

## Social Media Usage for Mental Health Information among University of Ilorin Undergraduates

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### Abstract

The increased deterioration of mental health among undergraduates, its causes, and viable panaceas are becoming an academic concern and a populated area of study among researchers worldwide. Amidst this is a bone of contention among scholars on the relevance of social media and its role in improving or deteriorating the mental health of undergraduates. Social media and its affiliated applications may either depreciate mental health or improve it among undergraduates. Thus, through an exploratory qualitative research design, this study investigated social media usage for mental health information among University of Ilorin undergraduates to understand the consequences of social media use on their mental health. The study purposively sampled thirty undergraduates using the in-depth interview as the instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that there is high usage of social media among the undergraduates. Based on the findings, the high usage of social media is borne out of the need to gratify their mental health needs, using it to seek mental health assistance. While there is an attestation by the undergraduates that social media usage has positive consequences on their mental health, the platform is found to predispose them to depression and low self-esteem. The study recommended that mental healthcare providers should focus more on mental health advocacy on social media as this would help to give credibility to mental health information available on social media.

**Keywords:** Mental health, Social media, Stigmatization, Uses and gratification

### Introduction

The high rate of poor mental health among young people, particularly undergraduate students, has become a topic of global public health concern. This has led to a series of empirical studies as researchers have sought to investigate the contributing factors and possible ways to mitigate it (Deepa & Priya, 2020; Jelenchick, Eickhoff & Moreno, 2013; Wright, Rosenberg, Egbert, Ploeger, Bernard, & King, 2013; Jelenchick, Eickhoff & Moreno, 2013). One of the issues that have received significant attention over time in

social media studies is increasing popularity and usage of social media among youths (Twenge, 2017; Frith, 2017; Lachmar, Wittenborn, Bogen, & McCauley, 2017; Kelly, Zilanawala, Booker & Sacker, 2018).

Social media is used by people for different health purposes which include mental health purposes. Undergraduates with poor mental health use social media to gratify their needs. They are motivated to use social media to get possible relief and necessary information from the platform (Barry, Sidoti, Briggs, Reiter, & Lindsey, 2017). Undergraduates use social media to seek peer to peer help, finding those with a similar mental health condition as theirs (Anne, 2018). In seeking peer-to-peer support, they equally use social media to interact with health care providers to manage their mental health (Anne, 2018). Similarly, Rideout and Fox (2018) submit that people are

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motivated to use social media to get health-related information such as symptoms, diagnosis, and as well as connect with health providers without geographical restrictions.

Contrarily, a study by Twenge (2017) shows that social media use by undergraduate students is associated with poor mental health variables such as anxiety, depression, and suicidality. Kelly et al's (2018) study also established that poor sleep, anxiety, and worries are the negative effects of social media use on young undergraduates' mental health. Kelly, Zilanawala, Booker and Sacker (2018) lists the factors responsible for this negative impact of social media on mental health, which includes the long daily usage of social media which results in sleep deprivation. Other factors identified by these scholars include worries and anxiety which are usually caused by online bullying. Additionally, their study further revealed that the effects of poor mental health caused by social media are not limited to poor sleep, anxiety, and worries; but rather extends to low self-esteem and poor body image perception which are caused by the portrayers of beautiful and filtered (edited version) images on social media.

Derived from the aforementioned, it is evident that social media can be a platform that deteriorates mental health as well serves as a platform that helps to improve mental health in youths, as well as used to gratify their mental health needs. However, Oko-Oboh (2017) posits that there is a paucity of empirical evidence on the causes, prevention, and strategies to aid or improve mental health in Nigeria through the use of social media. Notably, Okoh-Oboh states that there are limited Nigerian studies on whether social media use improves mental health or deteriorate young Nigerians' mental health and also on how social media can be used to gratify the mental health needs. For this reason, this study sought to investigate mental health information and social media usage among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. To understand how often University of Ilorin undergraduates use social media to get mental health information;

- ii. To investigate the uses of mental health information on social media among University of Ilorin undergraduates;
- iii. To examine the implications of social media usage on mental health among University of Ilorin undergraduates.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Frequency of Social Media Usage**

Social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, etc. have become popular and common tools for social interaction and engagement in today's world, particularly among university students. The frequency of social media usage varies among people. McClellan, Ali, Mutter, Kroutil, and Landwehr (2017) examined the use of social media to track conversations about mental health using Twitter. Between 2011 and 2013, 176 million tweets with content related to depression or suicide were collected. Using an autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA) data analysis, the study identified deviations from predicted trends in communication about depression and suicide. Within the period of the study, the results show a high increase in tweets on mental-health-related activity. This implies that there is increased usage of Twitter for mental health-related issues.

Deepa and Priya (2020) expressed that social media has become the reason for mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety among students. This descriptive study among students in Chennai indicates that students spend more than four hours a day on social media. The study concludes that the longer the time spent on social media the higher it negatively affects the students' mental health. According to a study by Montagni, Donisi, Tedeschi, Parizot, Motrico and Horgan (2016), most of the students use social media several times a day, with half of them claiming they use it to get information on mental health while most of them use it to get information on general health. It was concluded that the internet or social media is used by university students to get information on overall mental health challenges.

### **Social Media Usage and Mental Health**

Naslund, Aschbrenner, McHugo, Unützer, Marsch, and Bartels (2017) conducted a study on exploring the opportunities to support mental

healthcare using social media. The study surveyed social media users who self-identified as having a mental illness, to learn about their use of social media for mental health and to identify opportunities to augment existing mental health services. The study reached out to 240 Twitter users, who self-identified in their profile as having a mental illness, to participate in an online survey. Respondents from 10 countries completed 135 surveys. Majority of the respondents, i.e. 85 percent, expressed interest in mental health services provided via social media, in particular, to encourage general wellbeing and how to cope with symptoms of mental health.

Rideout and Fox (2018) examined young people's use of social networking sites in mental health interventions. The study used SNS-based approaches to improve young people's (up to 25 years of age) mental health, assess their efficacy, suitability, and protection, and identify gaps and opportunities for potential research. Findings from the study showed that acceptability of and engagements with the social networking sites are generally high, as were perceptions of usefulness and safety. Also, findings revealed that users showed a preference for mobile apps over web-based interfaces. The study concluded that young people are already shifting their attention to SNSs to participate in knowledge-based research and peer-to-peer support since SNS-based youth mental health programmes offer an opportunity to overcome some of the barriers faced by young people in accessing eligible mental health resources and information.

Northwestern University's (2015) study on "teens, health, and technology" noted that some set of people are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the health information particularly mental health information from the media. This is because the information does not mirror their present health condition. The questionable reliability of the source is also brought to the fore since social media allows for user-generated content which allows anyone to post any content on social media without been an authority in the field (Northwestern University, 2015).

### **Implications of Social Media Use on Mental Health**

The emergence of social media has changed human interactions in a social system vis-à-vis connecting with people and accessing information which has been made easier and quicker. Mental health has been described by the World Health report (2004) as a state of wellbeing in which people understand their abilities, solve everyday life problems, work well, and make a significant contribution to the lives of their communities.

Jelenchick, Eickhoff and Moreno (2013) examined social networking sites' usage and depression in older adolescents and found that there is no verification of interrelationship among SNSs and clinical depression. However, studies (Keles, McCrae, Grealish, 2020; Kelly, Zilanawala, Booker & Sacker, 2018; Chou & Edge, 2012) have found an association between time spent on social media as well as the number of social media platforms used, and symptoms of depression and anxiety. Most of these studies indicate that time spent on social media is correlated with depression and anxiety, but that does not necessarily mean that social media causes these problems.

Wright, Rosenberg, Egbert, Ploeger, Bernard, and King (2013) conducted a study on communication competence, social support, and depression among college students using the Relational Health Communication Competence Model as a framework. The study examined the influence of communication competence on social support network satisfaction and depression, the influence of the social networking site Facebook and face-to-face support networks on depression among 361 college students. All participants were current users of Facebook. The respondents averaged 20 years in age ( $M=20.26$ ,  $SD= 2.72$ ). The findings showed that mental health support received from social media helps college students with impaired mental health conditions. The study further revealed that due to the comfort they gained from it, students suffering from depression are more satisfied with the mental health information they get from social media.

O'Reilly, Dogra, Hughes, Reilly, George, and Whiteman (2018) explored the role of social media in fostering mental health in adolescents due to the prevalence of adolescent mental illnesses and the danger it posed to education and healthcare

systems globally. A qualitative research method was adopted for the study to explore perceptions that social media might be leveraged for mental health promotion amongst adolescents aged between 11 and 18 years. Utilising focus groups, the study collected data from different groups, which included six groups (6-12 participants in each) with adolescents, 11–18 years (N=54), 2 with mental health practitioners (N=8), and 2 with educational professionals (N=16). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected and three themes were identified. Findings from the study revealed that social media have the potential to promote positive mental health. The study also revealed that adolescents frequently utilised social media to seek information about mental health. The study also identified that there are benefits attached to using social media to seek mental health information. However, the study concluded that despite the challenges encountered when using social media, it does offer a useful way of educating and reaching adolescents to promote mental wellbeing.

### **Uses and Gratifications Theory**

Uses and Gratifications theory was propounded by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch in 1974. Before these scholars started their work on the theory, previous studies had been conducted during the 1940s to understand people's inclination to particular radio programmes and why people read newspapers daily (McQuail, 2010). The basic aim of the Uses and Gratifications Theory is to understand why people use the media and what they derive from using it (Musa, Azmi, & Ismail, 2015).

According to David (2016), Uses and Gratification theory explains that people use social media to eradicate negative feelings, to seek recognition, and for cognitive needs. This scholar contends that Uses and Gratifications theory has more relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because it explains how people use technologies and why people use the media for their personal reasons or needs. Social media has drastically changed the way people use mass media; they use it for different purposes (Musa et al, 2015). Social media users have access to information that is of interest to them and also benefits them without a restriction, which is entirely different from how

people access information in the mainstream mass media (Musa et al, 2015).

Giving the heuristic value of the Uses and Gratifications and its continuing adaptability to the ever-changing media landscape, the theory is fit to explain and understand why university undergraduates use various social media platforms for mental health purposes and the gratification they derive from the use. This theory also helps to understand some of the factors that motivate undergraduates to use social media for mental health purposes.

### **METHOD**

This study was carried out among undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 25 years at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, whose mental health has been affected positively or negatively by the usage of social media. Purposive sampling technique was used to conduct in-depth interviews with the 30 undergraduate students from various departments within the university. Before the study began, ethical clearance was given by the institutional ethical committee and at the commencement of each in-depth interview, each informant was assured of the confidentiality of the study. Adequate information was provided to each informant on the rationale for the study. The in-depth interview conducted in English was thematically analyzed with Nvivo10 software. Although the in-depth interview was centered on social media and mental health of University of Ilorin students, the students were also interrogated about their perceptions on improving mental health advocacy campaigns in Nigeria.

### **RESULTS**

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed three main themes which were identified simultaneously by two independent reviewers of the transcripts. The three themes were identified as follows: frequency of social media usage; the pattern of social media usage on mental health; and usage of mental health information.

#### **Theme One: Frequency of Social Media Usage**

This theme shows how often social media is used for therapeutic gratifications by undergraduates of University of Ilorin. Informants were forthcoming on the frequency at which they

use social media for mental health gratifications. Majority of the informants noted that social media is used on a daily basis to access mental health information basically to improve their health welfare and to get relief from depression. One informant articulately explained that “I use it every day but I don’t use it while am in the church or the lecture room because I won’t be able to hear what the preacher and lecturer are teaching”.

Similarly, informants 3 and 6 explained that they use social media mostly at night due to their tight schedule during the day. The informants further revealed that their rigorous academic activities during the day, which falls within 7am to 8pm, denied them of the luxury of using social media during the day. Similarly, informant 11 revealed that “I am an active social media user, I use it every day”.

Furthermore, the data in the study revealed that majority of the students spend most of their time on social media platforms which makes them have limited time to attend to other important issues in their lives. The data revealed that the majority of the informants spent more than three to five hours (3-5) hours daily. For instance, informant 2 stated that “I am very active; I spend 23 hours out of 24 hours per day using social media.” Similar to informant 2, informant 21 also said “Am active, I mostly spend a lot of hours on social media. I spend more than 7 hours a day.” These statements showed that the majority of the undergraduates have inculcated the use of social media in their everyday activities, which can then be deduced that a day cannot pass without them logging into their social media account.

Contrary to the above findings of this study, the in-depth interview also revealed that not all of the students are fond of using social media daily. Informant 20 and 29 revealed that social media is not a daily activity for them. Particularly, informant 20 says he uses social media platforms only when he needs to get information relating to his academic activities. When other informants were asked about the rate at which they use social media to seek mental health information, the data in this study revealed that majority of them believed that the new era of seeking information on social media constantly is here. Therefore, they frequently use social media to access mental health information only when their mental health is

challenged. For instance, informant 21 categorically stated that she uses social media frequently whenever she is trying to recover from psychological breakdown that affects her mental state. The data in this study also revealed that some of the informants use social media for few hours; for instance, informant 3 and informant 9 hardly spend at least one (1) hour on social media on a daily basis. Those responses show that few of the informants are not active users of social media as some of them spent one hour on social media usage daily.

### **Theme Two: Usage of Mental Health Information**

The findings of this study revealed that some of the informants use social media to gratify their mental health needs; they intentionally use social media when they feel depressed, they use it to seek mental health assistance from the platforms they are involved in. Evidence from the data showed that some of the informants use some social media platforms to suppress loneliness, depression and to get advice and read live shared.

For instance, informant 17 revealed that she fell into depression as a result of her poor academic results and financial crisis. However, social media gave her the comfort she needed. She reiterated that social media gave her a huge sense of belonging because of the positive enabling individuals that she met there. Similarly, another informant explained that social media gave her hope when she was mentally down and depressed which was caused by the difficulties she was experiencing with her boyfriend and her poor academic performance. She explained that going to social media gave her enough motivation and encouragement which have helped her recover from her traumatic and depressing state of mind. Similarly, informant 3 revealed that she intentionally wrote to BOM on social media when she was depressed as a result of the difficulty she was experiencing in her relationship. She stated further that after writing to BOM she was adequately relieved from depression. Yet another informant explained that whenever she was depressed, she usually posts what was on her mind on her WhatsApp status which usually attracts people who saw the post to slide into her DM to share their recovery stories from depression.

Also, informant 17 revealed that YouTube was a major social media platform that helped him recover from depression when he had a heartbreak. He mentioned some examples of videos on YouTube which are videos on how to recover from depression. According to the informant, the videos have been helping him to recover from the depression and as well as physical therapy sessions with his doctors at the Behavioral Sciences Department, of the University of Ilorin.

Also, few of the informants expressed that happy and inspirational posts always make them happy thereby improving their deteriorated mental health. Informant 26 stressed the importance of inspirational posts on social media. According to him, "Most times I don't need to talk to people about what am going through; seeing some happy and inspirational content on the social media make me happy". Another informant was emphatic on this when he explained that exposure to happy content on social media gives him huge relief from his poor mental health condition. He noted further that the happy contents serve as a therapy session for him whereby he does not need to talk to anyone about the situation deteriorating his mental health before he recovers from it. Aside from the therapeutic effect, it was also revealed by informant 3 that happy contents relieve her from depression without her talking to people about her problem. Another informant revealed that likes on her social media posts serve as therapy sessions for her because it shows that at least people love whatever she posted.

Informant 7 noted that: "... it has helped my mental health by making me happy due to the likes I get on my post. It makes me get off the depression it causes in me...". Similarly, informant 2 revealed that "I derive happiness from the number of likes I get on my posts, the higher the likes I get on each post the happier I am. It makes me forget my worries." The comment of informant 2 revealed that the more she gets like buttons on her social media posts in terms of videos, pictures, and write up the more she gets happy.

This study further revealed that some of the informants listen to music on social media to ease their poor mental health conditions in terms of stress, depression, sad mood, and anger. For instance, informant 23 revealed that "going for entertaining

stuffs helps me like listening to music help my sad mood". Another informant supported informant 23's view which revealed that "Yes, I do by listening to music, when I get depressed, I download songs on YouTube to ease my depression...". According to the informant, he usually downloads songs on YouTube whenever he is depressed. He further revealed that the song has therapeutic effects on him. Informant 19 as well supported informants 23 & 5's views by revealing that "Yes most times, I use it to get off my worries as a result of celebrity lifestyles I just... listen to music which has greatly helped me." Aside from listening to music to ease depression, informant 19 revealed that listening to music relieves him from worries which are caused by celebrity lifestyle portrayed on social media.

Analysis of the interviews in this study revealed that some of the informants love watching comedy skits on social media to ease off their mental stress. For instance, informant 5 revealed that he preferred watching Woli Agba's comedy skit to ease off his mental stress..." Information from informant 5 further revealed that Woli Agba serves as a form of gratification that eases off his mental stress. Similarly, informant 16 stressed more on the issue of discussion where he revealed that he is a very hot-tempered person, and any time he gets angry he always goes to social media to watch comedy which gives him a form of relief from his anger. Another informant also shares similar experiences when he revealed that he watches comedy to relieve himself from the worries celebrity lifestyles on social media caused. He further revealed that comedy on social media serves as a therapy session for him whenever he is worried. Overall, it can be deduced that the majority of the students whose mental health is not in good condition gratified mental health needs on social media in terms of getting mental health supports, entertainment skits, and happy content on social media. Therefore, the majority of the informants get adequate satisfaction from social media contents

However, this study also found that a few of the informants who use social media for mental health gratification are not fully satisfied with the mental health assistance they got and still getting from the platform. The in-depth interview further revealed that the mental health assistance the respondents got and are still getting from social media at times does not relate to the poor mental

health they are suffering from. This shows that there is a missing link in the mental health information they are consuming on social media, thus few of the informants are not satisfied with the mental health information they are getting on social media.

### **Theme Three: Implications of Social Media Usage on Mental Health**

On the implications of social media usage for mental health gratification, it was observed that each informant's experience differs. The in-depth interviews revealed that some of the informants experienced negative consequences in their health during the usage of social media for health gratifications. For instance, the responses from most of the informants revealed that some of them are depressed as a result of social media usage. The informants explicitly stated that social media makes them compare their lives with celebrities, friends, and peer mates who seem to be living a perfect and extravagant life, thereby resulting in low self-esteem and a less satisfying life. When the informants were asked to state the particular social media handles that gave them low self-esteem, the majority of them mentioned Facebook and Instagram.

One of the interesting discoveries of this research is that some of the informants' explained that the body shape, skin colour, and beauty that they were exposed to on social media, gave them an imbalanced mental state of mind. The informants mentioned Instagram as one of the social media platforms that give low self-esteem. In corroboration with the earlier mentioned comment, another informant elucidated that "social media makes me feel low body image. For example, Priscilla Ojo's skin looks fresher than me I feel intimidated despite that we have the same body type. Priscilla Ojo's skin makes me feel am less attractive. I have low self-esteem because of this". Similarly, two other informants remarked that female celebrities' shape and skin colour make them have low self-esteem when compared to theirs.

Aside from depression and low self-esteem which social media causes among some of the informants, other informants revealed that they get jealous whenever they get in contact with people portraying a rich lifestyle on social media. For

instance, informant 10 indicated that she feels envious whenever she sees extravagant lifestyles of celebrities on social media. She stated that "She travels out like mad, and I have never stepped out of this country before, her life is better than mine. I am always envious of her..." Also, informant 6 revealed that "... It worsens my mental health, I feel jealous because I have not gotten to that stage in my life. I feel my life is incomplete compared to what I see on the social media". In the same vein, another informant revealed that whenever she sees good events happening on social media, she feels jealous; she further stated that she always wishes she is the person such a good event is happening to. Another informant commented as follows:

People's lifestyles get me jealous; I do feel I should be in the same position as them... For example, I have a friend on social media whose husband gifted her a surprise birthday gift, I felt jealous when I saw the video. I get jealous of people on social media a lot. The good events in people's lives make me jealous. I do feel those people are better than me.

Jealousy made some of the informants feel bad about the good events happening in the lives of others, which made them wish they should be in the same position. The summary of the submissions by the interviewees is that social media has negative consequences on their mental health, by worsening their depression, jealousy, and low self-esteem.

It is interesting to note that some of the informants explained that the usage of social media had positive consequences on their mental health. Findings in the study established that social media helped some of the informants to get relief from their poor mental health condition through sharing whatever that is deteriorating their mental health on their timelines, group platforms, and chatting with friends. Few of the informants further revealed that they got help from people through advice, encouragement, and shared lived experiences of how to overcome the situation by those who had been through the situation in the past. This study found out that some of the students find mental health support in terms of sharing mental health experiences and discovery journey by people on social media. The informants further revealed the

platforms through which they get mental health support. These include WhatsApp timeline, chatting on WhatsApp, FIN on Facebook, Bom on Instagram, and other various platforms. For instance, informant 3 revealed how she got over depression when she had difficulties in handling her relationship. The informant revealed that she uses a particular Instagram handle to seek comfort, advice, and encouraging words from people which gave her relief from the psychological state of mind she was in. Informant 21 reiterated that she uses the FIN group on Facebook to get advice and guidance on how to handle her relationship with her boyfriend.

Another informant further revealed how social media has helped her recover from depression which led to the thought of committing suicide, the informant stated that writing on her timeline about the problem she was going through made her get advice from people who made her get relief from the poor mental health condition she was suffering from. Another informant also gave social media a pass mark when she explained that uploading her worries on the social media timeline made her seek people who always render mental health support. She further revealed that she prefers chatting with people on social media than in the real world because of stigmatization attached to poor mental health. Further analysis of responses from the informants revealed that they are always happy anytime they get likes and comments notifications on their social media posts, as the buttons change the informants' mood moves from sad to an exciting one.

Furthermore, this study found that some of the informants are happy whenever they get in contact with happy and inspiring contents on social media. Specifically, they stated that people's achievements make them happy in a way that rejuvenates their mood change from negative to an exciting mood. Another informant's view that supported informant 5 explained that people's achievements make him happy any time he is sad. He categorically stated that "I get happy when I get across with happy contents and when I see people's posts with their achievement, I get happy. My mental health improves that way".

In addition to the findings of this study, some informants revealed that their self-confidence was built on social media allows them to express

themselves without any form of restrictions. Specifically, informants 21, 23 and 9's views revealed that social media has strongly built their self-esteem due to the comments and motivational expressions they get from their posts. As a result of the comments, she revealed that she believes she is very attractive whereas no one can make her feel less attractive in the real world.

In summary, it was established that social media use among the students has positive consequences on their mental health. However, the consequence of social media depends on individual differences which ranges from the problems and attitude. The positive consequences of social media on the mental health of the students as revealed in the information gathered include mental health support, changes in mood from sad to an exciting mood, as well as the building of self-confidence.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

This section is based on three main themes i.e. the frequency of social media usage to get mental health information, the patterns of social media usage on mental health, and usage of mental health information among some undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin.

On the frequency of social media usage, findings showed that there is high usage of social media among undergraduate students as the majority of them agreed that they use social media daily to get mental health information to get relief from depression. This result corroborates the findings in earlier studies on the issue. The values derived from social media on mental health information determines the frequency of its usage. This is supported by Montagni, Donisi, Tedeschi, Parizot, Motrico and Horgan (2016) who reported that half of the undergraduates' used social media to get information on mental health while most of them use it to get information on general health. Thus, finding on high usage of social media among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin is in congruence with the findings of Rideout and Fox (2018) who found that there is high acceptability of and engagement with the social networking site platforms as were perceptions of usefulness and safety. Emerging from the findings of Rideout and Fox (2018) is that, there is a correlation between the acceptability of and engagement with social media platforms and the daily usage of social

media among undergraduate students in the University of Ilorin aligns with Deepa and Priya (2020) who reported a minimum of one hour daily for social media to seek for mental health information.

On the uses of mental health information on social media among University of Ilorin undergraduates, findings show that undergraduates use social media to gratify their mental health needs by intentionally and purposively using social media when they feel depressed, they use it to seek mental health assistance towards suppressing loneliness and depression; to get advice and read live shared. Beyond social interaction and connecting with friends, social media also helps to provide necessary information on mental health due to its acceptability and usability among mental health patients. This finding agrees with the study of O'Reilly, Dogra, Hughes, Reilly, George, and Whiteman (2018) who attested to the benefits attached to using social media for mental health information.

The study also revealed that social media have the potential to promote positive mental health. This is in consonance with Naslund et.al. (2017) who reported that social media users who self-identified as having a mental illness learn about their use of social media for mental health and to identify opportunities to augment existing mental health services. However, a sizeable percentage of undergraduate students in the University of Ilorin feels Facebook and Instagram platforms make them feel depressed, jealous and have low self-esteem as they tend to compare their lives to what they see on those platforms. This is similar to Chou and Edge (2012) report on people tending to be depressed when they are only exposed to the positive aspects of other people's lives on social media which makes them feel those people's lives are better than theirs. Excessive exposure to social media content can't create a perception among the users, depending on the disposition of users on the content; it might create depression among the users. Also, the findings corroborated with Naslund, Aschbrenner, McHugo, Unützer, Marsch, and Bartels (2017) majority of self-identified mental health users of Twitter expressed interest in mental health programs delivered through social media, especially to promote overall health and

wellbeing and for coping with mental health symptoms.

On the implications of social media usage on mental health gratification, findings from the study show that there are varying degrees of implications of social media usage on mental health among undergraduates. Undergraduates stated that using social media usually cause them depression and low self-esteem because they get jealous whenever they come in contact with people portraying a rich lifestyle on social media. This is contrary to studies (Rideout et al, 2018; Wright et al., 2013) which revealed that students suffering from depression specifically get satisfied with mental health information from social media because of the relief they derive from it. Since this study reported high usage of social media for mental health information, its findings further support previous studies on the relationship between time spent on social media as well as the number of social media platforms used, and symptoms of depression and anxiety (Keles, McCrae, Grealish, 2020; Kelly, Zilanawala, Booker & Sacker, 2018; Chou & Edge, 2012). Nonetheless, findings from the study show that the usage of social media has positive consequences on their mental health.

Also, these findings are in congruence with Rideout and Fox (2018) who reported that young people are already turning to SNSs to engage in knowledge seeking and peer-to-peer support, SNS-based youth mental health interventions provide an opportunity to address some of the barriers young people face in accessing qualified mental health support and information. Also, the findings are in congruence with O'Reilly, et.al's (2018) result that social media have the potential to promote positive mental health. It is this potential of social media that has made it to have a positive implication on the mental health issue among undergraduates of the University of Ilorin.

### **Conclusion**

There are a variety of reasons for using social media as it is evident in the study. Social media platforms are being used to seek mental health-related information among social media enthusiasts. The study has been able to show that there is high usage of social media among undergraduate students and they do use social media to gratify their mental health needs.

However, the study recommends the need for students to seek help from mental health care providers such as Pharmacists, Doctors, medical psychologists, or social workers whenever they have mental health challenges, and not to always keep to themselves or rely on social media all the time. The data also brings forth the recommendation that qualified mental health care providers should always be readily and easily available to students and young people in case of any emergency. Furthermore, there is a need to create public awareness of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and social media mental health among students in the various citadel of academic excellence in Nigeria. The Federal Government in Nigeria should make proper provision and equip the psychiatric hospitals as well as the rehabilitation centers to properly cater for any mental health issue cases. It is worthy to note that this study adopted qualitative research method. So, other research can consider engaging in a mixed method approach to investigate social media usage for mental health information among undergraduates. Likewise, researchers interested in studying usage of social media and mental health related studies, should endeavor to examine the influence of social media usage as an advocacy tool to combat mental health among undergraduates.

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