

**PERCEPTION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA TOWARDS USING  
SOCIAL MEDIA COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN  
ENHANCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

**By**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the perceptions of undergraduate students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, towards the use of social media for collaborative learning and its impact on academic performance. The research was guided by the Community of Practice (CoP) theory. Using a survey research design, data were collected from 379 undergraduate students across six faculties selected through multi-stage sampling. A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection, and results were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages. Findings revealed among others that, most respondents perceive social media as a useful tool for academic collaboration and learning enhancement. The study concluded that social media, when effectively utilised, serves as a powerful medium for collaborative learning and academic improvement. It recommended among others that, students should be encouraged to join or create academic-focused online communities where they can interact with peers, share knowledge, and access credible academic resources.

**Keywords:** social media, perception, collaborative learning, academic performance

**Introduction**

**Background to the study**

The rapid and vast adoption of social media technologies has changed how we access information from the news, find partners, and demand political change. The first social media site to reach a million monthly active users was MySpace. It achieved this turning point in

2004. This marked the beginning of social media as we know it (Paljug, 2025).

Today, social networking sites and applications are widely used by undergraduate students all over the world. They spend a lot of their time on these sites as a part of their daily lives. Studies revealed that among the various age groups of students, university students are among the most using social networking (Azizi, 2019). Social networking sites play a very important role in education. Through the social media, students have been afforded multiple opportunities to improve learning and access the latest information by connecting with learning groups and other educational systems. Students have also been able to exchange information by connecting with different individuals. This can have a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Kolhar, Kazi & Alameen, 2021).

The integration of social media into education has revolutionized the way students learn, teachers instruct, and educational institutions operate. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn are not just avenues for social networking; they have become powerful tools in the realm of education, influencing both classroom learning and professional development. (Wade, 2019). Moreover, social media fosters a personalized learning environment where students can access educational content tailored to their interests and learning pace. This personalized approach not only improves retention but also encourages self-directed learning (Thaker, 2024).

On the hand, social media's impact on academic performance is a topic of ongoing research and debate. While these platforms could facilitate learning through educational content, group discussions, and networking opportunities, excessive use has led to distraction, reduced study time, and poor academic outcomes. Surveys indicate a strong correlation between high social media usage and lower grades among students, suggesting a need for balance (Pokhara, 2024). In any case, its positive impacts include enhanced student engagement, motivation, and access to diverse knowledge, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, challenges such as distractions, potential for reduced productivity, and the need for strategic implementation by educators remain important considerations. (Ahamiojie, 2024).

Collaborative learning gained significant attention in the 1980s and 1990s, with scholars like Kenneth Bruffee theorizing its importance in higher education. During this period, efforts were made to distinguish it from the related concept of cooperative learning, which is generally seen as more teacher-directed, while collaborative learning emphasizes

student-led discovery and interaction (Yang, 2023). Features like forums, group chats, and video conferencing enable real-time interaction and discussion, which are important for collaborative learning. Studies have shown that students using social media for group projects and discussions report higher levels of engagement and satisfaction (Ghosh, 2024).

Despite the growing interest in social media-based collaborative learning, there is limited research on how students in Nigerian universities perceive its use of social media for collaborative learning and its impact on their academic performance. It is in the light of this that this study aims to investigate the perceptions of University of Nigeria students towards using social media collaborative learning in enhancing their academic performance, with a focus on identifying the benefits, challenges, and implications for education.

### **Statement of the problem**

Limited research has been conducted on the perceptions of students towards using social media for collaborative learning, making it difficult for educators to design and implement effective social media-based collaborative learning strategies. This has created a gap between the widespread use of social media among students and the lack of understanding of how social media can be used to enhance academic performance through collaborative learning.

There is a need for a student-centred approach to understanding the use of social media for collaborative learning, as current research often focuses on the perspectives of educators rather than students. As a result of this, this research aims to investigate the perception of students of the University Of Nigeria, Nsukka, towards using social media collaborative learning in enhancing academic performance.

### **Research questions**

1. What are the perceptions of undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka students towards using social media for collaborative learning in enhancing academic performance?
2. How does social media use relate to academic performance among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka?
3. What are the challenges undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka face when using social media for collaborative learning?

### **Literature review**

### **Empirical review**

In a bid to examine students' perceptions of online learning and social interaction, Salamah et al., (2020), embarked of a study. The descriptive qualitative method was used, with group discussion forums, online surveys, observation instruments with the research subjects of the 2018 class of PGMI students of STAI, Indonesia. The Purposive sampling technique was also adopted to select the respondents. The experiment comprised six distinct groups with the five of it being collaborative and one being non-collaborative in learning style. All the groups were exposed to mobile learning instructional content. The data gathered through the specially-developed instruments were analysed through proper statistical techniques. Result showed that online learning on campus is integrated with applications such as Google classroom, WhatsApp, Zoom, Jitsi, Google meet, etc., for teleconferencing during student presentations and discussions.

Similarly, Liu et al., (2022), studied social media-based collaborative learning effects on student performance/learner Performance with moderating role of academic self-efficacy. The survey procedure was used to gather data from different universities in China. Findings indicated that active learning was an important component needed to boost interest toward collaborative effort because the individuals involved work out their specific learning. Also, when students see the assistance given to scholarly activity, their approach toward collaborative learning improves, focusing on completing the course and acquiring skills and knowledge.

On their own, Chein, Jie and Choo (2021), studied collaborative learning and social media acceptance for student engagement. The study was conducted when most public and private tertiary institutions were suspending their face-to-face classes and moving to online and e-learning modes in which Malaysia was in the condition of heavily restricted movements. 201 Malaysian tertiary students from public and private universities completed the survey forms via purposive and snowball sampling methods. Descriptive analysis was done in SPSS, whereas model validation and structural model were analyzed using Smart-PLS 3.3. Result revealed that collaborative learning positively influenced the interaction with peers and lecturers and knowledge-sharing behavior.

Furthermore, Shamsiah et al., (2020), worked on antecedents of students' attitudes towards social media for collaborative learning. The study proposed a conceptual model that analysed the role of the following factors as antecedents of attitudes towards SMBCL: academic self-efficacy, social comparison concern, flow, student interest, social presence, active learning, and perceived benefits. The result showed three

variables that were key antecedents of attitude towards collaborative learning: active learning, flow experience, and perceived benefits.

In the same vein, Boruzie, Kolog and Egala (2020), researched on social network for collaborative learning: what are the determining factors? By sampling 360 students from universities in Ghana, a partial least square structural equation modelling was used to explore the determinants of using social networks for collaborative learning. Result showed that perceived ease of use of social networks, usefulness of social networks, perceived enjoyment from social network use, subjective norm, and user satisfaction were the major factors that determined students' behaviours towards the use of social networks for collaborative learning. Additionally, the study found social networks as useful tools to better the academic performance of students in higher educational institutions.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Community of Practice(CoP) Theory**

The concept was first proposed by educational theorist Etienne Wenger and cognitive anthropologist Jean Lave in their 1991 book, *Situated Learning*. Wenger significantly expanded on this concept in his 1998 book, *Communities of Practice*.

Community of Practice (CoP) theory is a social learning theory that describes how groups of people learn and develop expertise through shared interactions and experiences. It emphasizes that learning is a social process where knowledge is created and shared within a community, rather than being a solely individual endeavor. CoP is characterized by a shared domain of interest, a community of people, and a practice or activity they engage in.

The relevance of this theory to this study is that it is effectively used in social media-based collaborative learning by leveraging its principles of shared interest, interaction, and knowledge sharing to foster learning communities. Social media platforms provide a convenient and engaging space for individuals with a common domain to connect, learn from each other, and develop their practice.

## **Methodology**

For this study, the survey research design was considered most appropriate. This is because the study involved the respondents' psychological make-up, such as: behavior, beliefs, opinions, attitudes and motivations.

The undergraduates of University of Nigeria, Nsukka made up the population of this study. University Of Nigeria, Nsukka has a grand total

of 22,799 undergraduate students in Nsukka campus, according to the school's academic planning unit (2024-2025).

A representative set of the entire population in UNN campus was sampled. The Australian size calculator offered by the National Statistical Service (NSS) was used to determine the sample size for this study and a total number of 379 respondents were used as the sample.

The multi stage sampling approach was utilised. At the first stage, cluster sampling was used to divide the University of Nigeria into ten (10) faculties: Agriculture, Arts, Biological Sciences, Education, Engineering, Pharmacy, Physical sciences, Social Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, and Vocational and Technical Education. At the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select six faculties out of the existing ten faculties: Agriculture, Arts, Biological Sciences, Education, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences. In the third stage, Bowley's population sampling was used to divide the six selected faculties into departments. The various departments are shown in the table below. Finally, at the fourth stage, convenience sampling technique was used to select three departments from each faculty, giving the study a total of 18 departments. The Bowley's proportionate sampling technique was used to ensure corresponding and fair representation of the faculties in the distribution of the questionnaire vis-a-vis their respective population. Using a convenience sampling methodology, a non-probability sampling strategy in which a sample is taken from the most accessible portion of the population, the questionnaires were distributed in these departments. The distribution of questionnaires to chosen respondents who utilize Facebook was done in the last stage using the purposive sampling technique. The structured questionnaire was the instrument used to gather data during the course of the study.

The questionnaire employed the 4-point Likert scale to effectively direct user response. It also consists open-ended and close-ended questions to allow the respondents express themselves.

**Research question one: What are the perceptions of undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka students towards using social media for collaborative learning in enhancing academic performance?**

n=379

	Frequency	Percent
<b>How do you perceive the usefulness of social media for collaborative learning in your academic pursuits?</b>		
Not useful at all	43	11.3
Somewhat not useful	96	25.3
Neutral	61	16.1
Somewhat useful	109	28.8
Very useful	70	18.5
<b>Do you believe social media enhances your academic performance when used for collaborative learning?</b>		
Strongly agree	89	23.5
Agree	129	34
Disagree	108	28.5
Strongly disagree	53	14
<b>How likely are you to recommend using social media for collaborative learning to your peers?</b>		
Not likely at all	73	19.3
Somewhat not likely	124	32.7
Somewhat likely	109	28.8
Very likely	73	19.3
<b>How effective do you think social media is in facilitating group discussions and idea-sharing among students?</b>		
Very effective	189	49.9
Not effective at	89	23.5

all		
Somewhat effective	101	26.6

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Research question two: How does social media use relate to academic performance among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka?**

n=379

	Frequency	Percent
<b>How often do you use social media for academic purposes (e.g., discussing assignments, sharing resources)?</b>		
Often	107	28.2
Always	145	38.3
Occasionally	82	21.6
Rarely	45	11.9
<b>Do you think using social media for collaborative learning has improved your academic performance?</b>		
Strongly agree	111	29.3
Agree	125	33
Strongly Disagree	90	23.7
Disagree	53	14
<b>How many hours do you spend on social media per week for academic purposes?</b>		
Less than 1 hour	40	10.6
1 - 2 hours	96	25.3
2 - 3 hours	85	22.4
3 - 4 hours	74	19.5
More than 5 hours	84	22.2

**Do you believe there's a**

**positive correlation between your social media use and your academic grades?**

Strongly Disagree	47	12.4
Disagree	95	25.1
Neutral	62	16.4
Agree	92	24.3
Strongly Agree	83	21.9

Source: Field Survey, 2025

**Research question three: What are the challenges undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka face when using social media for collaborative learning?**

n=379

	Frequency	Percent
<b>How often do you experience distractions while using social media for academic purposes?</b>		
Almost never	108	28.5
Rarely	126	33.2
Often	84	22.2
Almost always	61	16.1
<b>How significant is the impact of technical issues on your use of social media for collaborative learning?</b>		
Not significant at all	72	19
Somewhat not significant	106	28
Somewhat significant	113	29.8
Very significant	88	23.2
<b>How concerned are you about information overload</b>		

**when using social media for academic purposes?**

Not concerned at all	62	16.4
Somewhat not concerned	110	29
Somewhat concerned	111	29.3
Very concerned	96	25.3

**How challenging do you find managing your time when using social media for collaborative learning?**

Not challenging at all	61	16.1
Somewhat not challenging	125	33
Somewhat challenging	129	34
Very challenging	64	16.9

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**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Discussion of findings**

Findings on research question one revealed that most undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, perceive social media as a useful tool for collaborative learning in enhancing their academic performance. Many respondents acknowledged that social media platforms play a significant role in facilitating academic collaboration, knowledge exchange, and interaction among peers. However, while a substantial portion of students found social media beneficial for group learning activities, a smaller but notable number expressed skepticism about its usefulness, viewing it as less effective for academic engagement. This finding aligns with the study by Salamah et al., (2020), which revealed that students' experiences with online lectures were generally positive, although they faced certain challenges such as poor internet connectivity and difficulty understanding materials that were only presented through assignments or limited discussions conducted via the SIAKAD platform.

Findings on research question two revealed that social media use among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, is strongly connected to their academic activities and performance. A majority of the respondents reported that they frequently used social media for academic purposes, with many indicating that they relied on it consistently for study-related communication, group discussions, and accessing learning materials. This finding is consistent with the study by Liu et al., (2022) which identified three key characteristics as significant predictors of attitudes toward flow experience, active and collaborative learning, and perceived advantages.

Findings on research question three revealed that undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, encounter several challenges when using social media for collaborative learning, even though many recognize its academic benefits. One of the major issues identified was distraction. While a significant number of respondents reported that they were rarely or almost never distracted when using social media for academic purposes, a notable proportion admitted that distractions occurred often. This finding is supported by Boruzie, Kolog and Egala (2020) which discovered that perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, subjective norms, and user satisfaction were the major determinants shaping students' attitudes toward using social networks for collaborative learning.

## **Conclusion**

### **Summary of Findings**

The study establishes that social media serves as a significant tool for collaborative learning and academic improvement among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Findings reveal that most students acknowledged that social media enhances understanding and academic performance when used constructively and for educational purposes.

However, the study also highlights that the effectiveness of social media in academic contexts depends on how students manage its use. Challenges such as distractions, poor internet connectivity, information overload, and time management difficulties often limit its full potential. While social media offers a convenient and interactive space for learning, it also requires discipline and intentional use to prevent it from becoming a source of diversion.

### **Recommendations**

- (i) Students should be encouraged to use social media platforms primarily for academic collaboration, knowledge sharing, and research-related discussions.
- (ii) Students should be sensitized on effective time management strategies to balance their academic and social media activities.
- (iii) Students should be encouraged to join or create academic-focused online communities where they can interact with peers, share knowledge, and access credible academic resources.

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