THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

Ifeanyi AGBASI, (CA)

Department of Mass Communication, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

friendsatpeace@yahoo.com

&

Paul BEBENIMIBO,

Department of Mass Communication, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

paulbebenimibo@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study investigated the influence of social media platforms on building relationships between undergraduate students at federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The enrolment figure includes all undergraduates of five South-Eastern universities. Purposive sampling was used to sample undergraduates in two federal universities out of the five federal universities in the South-East. The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire developed. The instrument reliability was obtained as 0.71 using the Cronbach alpha reliability rating. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that the social media platform is contributing and influencing to the formation of relationships among undergraduate students in Nigeria. In addition, research has found that Facebook is the most widely used social media platform for relationship building and the main reason for using social media platforms for relationship building is for communication, and technology enhancement, among others. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among other things that appropriate guidance should be given to undergraduate students on how to effectively use the social media platform to build relationships.

Keywords: *Social Media, Relationship Building, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Nigerian Students.*

1. Introduction

In recent times, social media have become increasingly a common part of everyday life, given the fundamental role it plays in corporate and social existence. In particular, there are many social media handles, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, that favour new interpersonal interactions and relationships and are neither directed nor reciprocal (Oji and Bebenimibo, 2021). With social media handles, social media users are able to read friends' online posts (self-disclosure) without interacting with them; It differs widely from traditional face-to-face communication.

According to Saini, et al. (2020) and Oji and Bebenimibo (2021), the emergence and widespread use of the Internet and smartphones, social media has become a widespread component of human interaction, Tiago and Verissimo (2019) claim that social media is widespread throughout the world. allows people. Communicate with each other and communication has shifted from the real world to a virtual world where people can connect and relate to each other. Individuals are allowed to communicate, associate, and build social relationships with each other through social media (Safco, 2012).

According to Edge (2017) media is a modern channel of communication through which people communicate, and share ideas, experiences, photos, messages, and information of common interests. Weinberg and Flivan (2011) show that social media has built relationships between individuals and organizations. In fact, social media platforms redefine social processes and promote the building and maintenance of relationships among graduate students. (Haruna and Danladi, 2013; Durkin, 2014).

With the use of social media, graduate students are able to make and follow friends on Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms. Thus, social media serves to create opportunities for effective relationships in the workplace, at home, and in schools (Okori & Tunji, 2011). In Nigeria, social media platforms are growing rapidly and are widely used for both interpersonal and public communication. Groneros (2015) notes that the use of social media has opened up a channel among undergraduates to the ability to build relationships by interacting with each other in a way they have never been able to do before.

Supporting the view of Groneros (2015), Hashim, et al. (2021) emphasize that relationship building is enhanced through increased participation, interaction, and communication among graduate students. The general mode of communication that sets networking platforms apart is

their interactive nature which allows students to participate in it from any part of their residence.

According to sküplü & Kartal (2020), there are 3.196 billion social media users globally. In recent times, countless social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.) have emerged that are used by graduate students. Today in our various universities, students use social media in various departments, including nursing, information systems, and many more, for various ideas, such as communicating with friends, sharing learning materials, group discussions, chat rooms, and more. Some (Al-Shark, Hashim & Kutbi, 2015).

Several empirical studies have looked at the impact of social media use on social behaviour, education, ethical use, academic performance, professional associations, and other topics (Al-Shark, Hashim & Kutbi, 2015; Wolf, Wenskovic & Anton 2016; & Mingle & Adams, 2015). However, there is no strong evidence, particularly in the Nigerian context that found the impact of social media, the most widely used social media platform, the motivation to use social media, and most importantly, graduate Students face challenges. Using social media to build relationships. In recent times, social media has become increasingly a common part of everyday life, given the fundamental role it plays in corporate and social existence. In particular, there are many social media handles, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, that favour new interpersonal interactions and relationships and are neither directed nor reciprocal (Oji and Bebenimibo, 2021). With social media handles, social media users are able to read friends' online posts (self-disclosure) without interacting with them; It differs widely from traditional face-to-face communication.

According to Saini, et al. (2020) and Oji and Bebenimibo (2021), With the emergence and widespread use of the Internet and smartphones, social media has become a widespread component of human interaction, Tiago and Verissimo (2019) claim that social media is widespread throughout the world. allows people. To communicate with each other and communication has shifted from the real world to a virtual world where people can connect and relate to each other. Individuals are allowed to communicate, associate, and build social relationships with each other through social media (Safco, 2012).

According to Edge (2017) media is a modern channel of communication through which people communicate, and share ideas, experiences, photos, messages, and information of common interests. Weinberg and Flivan (2011) show that social media has built relationships between individuals and organizations. In fact, social media platforms redefine social processes and promote the building and maintenance of relationships among graduate students. (Haruna and Danladi, 2013; Durkin, 2014).

With the use of social media, graduate students are able to make and follow friends on Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms. Thus, social media serves to create opportunities for effective relationships in the workplace, at home, and in schools (Okori & Tunji, 2011). In Nigeria, social media platforms are growing rapidly and are widely used for both interpersonal and public communication. Groneros (2015) notes that the use of social media has opened up a channel among undergraduates to the ability to build relationships by interacting with each other in a way they have never been able to do before.

Supporting the view of Groneros (2015), Hashim, et al. (2021) emphasize that relationship building is enhanced through increased participation, interaction, and communication among graduate students. The general model of communication that sets networking platforms apart is their interactive nature which allows students to participate in it from any part of their residence.

According to Usküplü & Kartal (2020), there are 3.196 billion social media users globally. In recent times, countless social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.) have emerged that are used by graduate students. Today in our various universities, students use social media in various departments, including nursing, information systems, and many more, for various ideas, such as communicating with friends, sharing learning materials, group discussions, chat rooms, and more. Some (Al-Shark, Hashim & Kutbi, 2015).

Several empirical studies have looked at the impact of social media use on social behaviour, education, ethical use, academic performance, professional associations, and other topics (Al-Shark, Hashim & Kutbi, 2015; Wolf, Wenskovic & Anton 2016; & Mingle & Adams, 2015). However, there is no strong evidence, particularly in the Nigerian context, that found the impact of social media, the most widely used social media platform, the motivation to use social media,

and most importantly, graduate students face challenges. Using social media to build relationships.

Research Questions

In view of the above, the following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What influence does social media have on the building of relationships among undergraduates at federal universities in Nigeria's South East?

2. What are the most frequently used social media platforms for relationship building among undergraduates in federal universities in South East, Nigeria?

3. What are the major motivations for using social media for relationship building among undergraduates in federal universities in South East, Nigeria?

4. What are the challenges that undergraduates in federal universities in South-East Nigeria face when it comes to using social media to build relationships?

2. Literature Review

Concept of Social Media

In our modern society, social media has changed the way we communicate and relate to each other. Social media is a collaborative term for websites and presentations that emphasize communication, community-based input, interaction, content sharing, and interaction. Forums, social media, public bookmarks, and public administration are among the various forms of social media (Ivy 2020).

According to Manning (2014), social media is a term used to denote new media approaches that involve communication between people or groups of people. Interaction between individuals or between groups of people is possible through social networking sites. Social networking sites are web-based forums that allow people to create a free or public profile near a restricted building, an organized list of additional shared users, and a list of ideas across the board and ideas created by others within the system. Allows list to be created.

The nature and classification of these networks may vary from site to site. What makes social media different is not that they allow people to interact with outsiders, but that they allow managers to communicate and make their communication links visible (Boyd & Ellison 2007). This can lead to interpersonal relationships that could not have been done otherwise (Hawthornthwaite, 2005).

Kaplan and Heinlein (2010) see social media as a means of communication between people where they produce, share and communicate information and ideas in important communities and networks. Social media is defined as; a group of online applications that are based on web-based ideas and technologies and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Clear & Mazman, 2011). The term has expanded to include message boards, chat forums, or interactive websites with the ability to post comments and chat with other people. Asemah, Okpanachi, and Edegoh (2013) view social media as a social network of organizations and associations called nodes, which are bound by one or more types of interdependence, such as friendship, kinship, common interests, financial exchanges, dislikes, relationships or relationships of trust, knowledge or fame.

So social media platforms have opened a whole new world of social media in the field of education. It has changed the way graduate students communicate and engage (Sokoya, Onifed & Alabi, 2012; Rees & Hopkins, 2012). Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Reddit, and Pinterest are among many social media platforms.

Facebook is a widely accepted social networking site that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages, and track groups, families, and co-workers. Twitter is a free short blogging service that allows registered members to post short posts called Tweets; Twitter participants can spread tweets and follow other users' tweets through multiple platforms and devices. Wikipedia is a free, open content online encyclopaedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedia. LinkedIn is clearly a social interaction platform for the business community; It aims to establish registered members and articulate a network of people they know and trust efficiently.

Furthermore, Reddit is a social media website and a place where news is selected and endorsed by media fans. The domain is made up of hundreds of sub-communities, known as 'subreddits'. Each subreddit has a specific topic such as technology, politics, or music. Pinterest is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images available online. Pinterest needs a brief description, but its main focus is the image; Clicking on Look will take the operator to a unique basis. For example, clicking a picture of some shoes may read the shopping centre to the operator and the picture of a blueberry cake may read the procedures.

Recent statistics show that Facebook enjoys a high position of being the market leader in the social media world with 1.97 billion monthly users (Statistical, 2017). Again, recent figures show that there are more than 1,679,433,530 Facebook users worldwide, of whom 9.3% (146,637,000) are from Africa; The number of Facebook users in Nigeria increased from 17.87 million to 30.95 million (Tankovska, 2021) from 2017 to 2021.

Influence of Social Media on Relationship Building

Social media do not only influence our relationships with others; they also influence our relationship with ourselves and the ways people perceive the world around them. Kerkhof, Finkenauer, and Muusses, (2011) found that uncontrolled Internet users were lonely, severely depressed, and often exhibited poor social skills than controlled internet users who showed that these negative traits were brought about by their excessive internet use.

The study by Marino, Vieno, Pastore, Albery, Frings, and Spada (2016) has revealed that overuse of online platforms significantly affects the lives of adolescents with negative consequences on their personal, and psychosocial wellbeing. Seo, Park, Kim, and Park (2016) claimed that the more problematic mobile phone addiction becomes, the more people will experience decreased self-esteem and emotional well-being. Seo, *et al*, (2016) revealed that a person who had developed a dependency on their cell phone experienced decreased attention and increased depression which led to destructive influences on their social relationships with their friends. The need for these individuals to stay constantly connected with their peers has led to problematic smartphone use.

A side effect of overusing a smartphone is decreased emotional self-control which is well articulated with two processes: decreased cognitive reappraisal (inability to assess mental or emotional state in a diverse way) and increased emotional suppression (suppressing one's

emotions often leads to building up of pressure and stress) both of which lead to an incapability to adjust motions properly (Elhai, Levine, Dvorak & Hall, 2016).

Motivation for Using Social Media

Motivation is the wish to do something or the eagerness for something. Motivation can be divided into two (3) categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is that which comes from an individual and is taken up by another individual via enjoyment or because of his or her personal interest. On the other hand, external inspiration comes from external factors. The motivation for using social media is an internal drive that influences people to use these sites for entertainment, the need to connect, share and update, search for information, and more (Mohit & Bharati 2020).

The rapid increase in the number of social media executives, particularly among graduate students, has led researchers to identify the various causes of social media involvement among graduate students in their daily lives (De Pablos, Gonzalez, & Colás, 2013). One of the main reasons people use social media is to build relationships with young people. Users and members of social networks are using these forums to meet new people. This is because these sites provide a tool for their use that facilitates one-to-one communication whereby two strangers are likely to be very close to forming a one-way relationship for offline contacts.

In addition, opportunities are provided by these forums so that people can connect with someone who has the same idea and the same place of interest and who is free to share their feelings and love for cooperation (Binsahl, Chang & Bosua, 2015; Hashim & Kutbi, 2015; Chen & Kuo 2017). The social network creates an opportunity to maintain online and offline relationships. Thus, it motivates a person to maintain good relations with one another.

People are encouraged to use social media when discussing various issues such as social, religious, and political. It is evident that these sites not only promote communication between people but also between teachers and students for discussion and discussion (Helou & Rahim, 2014). In education, dialogue plays a very important role as it allows for the sharing of information between participants (Athukorala, 2018). A study by Felemban and Sicilia (2016) revealed that the main reasons for using social media are for graduate students to build, maintain and maintain social relationships.

Moradabadi, Gharehshiran, and Amrai (2012) cited freedom of communication, unlimited information, and the principles of equality as the motives for using social media to build relationships. This re-echo's Oji (2006a) claim that the history of man is replete with his struggle for freedom of expression. Many wars were fought over this, and many lives were lost. Significantly, the most important motivation to use social media is to connect with young people. Therefore, it can be concluded that different people have different motives for using social media to build relationships.

Challenges Encountered Towards the Use of Social Media

Some of the challenges associated with the use of social media stem from the dangers of online student use on the basis that the Internet exposes students to inappropriate behaviour, unwanted adult interaction, and peer pressure (Suman & Bobby, 2014). One of the challenges one has faced in using social media is the flood of information (Benito, 2009). There is a chance that users will not be polite and respectful to others in such a way that swearing, profanity, profanity of abusive, offensive, or inappropriate language from the school environment sometimes in these forums.

In the literature, many factors have been identified as challenges faced in terms of the use of social media but not limited to the lack of information and communication technology (ICT), and the high cost of online access by undergraduate students (Emmanuel, Victor & Pauline, 2014). In addition to the challenges raised by Emmanuel, et al (2014), the following are the challenges posed by the use of social media:

- **Privacy**: The biggest challenge posed by social media is privacy. Many people hold back from participating in discussions for fear of repercussions.
- Security Concerns: Social media sites pose a similar risk to the protection of personal information and other sensitive information. Website hijacking is the biggest factor; hacking is a close threat to social media. This turns out to be another major challenge posed by the use of social media.
- **Deception**: The identity of an individual connecting to social media platforms can be real or fake. The originality of his identity is unknown to any other user. Earlier many cases of fraud were registered around the world. Social media is becoming more and more powerful, and it's getting harder to do

- **Terms of Agreement:** Most social media platforms allow the audience to create an account, after accepting the terms of the agreement, which are often vague. The terms of the agreement can be created in a number of ways. They pose a threat, indirectly. Most social networks receive a user-friendly agreement that their information may be used by the owners of social media platforms. It triggers an indirect privacy attack.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the gratification model which considers the reasons and ways in which individuals enthusiastically pursue and satisfy their exact desires. The satisfaction model is an audience-centred way of accepting mass messages. The gratification theory focuses on how society does use media and assumes that social media is the overarching product and audience of members of the same product.

The satisfaction model is linked to the ideas of Blumler, Katz, and Gurevich (1974). and is subject to the principles of limited or indirect influence of mass communication. Proponents of the satisfaction model suggest that the communication method can be used more effectively where the current objectives of using the communication method lead to greater satisfaction. This approach also assumes that people do not work but take an active role in capturing and integrating the communication platform into their personal lives. This model also assumes that people have a responsibility to choose social media platforms to meet their needs.

The satisfaction model suggests that individuals use social media platforms to seek genuine satisfaction. This model, therefore, includes the fact that mainstream media competes with other data sources to satisfy audiences. In addition, the model explains the reasons why people prefer a particular media over another social media platform and specifies the emotional needs that drive people to use a particular approach (Cheung & Lee, 2009). to inspire. They are aware of their behaviour and their needs.

The apt theory of application and satisfaction in the present study is that communities use social media to obtain some satisfaction (Ozzie, 2011). Adiyanju & Haruna (2012) point out that the main objective of the theory is that users have good needs that enable them to selectively select, care for and retain social media messages. Thus, the theory emphasizes the fact that people are important in a communication system because they choose content, form a definition, and act on that meaning (Akinwumi, 2011).

Using the principle of gratification in this study in place of agenda setting as explained by Oji (2008) and Oji (2006b), social media managers may be purposefully examining such media in order to use them for purposes other than establishing the agenda for discussion. People are rational beings with the ability to select the medium of their choice for building relationship, not merely passive listeners who succumb to planned news that is used to affect their thinking.

Prior Studies

In the case of Nigeria, there is a lack of strong evidence on the impact of social media platforms on building relationships among undergraduate students. Many studies in this area have focused on other areas related to social media use. For example, Spencer (2018) researched social media use and its impact on emotional relationships. A sample size of 627 applicants included a mixed-method survey involving the Likert scale and short-term questions about social media use, emotional well-being, and collaborative relationships. The findings showed that the more time people spend on social media, the more likely it is to have a negative impact on their overall emotional well-being and the declining quality of relationships.

Joshua & Precious (2017) conducted a study on the impact of social media on social life among female university students. The study conducted a quantitative survey using a questionnaire among 69 female students at the University of North-West in South Africa. Findings showed that social media improves the way female students think, communicate, communicate, and date; This is the reason why they have become addicted to social media and its apps.

Karen (2016) examined the impact of social media on face-to-face communication among college students. The study was conducted with the aim of attracting college students from private and public colleges and universities in the city of Eldoret. A random sampling process was used to select separate private and public partnership institutions, with a total of 43 universities and colleges with a population of approximately 50,000. Questionnaires, discussion schedules, and focus group discussions were obtained and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study found that social media sites are very beneficial for the educational development of college students. The study also found that social networking sites do not threaten face-to-face contact.

Eni (2015) examined the educational use of social media platforms for university graduate students in the South-East of Nigeria. The study used descriptive research formats and data was collected through a systematic questionnaire. The results showed that out of the 20 listed social

networking sites, Facebook and Google Plus were only accepted for use by students. Also, student interaction with social media enhances technical skills and enhances research skills.

Akpan, Akwawo, and Senam (2013) examined the impact of social networking sites in Nigeria using a multidisciplinary sampling method. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the findings showed that there are at least forty-six (46) social networking sites for various reasons and that most adolescents use social networking sites daily, weekly, and monthly. , more people use websites. , whenever they get a chance.

Greg, Chika, and Edogor (2013) examined communication platform use among selected university students in South-East Nigeria. The study was conducted using a research method, with 300 respondents as a sample. The explanatory analysis found that undergraduate students use social media for entertainment, and education/information purposes; They use social networking sites to talk about world affairs, engage in cybercrime, and expose themselves to it.

Asemah, Okpanachi, and Edegoh (2013) examine the impact of social media on the academic performance of undergraduate students in Nigeria. The research method adopted using questionnaires and descriptive results showed that graduate students have access to social media and their exposure to social media is high, with Facebook being the most widely used social media platform. . Also, research has shown that exposure to social media has negative effects on students.

Zanamwe, Rupere, and Kufandirimbwa (2013) examined students' perceptions of social media use in social media in Zimbabwe. The study adopted a descriptive research questionnaire and data was collected from 124 university students from five tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. The results showed that the majority of students were using Facebook and MySpace. In addition, it has also emerged that students use social media technology for educational purposes and especially for group work.

Gómez, Rosez, and Farias (2012) surveyed the educational use of social networks by university students in Spain in a survey conducted among 938 students and two discussion groups at the Universidad de Málaga. Descriptive results suggest that social media use is very high among university students. However, the frequency of use of such educational task networks was very low and, on average, the most widely used educational activities were those initiated by the students themselves, such as answering peer questions or studying Doing.

4. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The descriptive survey design was appropriate as it aimed to obtain the views and opinions of respondents on the influence of the communication platform in building relationships between graduate students at selected universities in South-East Nigeria. The study area was the national capital of Southeast Nigeria, which is one of the six (6) geopolitical areas in Nigeria. The researcher chose South-East Nigeria because it is one of the most developed academically in six (6) regions of Nigeria.

The enrolment rate includes all undergraduate (5) universities in Sout-East Nigeria. The area has five provinces with five (5) federal universities namely, the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu state, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Anambra state, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umdike, Abia state, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo state and Alex. Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo-Ebonyi province, with graduating students as respondents at these universities.

As found on the websites of institutions and planning units, a total of 100,706 students, consisting of 36,000 students from the University of Nigeria in Nsukka; Twenty-four thousand seven hundred and six (24,706) students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University; twenty-two thousand (22,000) students from the Federal University of Technology; fourteen (14,000) students from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture and, 4,000 students from Federal University Ndufu-Alike.

The sample size of the study was 400 students graduating from Federal universities in the South East. The study adopted a multi-phase sampling process. In the first round, two universities were deliberately selected from five Federal universities; The universities are the Nsukka University of Nigeria and the Federal University of Technology Owerri. The selection of these institutions is the result of their outstanding features - being the first indigenous university in Nigeria and the only state university of technology in the South-Eastern geopolitical zone.

In the second phase, the five state institutions had 111,766 students (100,706). However, the target population from the two universities was deliberately selected to be researched by 58,000 students. A sample of 398.04 was obtained using the Taro Yamane formula (1967). However, to avoid problems with decimals, the researcher determined a sample size of 400 studies.

In the third phase, a standardized sampling method was used to determine the sample size of each university. Thus, the Nigerian University Nsukka had 62 percent of the target population of 248 samples and the Federal University of Technology Owerri had 38% of the target population of 152 samples; all this up to a sample size of 400 respondents.

The data collection tool was a systematic questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to collect data to obtain the views and opinions of the respondents about the impact of the communication platform on building relationships between graduate students. The questionnaire was entitled 'the influence of the communication forum on the formation of relationships between undergraduate questionnaires' (ISMRBU) 'and was constructed using a 4-point rating scale.

The questionnaire identified information in four areas - the impact of the communication platform on relationship building; The most widely used social media platform to build relationships, the motivation to use social media for relationship building, and the challenges encountered with regard to the use of communication platform in building relationships between undergraduate students in North-Eastern universities, Nigeria. The reliability of the research tool was made using the Cronbach Alpha reliability rating to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and the reliability score obtained was 0.71

The questionnaire was interrupted during school hours by students of their skills and department and they ensured that the questionnaire was returned as soon as possible. Data obtained were analyzed using standard deviations. The rule of thumb for acceptance or rejection of an item is based on the central points of the respondents; this means that the respondent points mean 2.49 and below the object, indicating a disagreement/rejection of the view of an object, while a median point of 2.50 or higher is expressed in acceptance of the object. Statistical analysis was performed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

5. Results

Table 1: Mean response and standard deviation on the influence of social media on relationship building among undergraduates in federal universities in South-East Nigeria

ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	S.D	DECISION
Social media platforms foster relationships among one another	3.39	0.51	Accepted
Social media creates safe interaction with respect to your intimate friends and colleagues	3.20	0.60	Accepted
Social media gives the opportunity to accomplish relationship-related issues in schools	2.99	0.68	Accepted
Social media does not enable me to achieve anything related to my relationships	2.32	0.65	Rejected
Social Media is very vital in keeping and maintaining relationships with friends	2.89	0.54	Accepted
Social Media helps to build my relationships easily	3.05	0.64	Accepted

Source: Actual Fieldwork, 2021

The result presented in Table 1 indicates that the respondent agreed with all the item statements except item four which has a mean score of 2.32 which implies that the respondent disagree with the item statement. This showed that the respondents agree that social media foster relationships, create interaction with friends, accomplished relationship-related issues, vital in keeping and maintaining a relationship with friends and helps in building relationship easily. The table also shows that item one with a mean score of 3.39 ranked the highest, followed by item two at 3.20; next is item six with a mean score of 3.05, followed by item three with a mean score of 2.99, next is item five 2.89 and item four with a mean score of 2.32

Table 2: Mean responses and standard deviation on the most used social media on relationship building

ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	S.D	DECISION
Facebook is the most widely used in relationship building	3.03	1.71	Accepted
The Twitter platform is mostly used in building relationships among undergraduates	2.91	0.70	Accepted
Wikipedia is mostly used in relationship building	1.71	0.68	Rejected
LinkedIn is mostly used in relationship building	2.84	0.80	Accepted
Reddit is mostly used in relationship building	1.99	0.57	Rejected
Pinterest is mostly used in relationship building	1.78	0.59	Rejected
WhatsApp is mostly used in relationship building	2.60	0.74	Accepted

Source: Actual Fieldwork, 2021

The result presented in Table 2 indicates that the mean response of item one has a mean score of 3.03, item two with a mean score of 2.91, item four with a mean score of 2.84, and item seven with a mean score of 2.60 were accepted which mean that the respondent agrees with the item statement. This implies that the undergraduates mostly used Facebook, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp for relationship building while, item three with a mean score of 1.71, item five with a mean score of 1.99, and item six with a mean score of 1.78 were rejected which indicates that the respondents were not in agreement with the item statements. This implies that Wikipedia, Reddit, and Pinterest are not mostly used by undergraduates for relationship building.

Table 3: Mean responses and standard deviation on major motivations for using social media in relationship building

ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	S.D	DECISION
Increase students' psychosocial development	2.12	0.53	Rejected
Communicating one another thoughts and individual perceptions over different issues	3.13	0.67	Accepted
Improves technology proficiency	2.85	0.98	Accepted
Enhances social and communication skills	3.10	0.65	Accepted
Establishing a relationship with students from other institutions	2.81	0.64	Accepted
Helps to connect to students in related departments from other institutions	2.57	0.78	Accepted
Helps to connect with students with similar interests in social life	3.09	0.81	Accepted

Source: Actual Fieldwork, 2021

Table 3 presented shows that all the mean responses from items 2-7 have mean scores above 2.50 which is acceptable are the major motivation for using social media for relationship building, while item one which has a mean score of 2.12 indicates that the respondents disagree with the item statement, which means that increase in students' psychological development is not a major motivation for using social media on relationship building.

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation responses on challenges encountered toward the use of social media on relationship building among undergraduates in federal universities in southeast Nigeria

ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	S.D	DECISION
Difficulty in adapting to available tools	3.05	0.84	Accepted
Non-access to computing resources and the Internet when off-campus	2.81	0.63	Accepted
Electricity failure	3.14	0.61	Accepted
Poor time management	2.71	0.60	Accepted
Cyber extortion and fraud (such as theft of funds or credit card/account numbers)	2.74	0.44	Accepted
Lack of knowledge of how to use it effectively	2.93	0.69	Accepted
High cost of internet access (subscription)	2.74	0.79	Accepted
Lack of privacy	2.72	0.83	Accepted

Source: Actual Fieldwork, 2021

Table 4 presented revealed that all the items from one to eight is above 2.50 which indicates that the respondents agreed with all the item statement as major challenges encountered toward the use of social media in relationship building among undergraduates. Item three has a high mean score of 3.14, followed by item one with a mean score of 3.05, item six with 2.93, followed by item two with a mean score of 2.81, and Items five and seven have a mean score of 2.74. Therefore, difficulty in adapting to available tools, non-access to computing resources and the internet when off-campus, electricity failure, poor time management, cyber extortion and fraud, lack of knowledge, high cost of internet access, and lack of privacy are the major challenges encountered by undergraduates' students' toward using social media for relationship building.

Discussions

This study aims to determine the impact of a social media platform on building relationships between graduate students at the organization's universities in southeast, Nigeria. Looking at the research analysis, several findings have emerged. First, the research found that social media promotes relationships with each other, creates a secure connection between close friends and colleagues, provides opportunities for real-world relationship-related issues, is important for maintaining and maintaining relationships with friends, and helps build relationships. relationships easily. This, therefore, suggests that the influence of social media in relationship

building cannot be overemphasized. The findings of this study in line with Mohammed (2013) found that respondents used social media to maintain age and create new relationships.

The majority of respondents (65%) said that various social media platforms enable them to communicate with family members, friends, and acquaintances from a distance. They also like it more than other means of communication because it is less expensive. Also, Chukwuere and Bonga (2018) reported that social media is used for a variety of purposes, including connecting and maintaining relationships with friends and colleagues.

Second, the findings of the study revealed that Facebook is the most widely used social media platform for relationship building, followed by Twitter, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp, while Wikipedia, Reddit, and Pinterest are not widely used to build relationships. This means that graduates of universities in the South East use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp to build relationships more than Wikipedia, Reddit, and Pinterest. This could be the result of thunder, and awareness like Facebook, Twitter; LinkedIn, and WhatsApp are often more accessible than other social media platforms.

The findings of this study are consistent with Ganyobi (2012) who reported that people communicate more frequently every second and minute on various social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. In a related study by Mohammed (2013), the findings suggest that the most popular social media platform is Facebook. Facebook's popularity spreads to all parties and has nothing to do with the individual and the different categories of people who use it from educators, actors, and politicians to ordinary citizens. Facebook gives the impression that the whole world is meeting online and among young people, it is amazing to meet someone who does not have a Facebook account. It is a great opportunity to find friends and acquaintances who have been lost for some time.

Third, the findings of the study also revealed that the main motivation for using social media for relationship building is communication, technology, development of communication and communication skills, establishing relationships with school and department students, and meeting like-minded people. Also, the findings of this study showed that the increase in student mental development is not a major motivator for the use of social media among graduate students at Federal Universities in the South East. This means that social media is a useful platform for building relationships. Haruna and Danladi, (2013) reported that most students and young people use social media to make friends and share information and create

opportunities for people by making it easier to, among other things, connect with places and more information. international audience; stay connected and interact with peers; find and connect with people with shared interests and form relationships online.

Finally, the study's findings revealed the difficulty of becoming acquainted with available tools, the lack of off-campus computer and internet resources, power outages, and poor time management. Extortion and fraud via the internet. The challenges faced in using the platform of communication to build relationships between undergraduate students at federal universities in South East Nigeria are a lack of public service knowledge, high internet access costs, and a lack of privacy. This can be caused by a high level of insecurity and a lack of trust among people. Also, the high cost of data buying and its use, power outages, and inaccessibility of computer and internet services when you are not at school can be a very difficult time for students. These challenges affect the effective use of social media by undergraduates.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the effect of a social media platform on building connections among undergraduate students in Nigeria. The study concludes that social media platforms redefine relationships among undergraduate students at South-Eastern universities in Nigeria. Graduate students can now live in the comfort of their home, school, or department and start relationships with other students in any part of the world.

Apart from this, the distance problem in relationships has also ended with the use of social media. With a variety of social media platforms, students are now able to communicate and interact with their peers in any part of the world. As Oji and bebenimibo (2021) would put it, the media/social media has an enormous ability to affect public perception, in some cases, how societal associations are formed and maintained. This gives them a sense of intimacy with their friends, family, colleagues, and their study partners. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were given:

1. **Proper orientation of undergraduate students:** The library, and especially other university officials in general, must provide proper guidance to undergraduate students in order for them to be properly informed on how to make good use of social media in relationship building.

2. **Introduction of ICT literacy courses:** It is critical that ICT courses be made mandatory in all fields of study in our institutions so that graduates will be equipped with the necessary skills to access the internet. utilizing the various communication tools at their disposal.

3. **Subsidized cost of internet access:** Subscription fees for various internet service providers should be subsidized, keeping in mind that the majority of users are students.

4. Social media education by government and non-governmental organizations: Government and non-governmental organizations should begin educating citizens on how to best use social media to meet their information needs.

5. **Deployment of social media for development needs:** Since youths make up the majority of Nigeria's population, social media can be a useful instrument in the hands of development agents to reach the grassroots and close the information/communication gaps identified in Oji (2011) that indicated low awareness and knowledge of development information among community people.

Contributions to Knowledge

This research established that social media helps undergraduates in Nigerian universities to build relationships.

The study adds to the body of knowledge by affirming previous studies' findings that show Facebook as the most widely used social media platform for relationship building.

The study established that the high cost of data buying and its use, power outages, and lack of computer and internet services as the most probable forces militating against the use of social media for relationship building.

REFERENCES

Adeyanju, B. & Haruna, D. (2012). Uses of SMS in campaigns: An assessment of the 2011 general elections and post-election violence in northern Nigeria, *in Des Wilson (ed.) The media, terrorism & political communication in Nigeria*. Uyo; ACCE

Akinwunmi, A.O. (2011) *New media, political campaigns and violence in Nigeria*. Paper presented at the ACCE, Covenant University, Ota. September 2011.

Akpan, U., Akwaowo, E., &Senam N. (2013), Uses and gratifications of social networking websites among youths in Uyo Nigeria. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, *3*(2), 353-369

Al-Sharqi, L, Hashim, K &Kutbi, I. (2015). Perceptions of social media impact on student's social behavior. A Comparison between Arts and Science Students. *International Journal of Education and Social Science, 2*(4), 122-131

Ani. C. J (2015). *Academic use of social networks among undergraduates in Federal Universities in South East Nigeria*. An M.sc Thesis submitted to the department of library and information science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Asemah, E. S., Okpanachi R. A. and Edegoh, L. O. N. (2013). Influence of social media on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (12), 90 – 96

Athukorala, A.W.V. (2018). Factors affecting use of social Media by University Students: A Study at Wuhan University of China, *Journal of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka*, *21*(2), 44-72.

Benito. E.R (2009). 'Infoxication 2.0', in Thomas, M. (ed.), *Handbook of Research on Web 2.0 and Second Language Learning*, Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference. 60-79

Binsahl, H., Chang, S. &Bosua, R. (2015), 'Identity and belonging: Saudi female international students and their use of social networking sites', *Journal of Migration and Culture, 6*(1), 81– 102.

Blumler, J. G., Katz, E., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. *The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research*, (s 19), 32.

Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of computer-mediated Communication*, *13*(1), 210-230.

Chen, P. & Kuo, S. (2017). Technological forecasting & social change innovation resistance and strategic implications of enterprise social media websites in Taiwan through the knowledge sharing perspective. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 118, 55-69

Cheung, C.M.K. & Lee, M.K.O. (2009). Understanding the sustainability of a virtual community: model development and empirical test. *Journal of Information Science*, *35*(3), 279-298.

Chukwuere, J.E., &Onyebukwa, C.F. (2017). New media and politics: An assessment of 2016 South African local government elections. In proceedings of international academic conferences. *International Institute of Social and Economic Sciences.*

De Pablos, J., Gonzalez, T., & Colás, P. (2013). Juventud y redes sociales: Motivaciones y usos preferentes= Young People and Social Networks: Motivations and Preferred Uses. *Juventud y redes sociales: Motivaciones y usos preferentes= Young People and Social Networks: Motivations and Preferred Uses*, 1-18.

Durkin, M., McGowan, P., &Murray, L. (2014). Perspectives in the potential for social media to improve communication in small business-bank relationships. *Entrepreneurship and Innovation.15*(4), 251-264.

Edge W. (2017). Nursing professionalism: Impact of social media use among nursing students. *Journal of Healthcare Communications, 2*(3), 13-19.

Elhai, J. D., Dvorak, R. D., Levine, J. C., & Hall, B. J. (2017). Problematic smartphone use: A conceptual overview and systematic review of relations with anxiety and depression psychopathology. *Journal of affective disorders*, *207*, 251-259.

Emmanuel, U.A, Victor, O.O. & Pauline, I. (2012). Use of social media tools among Nigeria-selected tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Information and Knowledge*, *3*(5), 34-45.

Felemban., G, H. & Sicilia., M.A (2016). Motivations and incentives in joining and using social networks. A systematic review. *Journal of Mass Communication Journalism*, *6*(38), 1-9.

Ganyobi, N.Q. (2012). *What is the effect of social media on relationships*? Retrieved March 6, 2021, from file:///C:/Users/samsung/Desktop/New%20folder/what-iseffect-of-social media-on.html

Gomez, M. Roses, S., &Farias, P. (2012). Academic use of social networks by university students. *Communicar, 19*(38), 131-138.

Greg, H.E., Chika, E.A., &Edogor, I. O. (2013). Social media use among students of universities in South-East, Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6, (3), 23-32

Grönroos, C. (2015). *Service M* Tankovska. H. (2021). www.statista.com

anagement and Marketing. 3rd edition. Liber AB

Gurcan, H.I. (2015). Contribution of social media to the student's academic development. *International Journal of Information of Education and Technology*, *5*(12), 965-971.

Haruna, A. & Danladi, K. (2013). Social media, youths and culture change among ABU Zaria undergraduates. In D. Wilson's (ed.) Communication and the New Media in Nigeria: Social Engagements, Political Development, and Public Discourse. *A Publication of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE),* Nigeria. 176-188.

Hashim, N. F. A., Alek, S. K., Asmali, K. N., Rosli, R., Halim, N. A. R. A., & Almunawar, M. N. (2021). Utilization of social media by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Brunei Darussalam. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, *11*(1), 8.

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.

Haytrhornthawaite. C. (2005). Social networks and Internet connecting effects. *Conformation and Society*, 8 (2), 125-147

Helou, A. M., & Ab. Rahim, 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.

Ivy, W. (2020). *What is social media?* Retrieved from What isTechtarget.com/definition/social media on April 7th 2021.

Joshua. E.C& Precious, C.C. (2017). *The impact of social media on social lifestyle:* A case study of university female students. Ifeocentre for Psychological Studies/Services, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Kaplan AM, &Haenlein M (2010) *Users of the world, unite*. The challenges and opportunities of social media. Bus Horiz 53(1):59–68

Karen, J. (2016). *Influence of social media on face to face communication among college students: A Study of Selected Colleges In Eldoret*. An Unpublished M.Sc Thesis, Department Of Communication Studies, Moi University Eldoret

Kerkhof, P., Finkenauer, C., &Muusses, L. D. (2011). Relational consequences of compulsive Internet use: A longitudinal study among newlyweds. *Human Communication Research*, 37(2), 147-173.

Manning, J. (2014.) *Social media, definition and classes*. In K. Harvey (Ed.), Encyclopedia of social media and politics. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Marino, C., Vieno, A., Pastore, M., Albery, I. P., Frings, D., &Spada, M. M. (2016). Modeling the contribution of personality, social identity and social norms to problematic Facebook use in adolescents. *Addictive Behaviors*, *21*(63), 51-56.

Mingle, J. &Adams.M. (2015*). Social media network participation and academic performance in senior high schools in Ghana*. Retrieved on the 10th may from https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1286

Mohammed, B.K. (2013). Social media, maintenance and creation of social relationships amongst Hausa Youths in Zaria. *The Nigerian Journal of Communication. A*

Publication of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigerian Chapter, *11*(1), 58-76.

Mohit. G. &Bharati, P. (2020). Online social media mining to determine the mental term of an accident. *Journal of Social Research Academy*, *29*(5), 45-53

Moradabadi. Y.N, Gharehshshiran, M.A.&Armari, K. (2012). What is the motivation of students of Iranians for using Facebook? Procedia, *Social and behavioral Sciences*, *46*(12), 5192-5195

Hashim, N. F. A., Alek, S. K., Asmali, K. N., Rosli, R., Halim, N. A. R. A., & Almunawar, M. N. (2021). Utilisation of Social Media by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Brunei Darussalam. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, *11*(1), 8.

Oji, M., & Bebenimibo, P. (2021). An Examination of Social Media Reportage and Its Impact Towards Promoting School Development in Nigeria: A Study of Success Adegor's Viral Video. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, *11*(2), 189-189.

Oji, M. (2011). Awareness of interpersonal and mediated poverty alleviation communications in the Niger Delta. Journal of Global Communication, Vol. 4. No. 2. Pp. 95-112

Oji, M. (2008). A study of Mass Media Impact on HIV/AIDS Awareness and Knowledge in Avwraka. *The Nigerian Journal of Communications*, *6*(1&2), 242-255.

Oji, M. (2006a). Comparative media systems: A global view of press freedom. *International Journal of Communication*, *6*.

Oji, M. A. J. O. R. I. T. Y. (2006b). Communication and conflict resolution: The peace media initiative. *An Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication Studies*, *5*, 119-132.

Okorie, N. &Tunji, O. (2011). Facebook and online relating: computer-mediated romantic relationship among young Nigerians. *Nigerian Journal of Communication*. A Publication of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria, *9*(1), 111- 128.

Rees, M. J. &Hopkins, P. J. (2009). *Towards the integration of social media with traditional information systems Information Technology Papers*. Available at http://epublications.bond.edu.au/infotech_pubs/52. Retrieved March 2021

Saini, N., Sangwan, G., Verma, M., Kohli, A., Kaur, M., & Lakshmi, P. V. M. (2020). Effect of social networking sites on the quality of life of college students: a cross-sectional study from a city in north India. *The Scientific World Journal*, *2020*.

Safko, L. (2012). *The social media bible: tactics, tools & strategies for business success*. 3rd ed. Wiley & Sons Inc.

Seo, D.G., Park, Y., Kim, M.K., & Park, J. (2016). Mobile phone dependency and its impacts on adolescents' social and academic behaviors. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63, 282-292. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.026

Sokoya, A. A, Onifade, F. N. &Alabi, A.O. (2012). *Establishing connections and networking: the role of social media in agricultural research in Nigeria*. Available at http://conference.ifla.org/ifla78. Retrieved March 2021.

Spencer. C. P. (2018). Social *Media Use and Its Impact on Relationships and Emotions*. An M.sc thesis submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University, Brigham Young University.

Statista. The Statistics Portal, (2017). Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/398136/us-facebook-user-age-groups

Suman, K.K., and Bobby, V. (2014). Social media. Key issues and new challenges. A study of Nalgonda district. *Global Media Journal India Edition*, *1*(1), 1-12.

Tankovska, H. (2021). Number of social media users 2025, Statista. Available at https://**www**. **statista**. **com**

Tiago, M., &Verissimo, J. (2014). Digital marketing and social media: Why bother? *Business Horizons*, *57*(6), 703-708

Üsküplü, T., Terzi, F., & Kartal, H. (2020). Discovering activity patterns in the city by social media network data: a case study of Istanbul. *Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy*, *13*(4), 945-958.

Usule, K.Y. &Mazman, S.G. (2011). Gender differences in using social networks. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, *10*(2), 133-139

Weinberg, B. &Pehlivan, E.(2011). Social spending: Managing the social media mix. *Business Horizons*, *54*(3), 275-282.

Wolf, D.M, Wenskovitch, J, &Anoton (2016). Nurses use the interact and social media. Does age, years of experience and educational level make a difference. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, *6*(2), 68-75.

Yamane, T. (1967). Statistics: *An Introductory Analysis*, 2nd Edition, New York: Harper and Row

Zanamwe, N., Rupere, T. &Kufandirimbwa, O. (2013). Use of social networking technologies in higher education in Zimbabwe: A learners' perspective. *International Journal of Computer and Information Technology*, 2 (1), 9-18