

Influence of social media usage on the communication skills of adolescents in Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

As social media use increases, its role in adolescent self-expression and communication becomes increasingly significant. This study addresses a gap in the literature by examining social media usage and its relationship with communication skills among adolescents in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 145 adolescents through questionnaires, with reliability confirmed via test-retest ($r = 0.76$). Descriptive and inferential statistics revealed that WhatsApp is the most frequently used platform, followed by Facebook and Snapchat. Most participants reported daily use of social media for various purposes. A correlation was found between time spent on social media and self-rated communication skills, though opinions on its impact varied. These findings highlight the complex relationship between social media and adolescent communication, suggesting the need for targeted interventions. The study recommends the development of educational programs to improve adolescents' media literacy and promote healthier social media engagement.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 24 December 2024

Accepted 20 April 2025

KEY WORDS

Study habits; academic achievement, time management; undergraduate students, attitude towards study

INTRODUCTION

The increased use of social media has greatly changed the landscape in communication, thus shaping how people engage in worldwide exchanges. Its widespread use is especially notable in adults, thanks to its simple interface and relative simplicity in navigation (Rideout & Robb, 2018). The same is observed in Abuja, known as Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. Adults in this territory have also adapted to this shift in modes of communication and have established relationships across borders. In this context, in this research, there is a need to explore in detail the complex dynamics involved in using social media and communicative abilities in Abuja in line with modern usage trends, varied functionalities, and implications for general communicative ability. The rising use of social media has prompted research on how it affects human behaviour and societal advancement. Physically distant adolescents come together in such sites for information and social reasons and freely and easily exchange information while closing the gen insights about social media, especially in improving adult societies, touching on possible virtues and limitations in using it.

The previously discussed research has specifically emphasised the way interconnectedness is established through social media, allowing adults to keep in touch, receive assistance, and quickly build relationships with each other. Afolabi et al. (2010), Ojo et al. (2022), Ojo et al. (2023), and Kros et al. (2013) place social media as essentially a self-expression tool, in which ado-

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lescents are able to voice their imagination, share moments, and form identities in a virtual space. On the other hand, there have been stories recounting the negative aspects involved in using social media, especially in addiction and possible negative implications like lower self-esteem, cyberbullying, excessive lack of sleep, and violation of personal space, among others (Wang et al. 2019). Twenge and Campbell (2018), in research on screen time in the context of adolescents and children in addressing outcomes in mental health, offer proof about negative consequences resulting from excessive use of screens and social media on adolescents' cognitive health.

The potential benefits of using social media—particularly in enhancing school performance—form a central objective of this research. Some authors (Bowman & Cohen, 2018; Bowman et al., 2018) argue that social media encourages improved communication, collaboration, and self-expression. However, they also express concerns about its negative implications, such as increased irritability and dependency on short-form content. Similarly, Livingstone et al. (2010), in their study on online risks and security, identified various threats and concerns that young people face due to the widespread use of the internet.

The difficulties in children engaging in digital technology have come to be known as a serious problem in European nations, as extensive surveys and research articles in peer-reviewed journals have raised concerns about the dangers of digital communication. One major problem in this context is cyber victimisation and online victimhood across digital media. As outlined in a research report published by the European Commission (2018), nearly one-third of adolescents in Europe have faced different forms of online victimhood, such as online harassment, social rejection, and unauthorised dissemination of personal information. Such incidents can produce serious negative affective responses in forms like anxiety, depression, and increased distress in social situations. An equally serious problem concerns security and privacy risks in online spheres involving children.

A variety of online sites, including educational and online social networks, harvest personal information about children, often without informing them or ensuring they have enough awareness. The research programmes like the EU Kids Online have highlighted the fact that children are often lacking in awareness about risks involved in online disclosure of personal information and are thus vulnerable to identity theft and online forms of child exploitation (Livingstone et al., 2020). In fact, a 2020 EU Kids Online report found that at least 21% of children aged 12-16 in Europe do not know how to change their privacy settings on social media. The lack of transparency about information use makes matters worse and creates serious concerns about ensuring the security of personal information about children in today's online context (Livingstone et al., 2020).

Exposure to indecent or inappropriate content is another serious threat. As online engagement among children rises, so do their chances of being confronted with sexually graphic content (UNICEF, 2023), graphic violence, and hate speech—content widespread in video sites without appropriate controls. The impact on the child's psychological development caused by digital technology has been widely documented in academic research. The prevalence of unmoderated dangerous content was demonstrated by research on YouTube that found 11% of comments on children's films were poisonous (Papadamou et al., 2021).

Extended involvement in online games and social networking sites is associated with a variety of interlinked problems, including disturbances in sleep schedules, loss of physical activity, and increased anxiety level. The interactive nature of online games and online networking sites is causally related to these problems, and some have termed this trend as digital addiction. The idea that prolonged online engagement has serious negative health effects is supported by a systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Alimoradi et al. (2019), which discovered strong correlations between problematic internet use and sleep issues, as well as links to emotional distress and decreased physical well-being.

Repetitive behaviour involving self-comparison with idealised profiles on social media has been shown to negatively affect adolescents' self-perception, often leading to anxiety and depres-

sion—particularly among those who struggle with self-acceptance or are concerned about body image. Additionally, the use of digital modes of communication has been found to impair children's ability to engage in face-to-face conversations. Research by Taylor and Armes (2024) links decreased self-esteem and body image among adolescents to upward social comparisons on Instagram. To support young children's language development and communication skills, a study reported by the Times of India (2025) emphasises the importance of reducing screen time and prioritising interactive reading. This suggests that excessive reliance on digital communication may hinder the development of essential interpersonal skills.

As children use online networks and cell phone-based text messaging more and more, opportunities for direct face-to-face contact are being erased. The loss of direct speech may have profound implications for social and affective abilities, as well as for learning and application of non-verbal speech abilities. The research centre EU Kids Online theorises that this shift in behaviour is hindering the social and affective development of children as they use electronic gadgets as much as or more than direct human contact. This trend is increasingly raising questions about children's learning outcomes and the broader impact of ICT tools on education (Livingstone et al., 2020).

A study conducted in Europe, as explained in a report published by the European Agency for Safety and Work (2017), reveals that kids who are involved in extensive use of digital media often experience problems in sustaining concentration while learning. The problem is especially highlighted when digital stimuli like online entertainment, video games, and social networks are involved in procrastinating and cutting down on time devoted to learning. The lack of concentration can negatively impact their learning outcomes and cognitive development as a whole. The problem of digital literacy is another major source of distress for most children as well.

Notwithstanding the widespread use of digital tools among citizens, a major share of members of society lacks sufficient competency in efficiently navigating and safely using the online space. Studies have proven that kids are often lacking in awareness about security procedures involved in online use, especially in identifying scams, bypassing inappropriate content, and protecting personal information in facing online threats. Without sufficient training in digital literacy, such novice online users are vulnerable to being misled and facing negative online experiences. According to Livingstone et al. (2020), children across Europe demonstrate significant gaps in their ability to manage privacy settings and respond to risks in digital environments, emphasising the urgency of structured interventions. A joint attempt involving different department-based strategies for improving digital literacy, improving online security practices, and providing suitable guidelines for online tool usage and content access is a promising way out for addressing them. Moreover, problems in this context are not at all limited to European societies but have manifested as major concerns in different parts of the world, and hence it is necessary to incorporate these concerns in universal discourse related to online media usage among kids.

Historically, the existing research posits social media as a key tool for improving communication, and there have been multiple studies examining its ability to encourage collaboration, creativity, and self-expression. Afolabi et al. (2010) and Ojo et al. (2022), for instance, argue that social media presents opportunities for self-presentation and narration for its members, especially adolescents. Likewise, Livingstone et al. (2011) and Kross et al. (2013) affirm that social media allows relationships to be kept and makes easy and spontaneous sharing and discussion possible across distances. Yet, use of social media is not without problems, as cases involving cyberbullying, violation of personal space, and negative self-perception have been documented (Wang et al., 2019). Studies undertaken by Twenge and Campbell (2018) have illustrated correlations between excessive use and negative outcomes in health, including increased anxiety, increased pressure, and lower self-perception in adolescents.

Despite a rich corpus of research in the Global North on adolescents' social media use, there is little research examining adolescents' engagement with social media in African societies,

and specifically in Abuja, and subsequent implications for their communication abilities. The research undertaken by Kros et al. (2013) and Bowman et al. (2018) highlighted how social media can contribute to better collaboration and thereby improve communication abilities, but implications for adults in developing economies like Nigeria are still insufficiently studied. Similarly, while variations in use based on sex and age have been identified globally, there is little research focused specifically on implications for the use and application in Abuja residents based on these variables. An in-depth exploration of complex implications for communication in Abuja necessitates exploration based on the sociocultural context in the area, as well as the level of digital literacy and available technology.

In addition, while much research is focused on negative implications for social media use, for example, in lower attention (Bowman & Cohen, 2018) and dependency on shallow forms of communication, there is little research on how or if social media is re-shaping modes of communication in Abuja and specifically since there may be implications based on socio-economic and culture variables in this context.

In Abuja, a context in which there is a co-occurrence of modern and traditional forms of communication, the emergence of social media has created new channels for human engagement, potentially shaping individual competency in oral, non-verbal, and writing-based forms of communication (Kemi, 2016). However, there is a notable lack of a thorough exploration of how social media affects communication in this context since much research in this area is based on generalisations applicable across whole nations or worldwide. The current research intends to bridge this gap in research by targeting specifically the population in Abuja and measuring how social media affects communication competency in an urban context (Alabi & Jinjiri, 2024; Tsebee, 2024). In addition, this research examining the interrelationship between use of social media and communication in Abuja is expected to provide insights for key players, including policymakers, educators, and parents, thereby informing targeted interventions and learning strategies making use of the opportunities created by social media while mitigating possible negative outcomes.

Notwithstanding the available research examining gender variations in the use of social media in different locales, there is still a significant paucity of empirical research specifically examining Abuja, given Nigeria's status as a capital metropolis. Gender-based variations in engagement in social media can occur in multiple dimensions, including selection of sites, usage frequency, and reasons for use (i.e., for self-expression, learning, or social connectivity). As an illustration, previous research has proven that female and male adolescents have dramatically different usage patterns in sites for social media use; females use them for relationships and self-expression far more extensively than females use them for entertainment and games (e.g., Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2011).

However, usage trends identified in previous research are, for the most part, derived from Western or urban-based research and may not adequately represent the culture, education, and society unique to Nigeria and Abuja. Within the multicultural and cosmopolitan context of Abuja, Nigeria is expected to experience complex dynamics related to gender roles as a result of navigating modern and traditional values. Gender differentials are expected to occur in how male and female adolescents in Abuja use and relate to social media and in how susceptible they are to variables like socio-economic status, educational background, and prevalent societal perception towards gender roles. For example, Adigwe (2024) points out that girls are more likely to use social networking and interact with strangers, whilst guys are more likely to access online gambling and pornographic information. Differences in digital literacy, parental control, and use of technology can be sex-dependent and consequently impact usage behaviour. Thus, this makes research examining the influence of gender on adolescents' use of social media in Abuja highly meaningful.

Despite the vast research on adolescents' use of social media and related gender variations, there is still a major research gap in examining variations in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of

Abuja. Consistent with trends identified in foreign research conducted by Manago et al. (2023), this research contends that female adolescents in Abuja use social media for reasons related to cultivating close relationships and validation related to bodily appearances. On the other hand, as identified in research conducted by Akafa et al. (2024), male adolescents in Abuja use social media for competitive reasons and have a leaning towards sports and games content.

The unique socio-culture in Abuja is a key research gap area, potentially improving our comprehension of how trends in usage related to gender are connected to wider research findings globally. An exploration of possible variations in usage based on gender, usage frequency, or reasons for usage may provide valuable information about the influence of gender in shaping adolescents' online behaviour and digital literacy in communications. For example, Akafa et al. (2024) discovered that whereas male students in a public senior secondary school in Abuja favour gaming and sports-related material, female students are more likely to be drawn to visual content platforms. Furthermore, gender-based differences in parental control, digital proficiency, and technological access frequently influence how people use technology. Adigwe (2024) points out that whilst boys are more likely to access online gambling and pornographic information, girls are more inclined to interact with strangers and use social networking. These disparities highlight the need for studies that look at how gender affects teenagers' usage of social media in Abuja, since this will offer important information for focused interventions and instructional tactics.

Adolescents living in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT) use social media in a widespread manner, leading to questions about how it may affect their ability to communicate. Social media presents unique opportunities for self-expression and communication, but there are concerns about how it affects writing, non-verbal communication, and speech. Various interventions have been created in a bid to curb adolescents who are inefficient in conveying good communication skills; still, no remarkable improvement is noticed. The main objective of this research is to evaluate and explore the major social media sites being used by adolescents in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and to evaluate if there is a correlation between the length of time they use social media and the level at which they are efficient in conveying good communication skills. Also, this research tries to explore adolescents' perception towards social media and test hypotheses related to the impact of sex, age, and use of social media on writing, non-verbal communication, and speech.

This study aimed to resolve the following research questions: (i) Which social networks are most widely used among adolescents in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?; (ii) What is the link between adolescents in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and their preferred social network sites and communications abilities?; and (iii) What responsibilities are adolescents given in matters related to social media in the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja?

Furthermore, the following hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance: (i) there is no significant difference in adolescents' use of different social media platforms based on gender; (ii) there is no significant correlation between adolescents' age, their level of communicability, and the duration of their social media use in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja; and (iii) social media usage significantly affects the verbal, non-verbal, and written communication skills of adolescents in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

This study provides context-specific insights into how social media influences adolescents' communication behaviours in Abuja, Nigeria. Set in an urban, multicultural African environment, the research draws attention to the unique sociocultural factors that shape digital communication practices. It underscores the impact of social media use on adolescents' written, spoken, and non-verbal communication skills, emphasising the need for targeted educational interventions. The findings of this study offer valuable empirical evidence to inform the development of digital literacy curricula in schools and can assist curriculum designers, educators, and policymakers. Moreover, the research contributes to a broader understanding of digital inclusion and supports global initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly

those focused on quality education and reduced inequalities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From a theoretical perspective, Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory offers a strong framework for understanding how people learn and develop their communication skills in the social media sphere. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) explains how social media enables people, and especially adolescents, to develop and improve their communicative skills with the assistance of social media. SCT emphasises a lot in observational learning, whereby adolescents learn by observing behaviours displayed by peers, celebrities, and social media influencers across a variety of social media such as WhatsApp and Facebook.

According to Bandura's views on reflection and regulation, people evaluate and adjust their forms of communication following online interactions. Social media thus fosters a dynamic environment that encourages effective forms of communication. Valkenburg and Peter (2013) believe that adolescents mimic verbal and non-verbal communicative behaviours in online environments. This view has been supported by Lenhart et al. (2015) and Primack et al. (2017), who argue that social media provides adolescents with opportunities to learn and develop communicative skills through interactive feedback and interactions.

Notwithstanding its contributions, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) has faced criticism—particularly for its emphasis on observational learning. Critics argue that not all social media activity offers constructive models to emulate, as adolescents are often exposed to unrealistic or harmful portrayals of life. Valkenburg and Peter (2013) caution that such exposure can impair adolescents' communication skills, while Kross et al. (2013) report that social media use can negatively affect well-being, thereby hindering the healthy development of communication abilities.

The implications of such a theory are significant, particularly in explaining how adolescents in Abuja learn to communicate via social media. This study must address both benefits and potential risks involved in social behaviours in terms of learning to communicate and risks involved in being exposed to harmful content. The theory centred around the significance of examining social media objectives and effects for those utilising it. The study thus attempted to explore how adolescents in the said region perceive social media use and how such perceptions connect to their capacity to communicate. This study will inform efforts to enhance effective use of social media by youth and enhance their capacity to communicate.

METHOD

In this study, a cross-sectional study design was applied to collect data at a single point in time. This helped in having a clear overview of adolescents' use of social media and how it affected their communication skills. The effectiveness of cross-sectional studies in determining prevalence and relationships within populations is well known (Levin, 2006; Setia, 2016). This design is an appropriate choice for this research context because it is especially well-suited for investigating relationships between variables in large samples without necessitating extensive follow-up. Both convenience and stratified sampling techniques were adopted to ensure proper representation from different cohorts of adolescents in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Convenience sampling was applied in enrolling participants according to whether they were willing and volunteered to participate, while stratified sampling helped in ensuring a combination of different demographic segments.

The research sample comprised 145 adolescents from junior and senior secondary schools in Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT). To guarantee equitable representation across various demographic groups, a combination of convenience and stratified sampling methods was used to choose the participants. While convenience sampling made it possible to include stu-

dents who were available and willing to participate, adhering to the correct consent and assent procedures, stratified sampling was used to capture diversity in school types, age groups, and gender. The participants' ages ranged from 10 to 19 years, with two major age groups represented: 10–14 years and 15–19 years. Because early, middle, and late adolescence are represented in this age segmentation, it is possible to investigate potential developmental differences in social media usage and communication skills. Gender distribution made up of 84 males and 61 females, which suggests a somewhat balanced sample with a slight male preponderance. Students from Abuja's public and private secondary schools made up the sample, and respondents were enrolled in grades JSS₁ through SSS₃.

A structured questionnaire titled "The Social Media Use on Communication Skills among Adolescents" was filled out by each participant. It assessed platform usage patterns, online time, and self-reported communication proficiency in the written, spoken, and nonverbal domains. In urban educational settings in Nigeria, the findings are more relevant and generalisable because of the respondent profile, which guarantees that the sample includes a representative cross-section of adolescents in Abuja. The researchers-developed instrument had two different parts: Section A, which collected demographic information like age and gender, and Section B, which included ten (10) items covering social media use patterns, perceived social media roles, self-assessment of communication skills, and other related factors. A five-point Likert scale was used in this section to rate each respondent's opinion for each item. Face and content validity for the questionnaire were ensured, and reliability was tested using a test-retest technique with a coefficient value of 0.76, which represents a good level of reliability.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), which emphasises the role of modelling, imitation, and observational learning in behaviour acquisition, served as the primary theoretical foundation for the development of the research instrument. According to this theory, adolescents who use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp observe their peers, role models, and influencers, and internalise both verbal and nonverbal communication behaviours (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013; Primack et al., 2017). Consequently, the questionnaire items were designed to reflect key SCT constructs, including outcome expectations, perceived self-efficacy in communication, and observational learning. For example, Bandura's (2001) concept of self-regulation in mediated environments informed the items that assess adolescents' perceived ability to express themselves effectively in online settings.

Both closed-ended and Likert-scale items were included in the survey. In Section B, variables like platform usage frequency, social media engagement types, and self-assessed oral, written, and nonverbal communication skills were examined. In Section A, demographic data (age, gender, school type, and grade) were covered. Expert review by experts in adolescent psychology and communication studies guaranteed the instrument's content validity.

The data was analysed using basic percentage calculations, mean values, standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), multiple regression methods, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Multiple Regression Analysis was used to ascertain the predictive value of variables like age and gender on communication outcomes. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the relationship between social media usage and communication skills, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to look at group differences. In social science research, these techniques are widely used to examine correlations between interval or ratio variables (Field, 2018; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). The test-retest method was used to confirm the instrument's reliability, and the results showed an acceptable internal consistency with a coefficient of $r = 0.76$ (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the key findings from the data gathered on adolescents' social media use in Abuja, Nigeria. An emphasis is placed on how it relates to communication abilities. The re-

sults shed light on how social media affects teenage communication habits using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Table 1 provides the demographic distribution of respondents by age and gender. Most respondents fall into the 15-19 years age group (76.6%), with the remaining in the 10-14 years age group (22.8%). Gender distribution shows a slight majority of males (57.9%) compared to females (42.1%).

Table 1 Demographic distribution of respondents by age and gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	10-14 years	34	22.8	22.8	22.8
	15-19 years	111	76.6	76.6	99.3
	Total	145	100.0	100.0	
Gender	Male	84	57.9	57.9	57.9
	Female	61	42.1	42.1	100.0
	Total	145	100.0	100.0	

Research Question 1: Which social networks are most widely used among adolescents in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?

Table 2 indicates social media platforms that Abuja teenagers frequently use. The majority of adolescents use WhatsApp (44.8%) as a social media platform. Many use social media platforms daily (66.9%). This indicates that WhatsApp is the favourite platform, followed by Facebook. This fits our expectation that platforms that enable individuals to chat and communicate would be preferred by teenagers.

Table 2 Descriptive analysis of the frequency of adolescent visits to social media platforms

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
What social media platforms do you use?	WhatsApp	65	44.8	2.4138	1.60981
	Snapchat	27	18.6		
	TikTok	13	9.0		
	Instagram	8	5.5		
	Facebook	32	22.1		
	Total	145	100.0		
How often do you visit each of the listed social media platforms?	Daily	97	66.9	1.5172	.92123
	Several times a week	31	21.4		
	Once a week	9	6.2		
	Less than one week	5	3.4		
	Never	3	2.1		
	Total	145	100.0		

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 2: What is the link between adolescents in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and their preferred social network sites and communications abilities?

Table 3 indicates that the (-0.014) value associated with the variable indicates that social media hours decrease by 0.014 units on average for each additional hour spent on social media. This value is not statistically significant ($p = 0.840$) and indicates that social media hours and hours spent on social media do not have a strong relationship. The value associated with this va-

riable is 0.008 and indicates that social media hours increase by 0.008 units for each increase in a communication skills rating. However, like with social media hours and hours spent on social media, this value is not statistically significant ($p = 0.648$) and indicates that social media hours and a communication skills rating do not have a strong relationship. The study could not establish a strong relationship between hours spent by adolescents using social media and a communication skills rating in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory. Thus, social media hours and communication skills rating do not influence each other.

Table 3 Correlation between time spent on social media and communication skills

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.674	.145		11.528	.000
	Social Media Hours	-.014	.068	-.018	-.202	.840
	Communication Skills Rating	.008	.017	.040	.457	.648

a. Dependent Variable: social media hours

Research Question 3: What responsibilities are adolescents given in matters related to social media in the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja?

For Research Question 3, which considers what responsibilities adolescents are given in matters related to social media in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Table 4 presents figures comparing means and standard deviations for two different social media use questions. This indicates that, on average, adolescents in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, use social media primarily for different roles with a mean score of approximately 1.7793. The standard deviation of 0.93889 reflects different responses, and thus different preferred social media types.

Responses vary from a minimum score of 0.00 to a maximum score of 3.00, and all 145 participants provide valid responses. On average, adolescents in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, believe social media plays other significant roles, with a mean score of approximately 1.1586. The lower standard deviation of 0.36659 reflects fewer variations in responses compared to primary use of social media, and thus a common perception in other significant roles. Responses vary from a minimum score of 1.00 to a high score of 2.00, and all 145 participants provide valid responses. Descriptive analysis indicates that adolescents in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, use social media primarily for different roles with different preferences. Furthermore, adolescents in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, have a common perception in other significant roles in which social media plays a role.

Table 4 Descriptive analysis of the perceived functions of social media among adolescents

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What do you primarily use social media for? (Provide options such as connecting with friends, sharing photos/videos, staying updated with news/events, entertainment)	145	.00	3.00	1.7793	.93889
Does social media serves any other important functions for you?	145	1.00	2.00	1.1586	.36659
Valid N (listwise)	145				

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in social media platform use frequencies among adolescents by gender in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Table 5 Independent samples t-test results comparing time spent on social network sites and communication skills of adolescents by gender

	Males	Females	
Mean Visits to Social Media	10.6429	11.2459	-.60304
Standard Deviation	2.78396	2.46749	
Sample Size	84	61	
Degrees of Freedom	143		
t-statistic	-1.376		
p-value	0.171		
95% CI of the Difference	-1.48614, .28005		
	-1.46967, -.26358		

As demonstrated in Table 5, a p-value of 0.171 represents a probability value of 17.1% for observing the difference in average visit frequencies to social media sites by males and females. Since the p-value surpasses the standard value of 0.05 (or 5%), it's impossible to reject the null hypothesis. With a value of $p = 0.171$, it can be concluded that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) that there is no difference in visits to social media sites by adolescents by gender in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Based on the analysis and tests carried out, it's clear that gender does not have a considerable impact on adolescent visits to social media sites in Abuja's Federal Capital Territory.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between the amount of time spent on social media and adolescents communication skills in relation to their ages in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Table 6 on correlation analysis shows the correlation coefficient between communication skills rating and social media hours is 0.269. The p-value associated with this correlation coefficient is 0.001, less than 0.01 (significant at the 0.01 level). There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.269$) between communication skills rating and social media hours among adolescents. Therefore, this indicates that as the amount of time spent on social media increases, communication skills ratings also tend to increase.

The correlation coefficient between social media hours and age of adolescents is 0.214. The p-value associated with this correlation coefficient is 0.010, which is less than 0.01 (significant at the 0.01 level). There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.214$) between social media hours and the age of adolescents. Hence, this suggests that older adolescents spend more time on social media compared to younger adolescents.

The correlation coefficient between communication skills rating and age of adolescents is 0.127. The p-value associated with this correlation coefficient is 0.129, which is greater than 0.01 (not significant at the 0.01 level). There is no statistically significant correlation between communication skills rating and the age of adolescents at the 0.01 level. However, there may still be a weak positive relationship between these variables. The data suggest that there is a significant positive correlation between time spent on social media and communication skills rating among adolescents. Additionally, there is a significant positive correlation between social media hours and the age of adolescents.

However, there is no statistically significant correlation between communication skills ra-

ting and the age of adolescents at the 0.01 level. Based on these results, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{02}) and conclude that there is a significant relationship between the amount of time spent on social media and adolescents' communication skills in relation to their ages in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Table 6 Correlation between time spent on social media and communication skills by age group among adolescents

		Communi- cation Skills Rating	Social Me- dia Hours	Age of Ado- lescent
Communication Skills Rating	Pearson Correlation	1	.269**	.127
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.129
	N	145	145	145
Social Media Hours	Pearson Correlation	.269**	1	.214**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.010
	N	145	145	145
Age of Adolescents	Pearson Correlation	.127	.214**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.129	.010	
	N	145	145	145

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H_{03} : Social media usage significantly affects the verbal, non-verbal, and written communication skills of adolescents in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Table 7 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on influence of social media usage on adolescents communication skills

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.724	3	.908	1.031	.381b
	Residual	124.214	141	.881		
	-Total	126.938	144			

The data in Table 7 reveal that the F-statistic from the regression analysis to forecast social media use in terms of predicting adolescents' verbal, non-verbal, and written communication skills is 1.031. The p-value (Sig.) associated with the F-statistic in this case is 0.381, which is beyond the standard value of 0.05. We thus fail to reject the null hypothesis because the p-value is beyond 0.05. The results reveal that there is no evidence to conclude that social media use has a significant effect on adolescents' verbal, non-verbal, and written communication skills in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, because the regression model fails to be statistically significant. Overall, findings from the ANOVA reveal that predictors of social media use in the regression model do not sufficiently explain a statistically significant variance in adolescents' communication skills. Accordingly, null hypothesis (H_{03}) is accepted.

The findings from studies into what social media platforms adolescents use most reveal that Abuja's Federal Capital Territory residents mainly use WhatsApp and Facebook, with WhatsApp having the highest user involvement. Regularly using these social media platforms defines adolescents and reflects a high level of involvement. Adolescents can use different forms of online and offline communications, which can counterbalance social media use's negative effects on interpersonal communications. Therefore, they tend to use face-to-face interactions or alternative means of communication such as text and video messages, thus making them have a variety of communicatory options.

The use of these social media platforms by adolescents in Abuja supports earlier studies by Rideout and Robb (2018) and Lenhart et al. (2015), who had identified WhatsApp and Facebook as two social media platforms with high use by adolescents across the globe. In addition, various studies have continued to show that adolescents use social media a lot, as indicated by high use, according to Primack et al. (2017). The frequency with which adolescents in Abuja use these technologies daily is in agreement with high use documented in earlier studies. However, a variety of studies have established relationships between high use and negative impacts such as a reduction in well-being or a high likelihood of being bullied online, for example, by Twenge et al. (2018) and Primack et al. (2017).

The results regarding the number of hours spent on preferred social networking sites revealed no statistically significant relationship between social media use and adolescents' communication abilities. Despite high levels of social media engagement, there appears to be no discernible impact on adolescents' verbal, non-verbal, or written communication in Abuja. It is possible that adolescents in Abuja use social media for productive purposes—such as maintaining friendships, seeking social support, or engaging in collaborative activities—which may enhance rather than impair their communicative skills.

The finding that social media use does not have a perceptible impact on Abuja adolescents' verbal, non-verbal, or written forms of communication concurs with previous studies by Kross et al. (2013) and Valkenburg and Peter (2009), which also revealed no relationship between social media use and youth's communication skills. This lack of correlation contradicts findings from studies by Rosen et al. (2013) and Twenge and Campbell (2018), who theorised that high social media use may impair face-to-face communications skills or impede language acquisition.

The results with regard to social media's impact on adolescents in Abuja reveal that these adolescents use social media for a variety of reasons, such as socialisation with peers, entertainment, acquisition of information, and following current events. Generally, adolescents in Abuja report that social media plays other important roles. Nevertheless, a section of these adolescents perceives social media to be playing other essential roles, and such a limited perception reflects a limited awareness of what social media has to offer beyond socialisation and entertainment. This could be due to a lack of access to social media's educational, professional, or civic opportunities. Contributing to such could be differences in digital competency, differences in access to resources, or social norms in Abuja in terms of social media use. This may result in a limited perception and awareness of social media's wider possibilities.

Previous studies by Boyd (2014) and Livingstone et al. (2011) have established a wider set of perceived social media functions beyond entertainment and socialisation, including information gathering, expression, and identity formation. This finding contrasts with previous studies by Valkenburg and Peter (2011) and Vannucci et al. (2017), which established socialisation and entertainment as adolescents' major reasons for using social media in Abuja. The result that, on average, adolescents in Abuja use social media for a variety of reasons corroborates the common perception with regard to social media's multifaceted roles in these adolescents' lives.

The present research has shown that gender does not lead to a statistically significant difference in social media use among adolescents. Social media use patterns among Abuja adolescents seem to be independent of gender. Abuja adolescents have relatively consistent social media use patterns, with similarities in terms of social media platforms used, content viewed, and use styles, regardless of gender. Interests, peer influences, and cultural norms could be more important in influencing social media use than differences due to gender. The results revealing a lack of a statistically significant difference in social media use between male and female adolescents in Abuja corroborate earlier studies by Lenhart et al. (2015) and Wang et al. (2019), who documented limited gender differences in social media use. This study did not reveal a statistically significant difference in social media use between Abuja's male and female adolescents, contrary to earlier studies by Smith and Anderson (2018) and Vogel et al. (2014), which established the existence of

gender differences in social media use patterns. These earlier studies suggested that males and females may exhibit differences in terms of preferred platforms, use frequencies, or use styles in social media environments.

Finally, findings revealed that across different age groups, no significant relationship exists between the time spent on social media and adolescents' communication skills. Age does not emerge as a determining factor in the relationship between social media usage and communication skills among adolescents in Abuja. Possible explanations for the absence of notable age-related variations in social media usage and communication skills among adolescents in Abuja might stem from the fact that adolescents spanning various age brackets could possess comparable levels of digital literacy and adeptness, owing to their early and continuous exposure to digital technologies. abilities among adolescents in Abuja could be explained by the possibility that adolescents in different age groups have similar levels of digital literacy and proficiency due to early and ongoing exposure to digital technologies.

Moreover, the common use of smartphones, social media, and messaging applications is expected to create a consistent digital platform that closes intergenerational gaps, thus ensuring social media use and its implications remain consistent. Research by Rideout and Robb (2018) and Wang et al. (2019) has provided different findings in regard to age and social media use among adolescents. Previous studies by Primack et al. (2017) and Odgers and Jensen (2020) have suggested that younger adolescents can be uniquely susceptible to social media's impacts on their psychosocial health and ability to communicate. The finding that age and social media use have a weak correlation, and that social media use and communications skills have a weak correlation, contradicts this hypothesis and may imply that age has no impact on social media activities and their implications among adolescents in Abuja.

The study's findings have multi-faceted and mixed implications. To begin with, the findings enrich our understanding of adolescents' social media use and their communications skills in Abuja Federal Capital Territory. This information proves to be very important for policy makers, teachers, and parents in coming up with plans that promote the effective use of social media and increase adolescents' communications skills. In addition, the study outlines the specific social media platforms that adolescents in FCT use predominantly and how they view social media's functions, which can have a huge impact in coming up with media literacy programs and digital citizenship curricula.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the intricate dynamics of adolescent social media use in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Although social media sites are useful platforms for socialization and entertainment, they do not appear to have a detrimental effect on the communication skills of adolescents. These findings underscore the need for an equilibrium approach to responding to social media's impact on adolescent development, the importance of digital literacy, parental guidance, and policy actions to ensure that online experience is positive. Further research must address the long-term effects of social media usage on adolescent well-being and guide evidence-based responses to promoting healthy digital habits.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations for action are proposed: (i) Educational programs need to be developed and implemented for the improvement of adolescents' media literacy competence. These programs must be designed with a focus on promoting digital citizenship, critical thinking, and responsible social media usage. The focus should be placed on empowering adolescents with the competencies to safely and effectively utilise social media platforms and encouraging positive digital habits. (ii) Policy makers should demand that legislation be developed and enforced to ensure responsible use of social media by teenagers. This entails implementing protection guidelines against possible risks such as cyberbullying, online predators, and other forms of cyber threats. Policies should enhance the safe and responsible use

of social media with a concentration on adolescents' well-being. (iii) More research is needed on the long-term effects of social media consumption on the communication abilities of adolescents as well as overall development. Future studies should also look into the specific impact of different social media platforms and content types on adolescents' communication ability, social relationships, and mental health.

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