



Research Article

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Influence of social media use on micro-level social capital among students of University of Ibadan

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Abstract

Scholars have argued on the possibility of social media use to increase and/or decrease social capital—a term that refers to benefits derived from social relationships and interactions at the individual level only, especially among university students. Therefore, this study examined the association between social media use and three subtypes (bonding, bridging, and maintained) of

social capital among students of the University of Ibadan (UI), who have access to and belong to at least a social networking sites (focusing on Facebook and Twitter). Uses and Gratification Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. The study deployed both quantitative and qualitative approaches by adopting a survey and Focus Group Discussion methods. The questionnaire and FGD guide were the instruments of data collection. Two hundred and seventy (270) constituted the sample size—two hundred and forty-three (243) participated in the survey, while 27 participants joined in the FGD sessions. The research adopted stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. Findings revealed a strong positive connection between the use of social media and bridging and bonding social capital but with lesser influence on bonding social capital as connections with close friends is less sensitive to the amount of communication when compared to bridging social capital. However, no connection among social media use and maintained social capital. Certain activities like directed communication and consumption on these platforms contribute to micro-level social capital. It is recommended that young adults should maximise the potentials of these social media platforms to accrue social benefits from their interactions with friends and families online.

Keywords – Maintenance of existing relationships, Micro-level capital, Social media, Social networking sites, Young adult

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media can be regarded as an essential part of the everyday life experiences of an increasing number of people, especially among young people (Kuppuswamy & Narayan, 2010; Meyer & Bray, 2013). It took radio broadcasters 28 years to reach 50 million audiences and for television, 13 years. Surprisingly, The Internet was able to achieve this within four years and Facebook, a social media network, in less than nine (9) months, reached 100 million users



(Qualman, 2009). Its widespread use is because it provides the opportunity for people to engage in quick online interaction in a situation where face-to-face interaction may not be possible, irrespective of distance and location. These platforms do promote not only maintenance of existing relationships but also support the establishment of new ties with people online, which may result in face-to-face meetings. Given this fact, their widespread use has received substantial scholarly attention that raises enquiries on whether its usage affects people's offline group interactions.

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) use tend toward creating and sustaining social relationships. An important question that one may need to post would be whether the use of social media contribute to social capital, which refers to "the resources and benefits individuals, communities and/or broader society derive from their social relationships, interactions, and group membership" (Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe, 2011, p. 4). Researchers have explored the relationship among SNSs use and different degrees of social capital, especially the meso and macro indicators in different climes. For instance, a study by Yang and DeHart (2016) investigates the relationship between social media use, social capital, and political participation. Researchers such as Kwon D'Angelo and McLeod (2013) and Ciboh (2016) have also started to conceptualize social capital at the personal (micro) level as a substitute for (meso) communal and societal (macro) level, especially by focusing on two particular subtypes (bridging and bonding) of social capital.

According to Ellison et al. (2007), it is important to comprehend the association among the use of social media and diverse subdivisions of micro-level social capital such as 'bonding', 'bridging', 'maintained' and 'linking' because benefits from being in networks may differ in type and purpose. In view of this, most studies such as Ellison et al. (2007), Johnston, Tanner, Lalla and Kawalski (2013), Ciboh (2016) and Putnam (200) have examined the connection between 'social media use and micro-level social capital' by depending on the distinction of bridging and bonding social capital'. Also, Ellison et al. (2007) maintained on the role of social capital. Hence, Bridging, bonding, and maintained frameworks present a useful means of understanding online social capital. Bonding social capital is exclusive and connected to benefits derived from strong and close bonds of trust and support that is inherent in passionately intimate interactions or within family and close friends or people with similar social identity such as age, class, ethnicity (Steinfeld et al. as cited in Ciboh, 2016). Bridging social capital is an all-encompassing connection that transpires among persons from dissimilar upbringings with weak ties on social networks across social or geographical distances. They are connections found among classmates, and consociates, co-workers, or associates of a communal or religious organisation (Ellison, Lampe & Steinfeld, 2009; Granovetter as cited in Antheunis, Abeeel & Kanters, 2015). Unity between dissimilar upbringings, ethnicities, and tribal groups can be attained through weak tie relationships (Johnston et al., 2013).

Moving from one place to another for greener pastures is one of the possible contributing factors to the need to maintain valuable connections with people after being physically disconnected from them. However, the usefulness of technology to help in sustaining relationships endangered by life changes is possible. Therefore, Ellison et al. (2007) introduce another (sub) type of social capital, which is also considered a weak tie network as 'maintained social capital'. Maintained social capital is about the maintenance of relations and the benefits obtained from such maintained ties. Most available studies on this very important phenomenon were conducted outside Nigeria and within dissimilar cultures. Therefore, it is pertinent to explore this phenomenon given the diverse nature of Nigerian culture and her multicultural setting. Given the phenomenal rise of social media, this study aims to find out: the pattern of social media use among university of Ibadan students; the kinds of social relationships that the University of Ibadan (UI) students establish and/or maintain on these social media; the relationship between social media use and micro-level social capital; and the kinds of activities on social media platforms that contribute to micro-level social capital.



2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social media have prominently improved in acceptance, particularly among teenagers and young adults as a result of their use all over the world (Meyer & Bray, 2013). Their widespread around the world have made it important for people to be a member of at least one social network site. People have begun to create and maintain social relationships through social media platforms by connecting and communicating with others to find new friends and also reconnect with old friends, family, and relatives (Chennamaneni & Taneja, 2015). This is because they are quick modern interactive channels that pave ways for easier relationships and strong ties with family members and close friends, and also with weak ties, such as acquaintances and colleagues, and also allow new connections. The concentration of so many people on social media has attracted the interest of many scholars cutting across various fields of study to research into the usage of social media across demographic variables (Burke et al. 2011; Ciboh, 2016).

Social media use enables new networks by providing people with a different way to bond with others as indicated on Pew Internet 2006 survey report that online users are able to have a large network of people than those not using social media (non-users) and that social media users are likely to get assistance from other online users than non-users. Therefore, this connectivity can lead to an increase in social capital. However, there is a dearth of academic research on the concerned variables in Nigeria as limited studies have been mainly generated and limited to the European world. Therefore, it is pertinent to explore this phenomenon, given the diverse nature of Nigerian culture and her multicultural setting. This current study tries to fill this gap by focusing on the influence of social media use on 'bonding', 'bridging' and 'maintained' (sub) types of micro-level social capital. Also, it investigates how different activities on social media platforms may contribute to social capital considering the phenomenal rise of social media usage in Nigeria.

3. LITERATURE AND SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEW

The term 'social media' is broad and it covers a range of websites. Hence, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 26) describe social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Just like broadcast stations, social media sites have spread everywhere in Nigeria and are more sprouting as technologies continue to improve. With the growth of social media over the past few years, a large number of SNSs have surfaced, serving as platforms where people can communicate and interact online. Brown (2010) asserts that 90% of Internet users can name at least one social media network. Although a defined number of SNSs users is not available, 2013 survey data suggest that up to 90% of undergraduates (young people) who make up about half of the world's 7 billion population use Facebook-an SNS with the highest number of users in some developing countries like Nigeria (Lampe et al., 2013). Popular platforms are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and MySpace.

These SNSs have been useful in different relationship contexts because of their interactive nature. According to Chukwuere (2020, p. 4), "individuals use social media presence to build a strong relationship with peers, loved ones, and colleagues. Having a presence on social media means an individual understanding of the benefits attached to the platform." For example, friends can exchange pictures and video clips, work colleagues can plan and execute projects, and family members can share life events via these platforms. Butler and Matook (2014) classify these relationships into friendship relationships, kinship (family) relationships, and professional relationships. With the influx of social media use, these relationships are typically contrasted with each other. This paves the way for an ongoing debate regarding the advantages of social media use for social relationships. Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe Vitak (2011) argue that social media platforms have allowed relationships to overcome the limitations of offline relationships because of their potential to establish and/or maintain relations that otherwise might be hard or impossible.



Findings from previous studies have shown that one of the factors influencing young people to join these SNS sites is to maintain and strengthen ties with friends and/or new acquaintances (Valenzuela, 2009; Sponcil & Gitimu, 2012; Ezumah, 2013). Papacharissi and Mendelson (2008) argue that social media users also seek to acquire social benefits by staying connected to people or groups they had encountered in the past. In offline settings, people may establish their relationships in different ways, but social network sites may help facilitate and develop these relationships and thus creates a natural relationship with social capital.

Given that SNSs allow individuals to create larger social networks compared to an offline setting, it seems rational that using an SNS could help young adults build online social capital. This paves way for an ongoing debate regarding the importance of social media for social relationships. Ellison, Lampe, Steinfield, and Vitak (2010) argue that social media platforms have allowed relationships to overcome the limitations of offline relationships because of their potential to establish and/or maintain relations that rather might be hard or impossible. However, many scholars have argued on social media's possibility to diminish offline relationships by enabling online relationships substitute for offline ones (Wang & Wellman, 2010). This concern is also shown by Butler and Matook (2014, p. 4) as they assert that: "teenagers are not developing valuable communication social skills because they only interact through features of social media systems such as pokes, tweets, and texts." This shows that real-time relationships may be diminishing and damaging as online relationships may have taken over, which are being expressed through these activities on social media platforms.

Most studies have examined the connection among social media use and a micro-level social capital through the bridging, bonding, and maintained micro-level distinctions. In the bonding social capital conceptualization, findings from several studies conducted either show that increased social media use has a positive or no relationship with bonding social capital. For example, in the study of Ellison et al. (2011), findings show a little but positive "relationship between Facebook intensity and bonding social capital." Also, studies by Vitak, Ellison and Steinfield (2011) and Burke, Kraut and Marlow (2011) find no significant association between "intensity of Facebook use and bonding social capital within or outside the university environment." Nevertheless, Ellison et al. (2007) find out that Facebook use contributed to bonding social capital, which is often associated with strong ties such as close friends and family members. Also, Lampe, Vitak and Ellison (2013) find out that "Facebook non-users and heavy users reported higher bonding social capital than light Facebook users." Findings from these studies suggest that the use of social media may not facilitate bonding social capital.

In a study conducted by Ellison et al. (2007), a strong positive relationship between Facebook use and bridging capital was found among college students. A year later, the authors did a longitudinal investigation by probing a similar group of students. Outcomes of this investigation reveal that "the intensity of Facebook use in the first year strongly predicted bridging social capital in the second year." In future cross-sectional investigations, related affirmative discoveries for the intensity of Facebook use and bridging social capital existed. This means that when social media is used by students more intensely, bridging social capital becomes higher because SNSs give young adults the benefit of being able to start and maintain relationships despite physical distance. Their outcomes suggest the presence of a relationship among the use of social media use and bridging social capital.

Several scholars have also investigated the differences in bridging social capital among SNS users and non-users. Findings show that there is a difference in bridging social capital between SNS users and non-users (Brandtzaeg, 2012; Lampe, Vitak & Ellison, 2014). For example, in a study conducted by Brandtzaeg (2012), a comparison between SNS users and non-users was made and the outcomes show that the users of Facebook experience better bridging capital to nonusers. Lampe et al. (2014) in his discrepancy among "non-users, light, and heavy Facebook users" find out that "light and non-use of the site" has lesser intensities of bridging social capital. Summarily, findings from these studies propose that there is a strong positive connection between social use and bridging social capital. Also, results from previous studies, especially (Cummings, Lee and Kraut as cited by Ellison, 2007; Kwon et al. 2013), on the relationship between internet use and individual's maintained social capital show when social media users use social



media platforms to maintain long-distance relationships. Findings seem to indicate that the intensity use of Facebook is less relevant to enhance one's maintained social capital. However, in studies conducted by Ellison et al. (2007) and Johnston et al. (2013), findings show that social media use contributes to maintaining social capital by measuring the extent users possibly would depend on their secondary school associates to do them small favours as a result of online connection and interactions.

Most studies are mainly generated and limited to the European world. Therefore, this current study tries to fill this gap by focusing on the influence of social media use on 'bonding', 'bridging' and 'maintained' (sub) types of micro-level social capital. Also, it investigated how different activities on social media platforms may contribute to social capital because there are multiple different social media activities on these sites, one can engage in, which may also contribute to social capital.

4. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Uses and gratification theory is an important theory in today's mass communication research to understand why and how people actively seek out specific media. It also attempts to explain the uses and function of media for individuals, groups, and society by explaining how people use the media to satisfy their needs, to ascertain primary intentions for people's media use and to ascertain the positive and negative consequences of people's media use (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; Baran & Davis, 2009). The theory was first introduced in 1959 by Elihu Katz, who was concerned with the way people used the media rather than the effect the media had on people. Katz' theory seeks to answer the question 'what do people do with the media (Severin and Tankard as cited in Folarin, 2012). Uses and Gratification analysis shifts attention from media production to media consumption; therefore, the central issue becomes "who uses which content from which media under conditions and for what reasons" (Folarin, 2012, p. 72). Proponents of the theory are of the view that people do not just expose themselves to media messages for the sake of doing so; rather, there are certain ulterior motives that compel them to do so.

Drawing insights from these propositions of this theory, a pertinent question to ask is to investigate if UI students acquire benefits from social online interaction and relationships as a result of social media use. The uses and gratifications model can also be explored to explain the perceived benefits of these platforms among UI students. Therefore, this study adapts the uses and gratifications framework to investigate the perceived value of "bonding," "bridging," and "maintained" social capital among the University of Ibadan students. This will be achieved by looking into different types of interactions they form and maintain on Facebook and Twitter and two different (sub) types of social capital in terms of 'bonding' 'bridging' and 'maintained' conceptualization; and the individual benefits they accrue from these social relationships and interactions.

5. RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches with a special focus on a survey and focus group discussion (FGD), also known as mixed-method, in gathering data from respondents. This method was adopted because it is the appropriate method employed when the objective is to know people's opinions, knowledge, and attitude of a particular issue. The population for the study consists of all students (undergraduates and postgraduates) of the university of Ibadan who use social networking sites via their phones, laptops, and tablets. Two hundred and seventy (270) constituted the sample size—two hundred and forty-three (243) participated in the survey, while 27 participants participated in the FGD sessions. Stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to give all UI students a fair and equal chance of representation in the study. In The University of Ibadan, there are 11 hotels for both undergraduate and postgraduate (3 females, 6 males, and 2 mixed halls of residence) hotels. The three female halls of residence are Queen Elizabeth II Hall, Obafemi Awolowo Hall and Queen Idia Hall, while the male halls of residence are Mellanby Hall, Tedder Hall, Kuti Hall, Bello Hall, Nnamdi Azikiwe Hall and Independence Hall.

The mixed halls of residence are Tafawa Balewa Hall and Abubakar Abdusalam Hall. Using a stratified sampling technique, the University of Ibadan was stratified based on the sex of occupants. Therefore, the hostels were stratified into female and male halls. After stratification of the halls, Simple Random Sampling was used to select one female hall of residence, which is Queen Idia Hall, and two male halls of residence, which are Independence Hall and Bello Hall. Two male halls were selected through random sampling technique because of the higher number of their halls of residence in the institution. Also, using a simple random technique, Abubakar Abdusalam Hall was selected from two other hostels with both male and female residents. Two blocks from each hall of residence were selected through a simple random sampling technique. Therefore, blocks A and C were selected from Queen Idia Hall while blocks B and D, C, and E were selected from Bello and Independence Halls of Residence, respectively. For Abubakar Abdusalam Hall, blocks B and E were also selected using simple random sampling. A systematic sampling technique was adopted to select rooms to determine the respondents of this study.

Therefore, starting from the fifth room on each block, every 7th room was selected for this study. Purposive sampling was adopted to select respondents who explore social networking sites to answer questions concerning the connection among the use of social media and social capital for this study. For FGD, the above procedure was also employed by the researcher; however, the purposive sampling technique was used again to eliminate those who had participated in responding to the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 16 items that were divided into four parts, and a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) guide were used to obtain responses of the respondents on the research questions. The retrieved data was grouped, interpreted and analysed using Descriptive Statistics in terms of simple percentage (%) and frequency counts and also Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 17.0 in analysing data generated.

There are numerous approaches for assessing social capital on social media platforms but to reflect aspects in this study, some items from Williams' (2006) subscales – the Internet Social Capital Scales (ISCS) of measuring "social capital" and also some of Ellison et al. (2011)'s measures of Facebook usage were adapted for this study. Ellison et al. (2011)'s Facebook usage measures adapted to this study include items on time and frequency or duration spent on social media platforms to have a better measure of SNSs usage. Williams (2006) Internet Social capital subscales have been adopted by many studies on SNS use and bonding, bridging and maintained subtypes of social capital. However, some wordings were modified to reflect the meaning or the study context.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: The Pattern of social media Use among University of Ibadan Students

	Frequency(N-243)	Percentage(%)
Social media platforms respondents are exposed to the most		
Facebook	98	40.3
Twitter	76	31.3
Instagram	41	16.9
Youtube	28	11.5
Pattern of Exposure to social media		
Always	174	68.7

Occasionally	69	31.7
Number of Friends of respondents on Social Media Platforms		
Less Than 100	28	11.5
100-200	28	11.5
201-399	80	32.9
400-699	95	39.1
700-999	3	1.2
Above 1000	9	3.7
Hours per day spent on social media platforms by the respondents		
1-2hours	65	26.7
3-4hours	127	52.3
5-6 hours	42	17.3
7 hours and above	9	3.7

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 1 reveals that a higher number of students, 98 (40.3%) surveyed for this study, use Facebook while Twitter took the second place position with a total number of 76(31.3%) respondents. It also indicates that a larger percentage (68.7%) of students are regular social media users while 69 (31.7%) are occasionally exposed to social media. The above table also shows that the majority of the students, 127 (52.3%) spend between 3-4 hours daily on the social media platform, followed by 65(26.7%) of respondents who spend 1-2 hours daily.

Table 2: The relationship among social media use and other subtypes of micro-level social capital

Bridging Social Capital	SA	A	U	D	SD
Benefits from interactions with acquaintances/Classmates (Bridging Social Capital)					
Interacting with acquaintances/classmates online "reminds me that everyone in the world is connected"	117(48.1%)	102(42.0%)	16(6.6%)	8(3.3%)	0(0.0%)
Acquaintances/ classmates of my school I interact with online would	124(51.0%)	96(39.5%)	11(4.5%)	12(4.9%)	0(0.0%)

be good job references to me					
I get useful information from classmates/acquaintances I interact with online	102(42.0%)	126(51.9%)	31(5.3%)	2(0.8%)	25(10.3%)
Interacting with acquaintances / classmates online makes me want to try new things	80(32.9%)	140(57.6%)	11(4.5%)	6(2.5%)	6(2.5%)
Activities Respondents carry out on Social Media Platforms while Interacting with Acquaintances/Classmates from School					
Bonding Social Capital	SA	A	U	D	SD
I have close friends I interact with online to solve my problems	114(46.9%)	94(38.7%)	15(6.2%)	12(4.9%)	8(3.3%)
The close friends I interact with online would share their last naira with me	90(37.0%)	104(42.8%)	32(13.2%)	8(3.3%)	9(3.7%)
I can turn to my close friends I interact with online for advice about making very important decisions	59(24.3%)	123(50.6%)	47(19.3%)	9(3.7%)	5(2.1%)
I can share my problems with my close friends online for emotional support	58(23.9%)	104(42.8%)	46(18.9%)	30(12.3%)	5(2.1%)
I can get any of my close friends to do anything important for me online	62(25.5%)	142(58.4%)	16(6.6%)	17(7.0%)	6(2.5%)
If I need an emergency loan of 5000, I can get it from one of my close friends I interact with online	92(37.9%)	103(42.4%)	26(10.7%)	13(5.3%)	9(3.7%)
Benefits from interactions with old friends (Maintained Social Capital)					
Maintained Social Capital	SA	A	U	D	SD
I will "be able to find out about events in another town from a secondary school friend" using social media platforms living there	94(38.7%)	113(46.5%)	24(9.9%)	10(4.1%)	2(0.8%)
If needed to, I could ask a secondary school friend online to do a small favour for me.	74(30.5%)	132(54.3%)	19(7.8%)	15(6.2%)	3(1.2%)
I will be able to stay with a high school friend I interact with online if travelling to a different city	91(37.4%)	79(32.5%)	37(15.2%)	32(13.2%)	4(1.6%)
I would be able to find information about a job or internship from a high	111(45.7%)	85(35.0%)	28(11.5%)	16(6.6%)	3(1.2%)

school friend online					
It would be easy to find secondary school classmates to invite to my high school reunion	83(34.2%)	123(50.6%)	19(7.8%)	5(2.1%)	13(5.3%)

The above table shows that a larger percentage of the respondent agreed to all Bridging social capital of social media platforms statement in the section. The majority of respondents also revealed that they get useful information from classmates/acquaintances they interact with online by strongly agreeing 102(42.0%). Also, it shows that a larger percentage of the respondent (85.6%) agreed to the all the Bonding Social Capital propositions as majority of the respondents believe that one of the benefits they derive from online interactions with close friends is solving of problems. 85.2% of the respondents agreed that they would be able to find out via social media platforms on events happening in other town from secondary school friends online who lives there, while 85.8% agreed that they could ask a secondary school friend they interact with online to do a small favour for them if the needs arise.

Table 3: Pearson correlation showing the associate between social media use and bridging social capital

Correlations		Use	Bridging
USE	Pearson Correlation	1	.346**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	243	243
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The Pearson correlation value at 0.346 shows a positive relationship exists between social media use and bridging micro-level social capital. One can then also say the “value is statistically significant at 5% level of acceptance”. This relationship shows that as the social media use tends to be on the increase, bridging micro-level social capital accrued by the respondents will also be on the increase.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation showing connection between social media use and bonding social capital

Correlations		Use	Bonding
USE	Pearson Correlation	1	.268**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	243	243
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The Pearson Correlation Test done to establish correlation between respondents’ social media use and bonding micro-level social capital shows a correlation of 0.268, which means that the “value is statistically significant at 5% level of acceptance”, meaning, there is a low positive relationship exists between social media use and bonding micro-level social capital.

Table 5: Chi-square Test showing the relationship between social media use and maintained social capital

Correlations			
		Use	Maintained
USE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.868
	N	243	243

The Pearson correlation value is -0.011, which shows that there is a low negative relationship between the two variables. meaning the “value is not statistically significant at 5% level of acceptance”. This means that as social media use tends to be on the increase, maintained micro-level social capital accrued by respondents is on the decrease.

Table 6: The kinds of activities on social media platforms that contribute to micro-level social capital

	Frequency(N-243)	Percentage(%)
Activities Respondents on Social Media Platforms engage in most times while Interacting with Close Friends		
Phototagging	19	7.8
Chatting	144	59.3
Direct Messaging	19	7.8
Monitor Friend Broadcast	2	.8
Post On Friends Wall	59	24.3
Activities Respondents carry out on Social Media Platforms while Interacting with Acquaintances/Classmates from School		
Photo tagging	9	3.7
Chatting	52	21.4
Direct Messaging	43	17.7
Monitor Friend’s Broadcasts	54	22.2
Post On Friends Wall	85	35.0
Activities Respondents engage in on social media platforms while interacting with old friends from secondary School		
Photo tagging	80	32.9
Chatting	115	47.3
Direct Messaging	28	11.5
Monitor Friend’s Broadcasts	13	5.3
Post On Friends Wall	7	2.9

Source: Field Survey (2019)

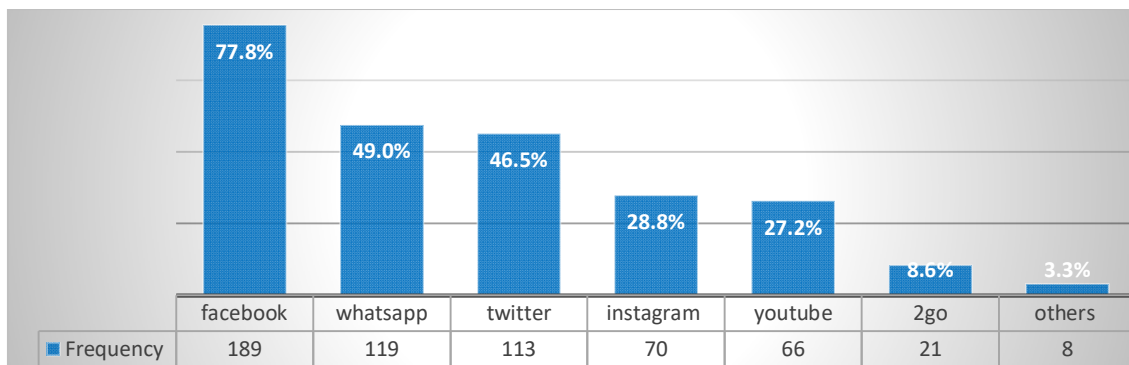


Figure 1: Pattern of Social Media Use among University of Ibadan Students

Figure 1 shows that 189 (77.8%) of the respondents are Social media users. It also shows that 119(49.0%) of them use WhatsApp, 113(46.5%) use Twitter, 66 (27.2%) have YouTube accounts, while 21 (8.6%) of them are on 2go. This gives the indication that responses generated from the respondents would be valid for analysis.

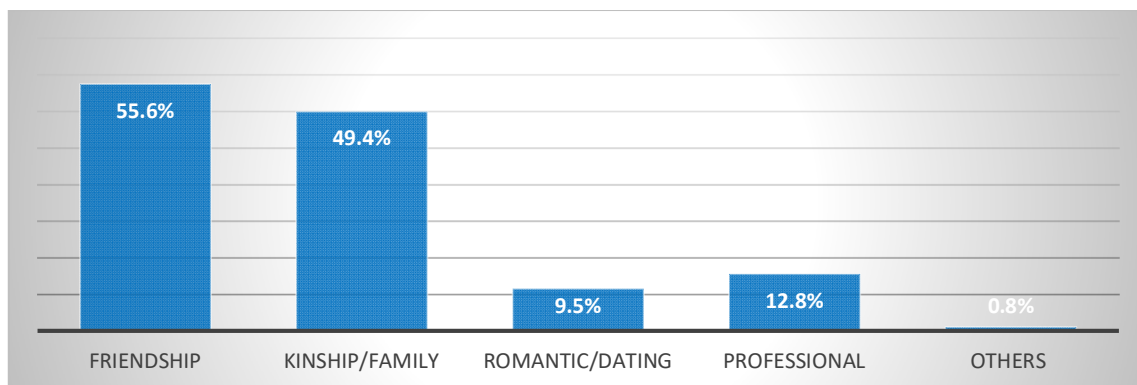


Figure 2: The categories of people UI students regularly contact on Social Media platforms

Figure 2 reveals that a higher number of respondents, 135(55.6%) use social media platforms to establish and/or maintain friendship while 120 (49.4%) of them also use social media platforms to interact with people of kinship and family ties. This shows that most of the respondents use social media platforms mostly to establish and/or maintain Friendship and keep in touch with family members and relatives.

7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings show that all the respondents are on social media, with (77.8%) of them on Facebook, follow by WhatsApp (49.0%), Twitter (46.5%), while 66 (27.2%) of the respondents have YouTube accounts. This shows that Facebook is the most popular among UI students. It is closely followed by WhatsApp. This may be because the two SNSs offer many features of interactivity. However, it was further revealed 98(40.3%) of the respondents are mostly exposed to Facebook, follow by Twitter with a total number of 76(31.3%) respondents. This was followed by Instagram and Youtube with 41(16.9%) and 28(11.5%). At the same time, the majority of the respondents have up to 400 friends on social media platforms and spend between 3-4 hours daily on these social media platforms.

Similarly, the majority of the discussants indicated that they are always online especially when they have a data



subscription. A 200 male student specifically mentioned that; "I go online regularly to keep track of my messages, reply to them log out. But at night I am online from 8.00pm". The implication of these findings is that a higher number of respondents are regular users of social media. Asked on how often they use social media, 24 of the 27 discussants indicated that they spent at least 10 hours on social media. This implies that only few numbers of students are not always on this platform with understandable reasons such as academic and financial constraints. Most of the discussants assert that they use social media every day. A female law student residing in Queen Idia hall says:

Once I have money to subscribe, I am online always. So, immediately a message comes in, I reply.

Let me say once I have data to connect, which I do most of the time, I spend at least 20 hours a day online

Another discussant from the Faculty of Music commented on how often he uses the social media:

You know I am a student, so I come online most times in the evening when I am already back to the hostel. During this period, in a stretch I can spend up to three hours.

The discussants also explained that whenever they log into their social accounts (mostly through their phones), they switch from one platform to another because they operate more than one social media platform accounts. It suggests that social media users are willing to embrace more social media platforms to sustain and maintain their online relationships. These findings support Mozee (2015) assertion that those who were given birth to between 1990- 1999 which is the 'I generation' consumes almost 20 hours of social media contents every day. This also supports Lampe et al (2013) affirmation that social media use has been the highest among young adults. This high patronage may be as a result of the platforms' interactivity, demassification and instantaneous features. Students can easily send pictures, voice notes or videos and chat with various friends through these platforms.

Also, data show that majority of the respondents use social media platforms mostly to establish and/or maintain Friendship and also to keep in touch with family members and relatives, given clue to the type of relationship they establish and/or establish on these platforms as Friendship relationship. More students use social media platforms as a means of communicating with their family members and relatives. Within the uses and gratification approach, one of the needs gratified media use especially among adolescents and youths is for integration and social interaction (Gallion, 2013). This confirms Sponcil and Gitimu (2012) and Ezumah (2013) assertions that most users use social media platforms basically for interactions with their friends and loved ones (family members). Relating it to the central proposition of the Uses and Gratification theory, findings show that the main purpose for the usage of social media among UI students is to gratify their need for interactions with friends whether they are close ones or acquaintances and family members.

However, there are also other kinds of relationships UI students also seek for on these platforms. Some respondents also appreciate the importance of social media platforms to keep in touch with those they are in relationship with and also in the same profession because connection on these platforms is cost effective and instantaneous. Some of the discussants that participated in the FGD sessions were of the opinion that they do engage more in professional, friendship and dating relationships. A male student in the department of Music, University of Ibadan specifically stated that:

"It's (social media use) mainly professional relationship. Although I am student I am also into networking. So I use it to network with people. Sometimes, I also connect with my friends and especially my girlfriend. I use it to keep in touch with her, thus strengthens our relationship. You know it's cheaper to communicate through these media especially now that one can place a voice call and video call through these sites."

Another female discussant from the Faculty of Education reiterated that "I connect with my friends, family members and especially those we are into fashion designing business together. I even have a fashion page." Also, a female



discussant said: "I hardly interact with family members because they are all busy. Although I do sometimes but it's very rare. From these analogies, although Friendship and Kinship/Family relationships both take the lead among UI students, however, some of them assert that SNSs use for Romantic/Dating relationship is essential although people do not only depend on social media to strengthen romantic relationship. It rather helps to complement such relationship.

As shown in the table, a larger percentage of the respondent agreed to all Bridging social capital of social media platforms statements. 208(90.1%) of the respondents agreed to the first proposition that interacting with acquaintances/ classmates online is a reminder that everyone in the world is connected. This was further confirmed when 220(90.5%) of them agreed to the second proposition that through their online interactions with acquaintances/ school classmates, they can be good job references. The majority of respondents 228(93.9%) also revealed that they get useful information from classmates/acquaintances they interact with online. Finally, on the proposition "Interacting with acquaintances/ classmates online makes me want to try new things", 220(90.5%) of them agreed to the statement.

Also, during the FGD sessions, students agreed to the fact that their connections via social media to casual friends and school classmate provide the platforms to derive some benefits such as access to important information. A female discussant from Queen Idia Hall said:

Yes, my casual friends share with me job opportunity information. But I will rather share my emotional problems with my family members especially my elder sister whether offline or online.

Another discussant from Abdusalam Abubakar hall commented on the benefits she derives from casual friends through online interactions.

I have got job information such as ushering jobs from them. Some will even directly post such information on my wall. Also, I get friends online that send me messages making inquiries about my fashion business.

Similarly, the Pearson correlation value, which is 0.346 shows a positive relationship exists between social media use and bridging micro-level social capital. One can then say the "value is statistically significant at 5% level of acceptance". This relationship shows that as the social media use tends to be on the increase, bridging micro-level social capital accrued by the respondents will also be on the increase. This implies that a larger portion of the respondents are benefitting from social media use while connecting with their casual friends or acquaintances online. Thus, these platforms serve as medium of interaction through which there is high possibility for young adults to reap potential and real benefits of bridging social capital. This finding support previous studies (Ellison et al., 2007; Johnston et al., 2011) that greater use of social media platforms is a significant predictor of bridging social capital.

Furthermore, data show that all the respondents agreed to all the Bonding Social Capital propositions via social media platforms. Data shows that majority of the respondents are benefitting from social media use while connecting with their close friends via social media platforms. Bonding social benefits may be generated through a single good friend who can be relied upon in times of need and is also less sensitive to the amount of communication when compared to bridging social capital. This is because social media platforms may not strengthen already-strong relationships, but it can increase the value of less strong ones. Therefore, UI students acquire other benefits of bonding social capital such as accessibility of rare resources, substantive support and access to information. The FGD sessions further shows the extent people may reap social benefits from their close friends. Although, the discussants agree that they get access to useful information as a result of their connections with their close friends online, most of them do not seem to trust friends enough no matter how close they are to them online to feel comfortable talking to them about intimate personal problems especially that of relationship. According to two male undergraduate students: The only major benefit I get from my online interaction with close friends is useful information. It is not ideal to share sensitive information with my friends online.



I don't believe in sharing my problems especially relationship problems with my friends, no matter how close we are. It is better not to involve a third party in your personal relationship problems.

However, a postgraduate female discussant in Abdusalam Abubakar Hall said:

I have a close friend I share my emotional problems with online. We are also into fashion designing business together so we keep in touch with each other online by asking questions pertaining to fashion when necessary.

The Pearson Correlation Test done to establish correlation between respondents' social media use and bonding micro-level social capital shows a Pearson correlation of 0.268 which means that the "value is statistically significant at 5% level of acceptance" such as a low positive relationship exists between social media use and bonding micro-level social capital. This relationship shows that as social media use tends to be on the increase, bonding micro-level social capital accrued by the respondents will also be on the increase.

As regards the connection concerning social media use and maintained micro-level social capital, the Pearson correlation value is at -0.011. This shows that there is a low negative relationship between the two variables. It shows the value is not statistically significant at 5% level of acceptance. This means that as social media use tends to be on the increase, maintained micro-level social capital accrued by respondents is on the decrease. As suggested, a larger portion of the respondents use social media platforms to maintain relationships they have developed over time with other people such as old secondary school classmates but are not benefiting from such connections. These findings are contrary to the findings of Ellison et al. (2007) and Johnson et al. (2013) that disclosed that social media platforms strength projected better sustained social capital. The data gathered, however, show that UI students do not rely on secondary school acquaintances they connect with via social media platforms to do any favours. Although some studies such as Wang and Wellman (2010) and Butler and Matook (2014), express fear on the possible damaging influence of social media use on social relationships especially face to face engagements (offline social capital),, this study agree that greater SNS use greatly contributes to bridging social capital and seems less relevant in contributing to bonding social capital. Conversely, it further shows that SNSs use does not translate to maintained social capital which is contrary to previous studies.

Likewise, findings suggested that to a large extent, active use of social media platforms contribute to bonding social capital. A higher number of the respondents assert that they involve more in chatting, followed by posting on friends' wall, photo tagging and direct messages which are all forms of active use of social media. Chatting, a form of directed communication and one of the active uses of social media platforms is the most activity involved in while connecting with close pals. Other directed communication that contributes to bonding social benefits is post on their close friends' wall. This shows that not only does chatting allow SNSs users to bond well with their friends but also when post on their walls when necessary. Therefore, directed communication, meaning active use of social media contributes to bonding social capital. Chatting between close friends are a means of facilitating and maintaining such friendships. Consumption of close friends' broadcasts on these platforms most times only may not reap benefits of bonding social capital. This goes in line with Burke, Marlow and Lento (2010)'s findings that reveals that directed communication between close friends plays an expected role in bonding social capital.

This shows that not only does the use of social media platforms influences social benefits but users perform certain activities on these platforms to acquire social capital. Therefore, there is possibility for young adults to reap potential and real benefits of bonding social capital through their active use of these platforms by taking advantage of the communication contexts. This goes to support previous studies (Burke et al., 2010; Burke et al., 2011) that not only intensity of social media serves as an important prognosticator of bridging social capital but also taking advantage of the communication contexts.

Also, some of the discussants that participated in the FGD sessions affirmed that direct messaging and chatting are the activities they perform mostly while interacting online with their close pals. A discussant specifically said:



I chat with my close friends online and also directly message them too because they are as active as I am on these sites. Therefore, they get my feedbacks instantly.

Another response from a male discussant was that:

I like their posts, read their messages but hardly chat with except when necessary. I unconsciously consume their broadcast messages too because these sites help in knowing what is going on presently in each of your friend's life.

Another male discussant said:

I only like my casual friends' status if I find it interesting and innovative unlike that of my close friends'. Whether it makes sense or not, I will like such posts and even comment when not necessary. It's a must to do.

However, a female student residing in Queen Idia Hall inputted that: "Once I don't chat with them for a long period of time, I remove the person from my account. Since I am not interacting nor benefitting from such person." All these show that for bridging social capital, there is no specific activity that actually determines the social benefits derived from online social capital. Both active (directed communication) and (consumption) passive activities on Social media platforms are in the same level because they are all working hand in hand to contribute to social capital. This is contrary to Burke et al. (2010) and Ellison et al. (2011) findings that consumption is associated with reduced bridging social capital as their findings only show that directed communication has a modest relationship with bridging social capital.

Specifically, a male discussant asserts that "I don't chat with my former secondary classmates online so I don't even expect anything to come out from such connections". While undirected broadcasts and passive consumption of friends' messages most times may help get updates of friends' recent life happenings, they do not directly help to develop relationships or allow acquaintances to call on each other for help. Few or no directed communication may make users to feel less connected with their friends. Therefore, to reap the benefits of a diverse network, one needs to both consume friends' broadcasts and directly communicate with them.

8. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study reveals that online interactions do not translate to the removal of people from their offline world but rather support relationships—Keep people in touch with each other, especially when life changes make them move from one community to another. Such connections could translate to benefits such as jobs, internships, and other opportunities.

9. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

With little literature on the correlation between the use of social media and micro-level social capital in African countries, especially Nigeria, this study contributes to knowledge in the area of social capital in relation to social media use by young adults in a multicultural setting, through the investigation of three variables to understand the kinds of relationships young adults establish and maintain on social media platforms, different activities on this site and benefits derived between social media use in terms of "bonding," "bridging" and "maintained". Expectedly, the findings of this study serve as a reference for future research.

10. CONCLUSION

The major objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between social media use and micro-level social capital among young adults with diverse cultural orientations and norms. Findings showed that the most prominent relationship is found among social media use and bridging social capital, while relationships as regards bonding social capital become punier. However, no relationship was found among social media use and maintained social



capital. Online connections with friends, whether old, casual, or close, suggest how SNSs assist in maintaining relationship as people relocate from one online community (platform) to another.

The platform can also facilitate UI students who have graduated to keep in touch with others and using their social media platforms to stay connected with the college community. Hence, online interactions do not translate to the removal of people from their offline world but rather support relationships—Keep people in touch with each other, especially when life changes make them move from one community to another. Such connections could translate to benefits such as jobs, internships, and other opportunities.

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