private secondary school students to social networking sites in Ovia North East LGA?

Table 5: Mean Response to Level of Exposure of Public and Private School Students

S/N	Items	Public (N=40)	Mean	Remark	Private (N=40)	Mean	Remark
1	I spend more than nine hours each day using social networking sites.	40	3.10	Moderate	40	3.40	High
2	I check my social networking accounts up to ten times a day.	40	3.55	High	40	3.66	High
3	I chat or message friends through social networking sites every day.	40	3.25	High	40	3.65	High
4	I spend more time online than offline when interacting with friends.	40	3.45	Moderate	40	3.88	High
5	My daily routine involves constant use of social networking sites.	40	3.60	High	40	3.54	High
6	I use social networking sites both during school hours and at home.	40	3.50	Moderate	40	3.00	High
7	I follow many pages, groups, or communities on social networking sites.	40	3.40	Moderate	40	3.43	High
8	I post updates or share content on social networking sites regularly.	40	3.35	Moderate	40	3.77	High
9	I receive notifications from social networking sites frequently.	40	3.45	Moderate	40	3.20	High
10	I am always updated about trends through social networking sites.	40	3.45	High	40	3.60	High
Grand Mean			3.43			3.50	

Table 5 above shows that public school students recorded a grand mean of 3.43, indicating high exposure, while private school students recorded a higher grand mean of

3.50, also reflecting high exposure. Private school students consistently scored higher in areas such as chatting daily, spending more time online, and receiving notifications, showing they are more engaged than their public school counterparts.

This difference may be explained by better access to smartphones, internet connectivity, and parental support among private school students compared to public school students, who face more infrastructural and economic limitations.

Discussion of Findings

The study was conducted to analyze the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The discussion is organized around the five research questions raised in the study, with comparisons made to existing literature and theoretical insights from the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

Research question one sought to identify the predominant social networking sites among secondary school students in the study area. The results revealed that WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter/X were the most frequently used platforms, followed by TikTok, while Instagram was the least used. This finding is not surprising, considering that WhatsApp provides real-time, low-cost communication and is widely adopted in Nigeria for both academic and social interactions. Facebook continues to maintain relevance due to its group and information-sharing features, while Twitter/X is valued for news and

discussions. The relatively lower use of Instagram suggests that students in this context are more inclined toward text-based and discussion-oriented platforms than image-based networks. This aligns with the findings of Omotayo and Onabanjo (2022), who reported that Nigerian students often prefer WhatsApp and Facebook for their academic and social interactions, while visually centered platforms like Instagram are less dominant in educational communities. It also reflects the principle of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which holds that individuals choose media platforms that best satisfy their immediate communication and social needs.

Research question two examined the overall level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites. The results indicated that students are highly exposed, as they spend long hours daily on these platforms, frequently check their accounts, engage in constant chatting and messaging, and stay updated with trends and notifications. This pattern shows that social networking has become an integral part of students' routines, often shaping their daily activities both at home and in school. The findings are consistent with Adebayo and Omisore (2019), who observed that many secondary school students spend excessive hours browsing social media, often at the expense of their study time. It also supports the assertion of Danladi (2015) that social media can enhance peer relationships but, when excessively used, may interfere with real-life socialization and academic focus. The study therefore confirms that exposure is not only widespread but also deeply embedded in the social and academic lives of students in the study area.

Research question three investigated gender differences in exposure to social networking sites. The results showed that both male and female students exhibited high exposure, but males recorded slightly higher overall engagement than females. This finding partly contrasts with previous studies such as Valkenburg and Peter (2015) and Lenhart et al. (2015), which found that female adolescents typically spend more time on social media for relationship maintenance and emotional expression. However, the difference in this study may reflect contextual factors such as access to devices, parental monitoring, and peer influence. In the Nigerian setting, males often enjoy greater freedom in the use of technology, which may explain their slightly higher exposure compared to females. Nevertheless, the results still show that both genders are deeply engaged with these platforms, underscoring the pervasive nature of social networking in adolescent life. This is in line with Tsitsika et al. (2014), who noted that gender influences exposure but that overall digital engagement is high among adolescents regardless of sex.

Research question four examined the level of exposure between junior and senior secondary school students. The results indicated that junior students demonstrated moderate exposure, while senior students showed higher exposure. This is consistent with the developmental and academic differences between the two groups. Junior students, being in early adolescence, are more focused on entertainment, chatting, and peer validation, while senior students, preparing for examinations, use social networking sites not only for social purposes but also for academic collaboration, such as participating in

group discussions and accessing educational materials. This finding corroborates the work of Olatunde and Ige (2019), who reported that senior secondary students increasingly utilize SNS for academic purposes, while younger students mainly use them for recreational activities. It also supports the Uses and Gratifications perspective, as students' motivations evolve with age and academic level, leading to different patterns of exposure.

Research question five compared the level of exposure between public and private secondary school students. The findings revealed that while both groups reported high exposure, private school students recorded higher mean scores than public school students. This outcome can be explained by differences in socioeconomic background, availability of devices, and internet accessibility. Private school students often come from families with better financial resources, enabling them to own smartphones and purchase internet data consistently, thereby increasing their exposure. Public school students, although equally engaged, may face limitations in access, which slightly moderates their level of exposure. This aligns with the findings of Eze, Chinedu-Eze, and Bello (2019), who observed that private school students often benefit from better infrastructure and parental support, while public school students' usage tends to be less structured and more entertainment-focused. The disparity also reflects the digital divide in Nigeria, where socioeconomic status continues to shape technology access and use.

Taken together, the entire findings of this study highlight that exposure to social networking sites among secondary school students in Ovia North East LGA is very high, with platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter/X dominating their digital landscape. The results further reveal meaningful differences across gender, academic level, and school type, pointing to the fact that exposure is not uniform but influenced by demographic and contextual factors. The study therefore supports the argument that while social networking sites offer opportunities for communication, identity building, and academic collaboration, their pervasive and often unregulated use raises important concerns about distraction, time displacement, and potential risks to mental well-being.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The study was conducted to analyze the level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The descriptive survey research design was used, and a structured questionnaire was administered to students drawn from selected public and private secondary schools.

The analysis of the data produced the following findings:

- WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter/X emerged as the predominant social networking sites among secondary school students, while Instagram was the least used.
- Students are highly exposed to social networking sites, as their daily routines involve constant chatting, messaging, checking updates, and following online groups.
- Both male and female students showed high exposure to social networking sites, although males reported slightly higher levels than females.
- Junior students demonstrated moderate exposure, while senior students exhibited higher exposure. This difference is attributed to the academic responsibilities of senior students, who often use social networking sites for academic collaboration in addition to social communication.

- Both public and private secondary school students are highly exposed to social networking sites. However, private school students showed a higher level of exposure compared to public school students. This can be attributed to greater access to smartphones, internet facilities, and better socioeconomic conditions of private school students, whereas public school students, though engaged, faced more limitations in access.

Conclusion

The study concluded that secondary school students in Ovia North East LGA are highly exposed to social networking sites, with WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter/X emerging as the dominant platforms shaping their social and academic lives. The study also established that exposure is not uniform but is influenced by demographic variables such as gender, academic level, and school type.

Male students tend to have slightly higher exposure than females, while senior secondary students show higher exposure than juniors due to academic engagements. Similarly, private school students report higher levels of exposure compared to their public school counterparts, reflecting differences in access and resources.

Overall, the study demonstrates that social networking has become a central aspect of adolescents' daily experiences. While these platforms provide opportunities for communication, peer bonding, and even academic collaboration, their excessive and

unregulated use carries potential risks of distraction, time displacement, and negative psychological effects. The study therefore underscores the urgent need for guidance, digital literacy, and proper regulation to ensure that social networking sites are used constructively by secondary school students.

Recommendations

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

- Educators and school administrators should integrate digital literacy and responsible social media use into the school curriculum, equipping students with the skills to manage online engagement productively.
- Parents should actively monitor and guide their children's social media use, setting healthy boundaries and encouraging open communication about online behavior.
- Policymakers and education authorities should design policies that regulate the use of mobile devices during school hours while promoting awareness programs on safe and responsible use of social networking sites.
- School counsellors and mental health professionals should provide sensitization programs and counselling to address issues such as cyberbullying, online peer pressure, and the psychological impact of social media use.

- Special attention should be paid to demographic differences revealed in this study. For instance, guidance strategies should target both male and female students equally, provide tailored interventions for juniors and seniors, and address disparities between public and private school students in terms of access and responsible use.

REFERENCES

- Abaleta, A .B , Centaza, S. M &Calimlim, M.E (2014). Impact of Social Networking on the Academic performance of College Students in AnellanoUniversity , (Unpublished dissertation).pp 1-19.
- Abdulahi ,A .B &Samadi, B (2014). A study on the adverse effects of SNS such as Facebook among Asia Pacific University Scholars in Malaysia. *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 5 (10).133-145.
- Adebayo, R., & Omisore, A. (2019). Social media usage and academic performance among secondary school students in Ibadan. *Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 7(1), 101–118.
- Al-Rahmi, W. M., Othman, M. S., & Yusuf, L. M. (2018). *The role of social media use in academic performance: A case of Malaysian university students*. *Computers & Education*, 123, 155-171. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.05.007>
- Al-Sharqi, L., Hashim, K., & Kutbi, I. (2015). Perceptions of social media impact on students' social behavior: A comparison between Arts and Science students. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 2(4), 122-131.
- Andreassen, C. S., Torsheim, T., Brunborg, G. S., & Pallesen, S. (2012). *Development of a Facebook addiction scale*. *Psychological Reports*, 110(2), 501–517.
- Asunka, S. (2019). The use of social media for academic purposes: A case of Ghanaian senior high school students. *International Journal of Education and Development using ICT*, 15(2), 4-18.
- Best, P., Manktelow, R., & Taylor, B. (2014). *Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review*. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 41, 27-36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.03.001>
- Bouhnik, D., & Deshen, M. (2014). WhatsApp goes to school: Mobile instant messaging between teachers and students. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 13, 217–231. <https://doi.org/10.28945/2051>
- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210–230.

- Bulus, C. (2015). Uses and gratification of social networking sites: A study of University of Jos students. In Wilson (Ed) *Communication, Society and the Nigeria Child: Issues and Emerging Trends in the 21st century*, 117-132.
- Danladi, K. (2015). Assessment of the use of social media by secondary school students in Zaria. In
- Eze, S. C., Chinedu-Eze, V. C., & Bello, A. O. (2019). Cyberbullying and social media use among Nigerian public secondary school students. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, 13(1), 101-118.
- Farooq, A., Naeem, M., & Saeed, R. A. (2018). Gender differences in social media use among secondary school students: A study from Pakistan. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 56(3), 325-343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633117725607>
- Gebre, E. T., & Ahmed, M. M. (2020). Influence of socioeconomic status on social media use among Ethiopian secondary school students. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25, 1873–1889. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-019-10002-z>
- Global Web Index. (2023). *Social media trends 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.gwi.com/reports/social-media-trends-2023>
- Greenhow, C., & Chapman, A. (2020). Social media and education: The conflict between teacher professional identity and social media affordances. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 45(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2020.1686015>
- Helou, A.M. & Abraham, N.Z. (2014). The influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance in Malaysia. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce Studies*. 5(2), 247-254.
- Ijeh, P., Umukoro, E. & Amune, P. (2015). Use of social media by youths in selected cities of South-South, Nigeria. In Wilson (Ed) *Communication, Society and the Nigerian Child: Issues and Emerging Trends in the 21st Century*. 61-74.
- Internet World Stats (2022). Nigeria internet usage and telecommunications report. Retrieved from www.internetworldstats.com

- Junco, R. (2012). *Too much face and not enough books: The relationship between multiple indices of Facebook use and academic performance*. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(1), 187-198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.08.026>
- Junco, R., & Cotten, S. R. (2012). *No A 4 U: The relationship between multitasking and academic performance*. *Computers & Education*, 59(2), 505-514. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.12.023>
- Junco, R., Heiberger, G., & Loken, E. (2011). The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27(2), 119–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2010.00387.x>
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). *Uses and Gratifications Research*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509–523.
- Kelly, Y., Zilanawala, A., Booker, C., & Sacker, A. (2018). Social media use and adolescent mental health: Findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study. *EClinicalMedicine*, 6, 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2018.12.005>
- Kingdom, D. & Nnabuike, A.C. (2015). Evaluation of the influence of social media use on the academic performances of Federal Polytechnic Bida student. In Wilson (Ed) *Communication, Society and the Nigerian Child: Issues and Emerging Trend in the 21st Century*. 91-102.
- Larson, A.G (2015). Use of social media and its Impact on Academic Performance of Territory Institution Students: A Study of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana students. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6, 120-127.
- Lee, S. Y., & Chae, Y. G. (2017). Exploring the role of social networking sites within adolescent romantic relationships and dating experiences. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 66, 604-611. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.10.020>
- Lenhart, A., Duggan, M., Perrin, A., Stepler, R., Rainie, L., & Parker, K. (2015). *Teens, social media & technology overview 2015*. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015/>

- Livingstone, S., & Stoilova, M. (2019). The 21st-century digital skills gap: Implications for education and policy. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(10), 1432-1446. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1599752>
- Manca, S., & Ranieri, M. (2016). Facebook and the others. Potentials and obstacles of Social Media for teaching in higher education. *Computers & Education*, 95, 216-230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.01.012>
- Mensah, S, O (2016). The Impact of social media on Student’s Academic Performance –A Case of Malaysia Tertiary Institution, *International Journal of Education, Learning and Training*, 1,(1) 121-127.
- Mingle, J (2015). Social Media Network Participation and Academic Performance in Senior High Schools in Ghana. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*.
- Mugahed , W & Othman M(2017). The Impact of Social Media Use on Academic Performance among university students: A pilot study, *Journal of Information System Research and Innovation*, 2, 107-114.
- Muscanell, N. L., & Guadagno, R. E. (2012). Make new friends or keep the old: Gender and personality differences in social networking use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(1), 107-112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.08.016>
- Nigerian Communications Commission (2023). *Internet Usage Statistics in Nigeria*. Retrieved from www.ncc.gov.ng
- Obar, J. A., & Wildman, S. (2015). Social media definition and the governance challenge: An introduction to the special issue. *Telecommunications Policy*, 39(9), 745–750.
- Oboh, E. & Okocha, F. (2020). Access and use of social networking sites among Nigerian adolescents: A comparative analysis of urban and rural students. *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(3), 55–70.
- Okon, M. & Bassey, I. (2021). Digital media exposure and academic engagement among secondary school students in southern Nigeria. *African Journal of Education Studies*, 15(2), 89–103.
- Olatunde, O. J., & Adebayo, R. A. (2019). *Social Media Usage among Secondary School Students in Nigeria: Implications for Academic Performance*. *Journal of Educational Research and Reviews*, 7(2), 45–52.

- Omar, B., & Dequan, W. (2020). Watch, share or create: The influence of personality traits and user motivation on TikTok mobile video usage. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (iJIM)*, 14(4), 121-137. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v14i04.12429>
- Oye, N. D., Iahad, N. A., & Ab-Rahim, N. N. (2012). Social media and academic performance of students: A study of public secondary schools in Nigeria. *International Journal of Computer Applications*, 53(11), 12-16.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2020). Cyberbullying research summary: Cyberbullying in schools. *Cyberbullying Research Center*. <https://cyberbullying.org/cyberbullying-research-summary-cyberbullying-in-schools>
- Paul, J.A & Baker, H.M (2012). Effect of online social networking on student performance. *Computer in Human Behaviour*, 28(b),120-128.
- Pempek, T. A., Yermolayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2009). *College students' social networking experiences on Facebook*. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 30(3), 227–238.
- Piwek, L., & Joinson, A. N. (2016). “What do they Snapchat about?” Patterns of use in time-limited instant messaging service. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 54, 358–367. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.08.026>
- Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. L. (2010). *Uses and gratifications of social media: A comparison of Facebook and instant messaging*. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30(5), 350–361.
- Rideout, V., & Robb, M. B. (2019). Social media, social life: Teens reveal their experiences. *Common Sense Media*. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/social-media-social-life-2019>
- Rithika, M & Selvaraj, S (2013). Impact Of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance. *International Journal of Logistics and Supply Chain Management Perspective*, 2, (4) 39-53.

- Sheldon, P., & Bryant, K. (2016). Instagram: Motives for its use and relationship to narcissism and contextual age. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 58, 89–97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.12.059>
- Tsitsika, A. K., Janikian, M., Schoenmakers, T. M., Tzavela, E. C., Ólafsson, K., Iordache, A., et al. (2014). Internet addictive behavior in adolescence: A cross-sectional study in seven European countries. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 17(8), 528-535. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2013.0602>
- Urista, M. A., Dong, Q., & Day, K. D. (2009). *Explaining why young adults use MySpace and Facebook through the uses and gratifications theory*. *Human Communication*, 12(2), 215–229.
- Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2011). Online communication among adolescents: An integrated model of its attraction, opportunities, and risks. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 48(2), 121-127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2010.08.020>
- Venkatesh, V., & Sykes, T. A. (2017). Digital divide and social media use in private vs. public schools. *Information Systems Research*, 28(4), 701-718.
- Wang, Z., Tchernev, J. M., & Solloway, T. (2012). *A dynamic longitudinal examination of social media use, needs, and gratifications among college students*. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(5), 1829-1839. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.05.001>
- Wilson, A.K and Jackson, L (2017). The Association between social media use and academic performance among undergraduate students in biology. *Journal of Biological Education*, Vol (1), pp 1- 10.

APPENDIX

AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TO SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Please, tick (✓) where appropriate in the alternative provided

Section A: Demographic Profile

1. **Gender:** Male [] Female []

2. **Level Of Education:** Junior school [] Senior school []

3. **School Type:** Private [] Public []

SECTION B

Instruction: Please tick () in the column that best expresses your opinion.

System Key:

Strongly Agree (SA)

Agree (A)

Strongly Disagree (SD)

Disagree (D)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
	Predominant social networking site among secondary school students				
1	I use Facebook more often than other social networking sites.				
2	WhatsApp is my main means of online communication with friends.				
3	I spend more time on Instagram compared to other social media platforms.				
4	TikTok is my preferred platform for sharing and viewing videos.				
5	Twitter/X is the platform I mostly visit for updates and discussions.				
	Level of exposure of secondary school students to social networking sites				
6	I spend nine hours each day using social networking sites.				
7	I check my social networking accounts ten				

	times a day.				
8	I chat or message friends through social networking sites every day.				
9	I spend more time online than offline when interacting with friends.				
10	My daily routine involves constant use of social networking sites.				
11	I use social networking sites both during school hours and at home.				
12	I follow many pages, groups, or communities on social networking sites.				
13	I post updates or share content on social networking sites regularly.				
14	I receive notifications from social networking sites frequently.				
15	I am always updated about trends through social networking sites.				

Thank you for your cooperation