

Navigating the Digital Workplace: The Impact of Social Media Use on Thriving and Job Performance with a Focus on Self-Regulation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between social media use, thriving, and job performance given self-regulation as a moderating factor. The increasing social media use by employees in the workplace provides both opportunities and challenges, which may cause its impact on performance outcomes to be highly variable. Moreover, the relationship between social media use and performance outcomes is complex, suggesting that there may be contextual variables influencing the significance of this relationship. Data for this study were collected from 274 academics at Delta State University, Delta State, Nigeria, and subjected to the partial least square [PLS] analytical protocol for structural equation modeling. The PLS results demonstrated that social media use and thriving have a positive and significant link that can be explained partly by the mediational pathway of thriving. Second, self-regulation interaction with social media use triggers thriving, which can be viewed as a significant antecedent of job performance. The study recommended that managers should encourage the regulated use of social media to ensure it stays effective for the realisation of desirable work benefits.

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This calls for the training of staff to enable them to address conceptions and misconceptions of social media use and develop competencies and strategies for the regulated and productive use of social media applications.

Keywords: *Learning, Job Performance, Self-Regulation, Social Media, Thriving, Vitality*

Introduction

Over the past decade, the use of social media [SM], which is a group of internet-based applications that create a social environment for the creation and exchange of work-related and non-work-related information, has become part of everyday life for many employees across the world of business. The primal appeal of SM is that it blurs spatial and temporal boundaries for better connectivity, exchange of information, and collaboration among individuals (Ononye & Igwe, 2017). A recent study (Igwe & Ononye, 2020) indicates that SM enrichment of knowledge-related practices may account for the surging popularity and usage of generic SM applications (e.g., wikis, blogs, and social network services) among employees of Nigerian organisations. Concerning this, it could be claimed that SM applications, to an extent, have changed the traditional communication model, and presented many knowledge-related opportunities promoting employee and organisational performance. However, there are fears that the growing use of SM may create problems for employees, especially when left unregulated during working hours (Reinecke et al., 2022). Some of these concerns (e.g., distraction, anxiety, burnout, stress, isolation, and poor time management) may prove inimical to positive work attitudes, behaviours, and performance (Khan et al., 2021).

Self-regulation, which is a discrepancy-reducing behavioural process oriented towards goal attainment, ensures the appropriate use of SM applications at work (Reinecke et al., 2022). SM can have variable influences at work because its utility presents both opportunities and challenges, which are likely to foster different outcomes (Zhao & Yu., 2023). Likewise, it can be used for work-related and non-work-related purposes, which make social media use [SMU] influences in the workplace paradoxical. For instance, work-related SMU conveys instrumental benefits (e.g., knowledge and advice), whereas non-work-

related SMU conveys affective benefits (e.g., trust and commitment), with both having different implications on performance-related outcomes (Luo et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2021). However, self-regulation is an important boundary condition for achieving a balance between competing purposes in a specific work context (Khan et al., 2021; Reinecke et al., 2022), and this can lead to the manifestation of positive employee outcomes. Of interest to this study is thriving at work, also known as thriving. Thriving is the psychological state wherein employees jointly experience learning and vitality at work (Ononye, 2023).

The changing work environment can expose employees to greater uncertainties and complexities, and to perform well in this context, employees need to leverage variegated functional resources that would enable them to thrive productively. Ononye (2022:24) states that “the experience of thriving does not occur in isolation from social interactions. Thriving is cultivated through socialisation mechanisms and the knowledge resources accrued in a given social context”. This forms part of Spreitzer et al.’s (2005) socially embedded model of thriving. It is logical to assume that SM close association with personal knowledge management often cultivates supportive resources, facilitating the occurrence of thriving. This may be true because the learning process is activated when shared knowledge is embodied in action to promote knowledge generativity, and vitality is experienced when individuals participate in constructive relationships leading to the exchange of critical knowledge resources. Drawing from the social capital theory, the resources (e.g., information, advice, and emotional support) obtained from relations with others in SM interactive space can support the development of positive psychological states, and these positive psychological states are strong antecedents of adaptive work behaviours. As an adaptive concept, thriving motivates employees to learn and seek new growth and development opportunities needed to effectively navigate changing work contexts (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). In this line, thriving ensures individuals’ sustainable development and performance. Studies (Elahi et al., 2019; Kleine et al., 2019; Sprietzer et al., 2005) state that employees who thrive at work focus on generating new resources by building supportive relationships and access to knowledge widely dispersed in the global environment. Arguably, self-regulation enables these foundational elements to be concretised in SMU for the emergence of thriving, which ultimately

enhances job performance [JP]. JP is the aggregated contribution of an employee to the attainment of organisational goals.

Thriving employees achieve enhanced JP due to continuous learning and renewed motivation to work (Spreitzer et al., 2005). However, Khan et al. (2021) state that the SMU effect on employee outcomes is a complex phenomenon that cannot be ascertained by simple causality. This is to say that SM prediction of JP seems less probable in the absence of specified intervening pathways serving as catalysts (Jafar et al., 2019; Jong et al., 2021). Because SMU is a distal construct that is likely to have a minimal direct impact on JP, the study believes that the usefulness of SM on JP could be largely dependent on its capability to cultivate other employee-related constructs closely associated with JP. This led to the selection of thriving as the key mediational factor accounting for the association between SMU and JP. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no single study has examined this potential explanatory pathway in the SMU-JP link. The study also argues that self-regulation modulates SMU by developing a sense of responsibility that helps employees stay focused on tasks to attain desirable work outcomes. Therefore, whether self-regulation interacts with SMU to shape employees' sense of thriving for better JP remains an open empirical question.

The study is significant given that organisations are concerned about the consequences of SMU in the workplace as well as the mechanism at play in the SMU-JP link, and the results can serve as a guideline for organisations, managers, and employees to better SM strategy and practice accordingly. Though the extent to which thriving is attained depends on the social context, the role of the SM context in facilitating the experience of thriving remains underexplored in empirical research (Walumbwa et al., 2018). Additionally, prior studies (Khan et al., 2021; Zhao & Yu., 2023) suggest that SMU main effect on JP appears highly variable; however, the study considers how mediatory variables may help elucidate this relationship. Further, there is a lack of clarity on self-regulation conditioning of the adaptive use of SM to facilitate positive changes in thriving and ultimately JP (Reinecke et al., 2022). The finding will provide insights into the use and effectiveness of self-regulation in the SM context for a better appreciation of its link to other employee-relevant constructs. More so, Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014:138) observe that “two

out of three employees make occasional use of social media for their work". The reason is not farfetched from the rising number of active SM users in Nigeria (Ononye & Igwe, 2017). It is highly likely that the ubiquity of SM has permeated organisational life and boundaries to facilitate communication and knowledge work (Xiongfei et al., 2016). Because of the prevalence and accelerated use of SM, the need to examine SMU for work purposes has emerged (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). Despite this call, studies are still limited on the effects of SM on employees' outcomes in organisations (Song et al., 2019). Hence, there is a need for further analysis to improve our understanding of the possible benefits of SMU in the workplace within the boundaries of geographic context. The findings of such an investigation could help organisations in Nigeria reconfigure strategy and practice for the utility of SM in the workplace to ensure that the goal of better employee performance is not compromised. Therefore, the objective of this study is to demonstrate the following: (1) the relationship between SMU and thriving; (2) the relationship between thriving and JP; (3) the mediating role of thriving on SMU and JP; and (4) the moderating role of self-regulation on SMU and thriving.

Literature Review

Social Media Use and Thriving

The advancement of SM applications has significantly influenced the work environment in which employees operate. This makes its use a contemporary issue in organisational studies. Carr and Hayes (2015:50) describe SM as "Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others". SM applications or technologies are being utilised in work practices for communication and engagement (Rasheed et al., 2021). In practice, SMU comprises 3 activity levels: consumption (i.e., internalising posted information or contents), conversation (i.e., participating or engaging in discussions with other individuals or groups), and contribution (i.e., sharing knowledge and views through posts and/or comments), as indicated in Nayak et al. (2020). Arguably, SM applications have created more boundaryless opportunities for connection, communication, and interaction in a collaborative paradigm (Mohammad & Usha, 2017). It also fosters other knowledge-related

practices (e.g., knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, knowledge capture, knowledge application, and knowledge combination) for the effective leverage of collective intelligence (Bik & Goldstein, 2013; Cepeda-Carrion et al., 2022; Nisar et al., 2019). By using SM, employees have access to social support structures that facilitate and enable resource sharing and generation. The resources shared or generated can provide either or both instrumental and affective benefits to employees (Luo et al., 2018). Nayak et al. (2020) state that SM presents ample opportunities for organisations to foster a culture of positive reinforcement and a sense of community, which underlines its importance for work attitude, behaviour, and performance. In summary, SMU forms part of a transformative culture, providing numerous benefits for employee and organisation communication (Rasheed et al., 2021).

Thriving is a psychological condition for the joint experience of learning (the acquisition and application of knowledge for competency building) and vitality (the positive feeling associated with being active, energetic, and enthused at work). This psychological condition comprises both cognitive (learning) and affective (vitality) components, and a variation in one component may cause employees to experience less or more thriving (Ononye, 2023). It is a continuous process and not a one-time psychological state (Spreitzer et al., 2005). This suggests that it is not a stable but a temporal psychological disposition that needs to be rightly reinforced across changing circumstances (van der Walt 2018). The benefit of treating them as a composite construct rather than an individual construct is that more desirable consequences or outcomes are realised when both are evident in a given context (Ononye, 2022).

Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) socially embedded model of thriving suggests that learning and vitality are socially constructed, and SM can provide a social support system for the conveyance and convergence of resources to affect individuals' sense of thriving. By using SM, thriving is either supported or impeded by the connections between employees, resources, and opportunities. It is possible that resource sharing and resource generation play an important part in the appropriate use of technology, and this makes SM relevant because it provides an extended social context that cultivates different work resources, enabling the experience of thriving (Hussain et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2021). Besides, other antecedent variables of thriving, such as information sharing,

friendship, relationship building, constructive conversations, supportive environments, participation, and collaborative relationships, are, to an extent, reflective of SM affordances (Abid & Contreras, 2022; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Kleine et al., 2019). These affordances carry with them the promise of better behavioural engagement, with the possibility of restructuring work to meet changing personal and work demands. Both behavioural engagement and thriving include a vitality/vigour component, but thriving includes learning, whereas behavioural engagement comprises absorption and dedication (Van der Walt, 2018). It is apt to point out that learning and absorption, though conceptually distinct, are characterised by the use of cognitive processes to guide efforts in the workplace.

Rasheed et al. (2021) argue that organizations that foster effective communication processes experience high employee engagement. This may be true because the conversational and collaborative features of communication processes contribute to the positive feeling of relatedness and connectedness in the context of the work environment. In a communication setting, relations and connections enable effective information and knowledge flow (Mohammad & Usha, 2017). SM-based communication effect on employee engagement (Rasheed et al., 2021) may be the same for thriving because both employee engagement and employee thriving are somewhat related. Ostic et al. (2021) utilised the social capital theory to argue that SMU impacts the positive psychological state of an employee by increasing the resources embedded in his or her social network. Thriving is a positive psychological state attained through socialisation (Ononye, 2022) and, thus, can be impacted by SMU. Liu et al. (2021) demonstrated that the use of enterprise SM for both work and social tasks positively impacts employees' thriving. Thus, it can be implied that the use of generic SM applications can achieve the same result regarding thriving. Based on the above arguments, the study developed the following hypothesis.

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between SMU and thriving.

Mediating Role of Thriving between Social Media Use and Job Performance

While thriving can be influenced by SMU, it can also lead to a variety of positive outcomes for employees and organisations, one of which is JP. Arguably, employees who achieve a state of thriving can perform well in

diverse organisational settings due to their self-development concept, adaptation abilities, and motivational orientation to work. The formation of a positive psychological state enables them to develop additional work resources to fuel behaviours necessary for optimal functioning and performance improvement. Thriving association with JP has been confirmed in previous empirical studies (Ali et al., 2018; Elahi et al., 2019; Hussain et al., 2022). More so, thriving has been operationalised as an intermediary construct in studies involving work behaviour(s) and JP. For instance, Elahi et al. (2019) examined workplace behavioural predictors of JP through the mediation of thriving, and the study found that thriving mediation was positive and significant. A similar mediation result was also achieved in a study conducted by Ali et al. (2018) on the relationship between empowering leadership, thriving at work, and JP.

Studies (Khan et al., 2021; Zhao & Yu, 2023) observed that SMU effect on work outcomes is complex and cannot be determined by simple causality in a specified relationship. This affirmed the suggestion of Kasćelan et al. (2020) that organisational performance can indirectly be affected by information technology resources due to their influence on knowledge management practices, such as knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is one of the preconditions for thriving (Ononye, 2022). For this reason, the relevance and utility of SM are determined by the extent of its relatedness to behaviours and practices associated with thriving. Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) socially embedded model of thriving suggests that thriving can act as a mediator in channelling SM benefits (information sharing, supportive relationships, and access to relational and knowledge resources) to different thriving outcomes, such as JP (Abid & Contreras, 2022; Kleine et al., 2019). In other words, the technological context (SM) provides the activity or mechanism in which individuals obtain important job resources to function effectively and efficiently at work. The quality of job resources impacts the emergence of certain personal resources (thriving) in employees, which in turn modulate different performance variables (JP). Given the social capital theory, this may be true because relationships formed on SM platforms create value for employees as they provide important resources that can be used to realise positive outcomes, such as thriving and JP. Thus, SMU may improve thriving, which has a positive effect on JP. Based on the arguments, the study formed the second and third hypotheses.

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between thriving and JP.

H3: The positive and significant relationship between SMU and JP is mediated by thriving.

Moderating Role of Self-regulation on Social Media Use and Thriving

Self-regulation has become a topical theme in social knowledge management literature. By definition, it represents the competency or ability of an individual to adapt behaviour, cognition, and emotion according to standards or goals conditioned by the person-work context. The application of self-regulation is to increase employee effectiveness in any given activity through goal setting, self-monitoring, self-control, and self-reinforcement. The capacity for self-regulation varies among employees due to individual differences and can be learned through experience, and self-reflection or feedback (Popa, 2015). The use of self-regulatory processes promotes attention control in the realisation of a plethora of planned employee goals (Khan et al., 2021; Reinecke et al., 2022). The attainment of high thriving and JP from SMU is an important goal realised, in part, by the self-regulation of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes. Morosanova (2013:252) states that “goal-oriented regulation of an individual’s activity is the main mechanism providing a productive relationship between subjective, objective, and social reality”.

Mauroner (2016) argued that SMU may attenuate positive employee behaviours when it impedes employees’ functionality during working hours. Self-regulation enables work-related considerations to underpin SMU for productive work behaviours to be well-guided and maintained (Khan et al., 2021; Reinecke et al., 2022). In other words, self-regulation provides the internal resources or cues required to exploit the affordances of SM in a controlled and purposeful manner to ensure the generative and functional benefits from its utility are realised fully. Drawing from the psychological flow theory, the need for self-regulation stems from the motivation to reduce SMU negative effects (e.g., addiction, distraction, stress, and technology-based work conflicts) and help employees focus on specific tasks and assignments through self-discipline, self-direction, and self-determination (Cziksentmihalyi, 1990). MacCormick et al. (2012) suggest that mental recovery is ensured by self-regulation to optimise knowledge work. Arguably, by using self-regulation to buffer the connection between SMU and

thriving, employees with a high sense of thriving can benefit from SMU to strengthen JP. In line with this argument, the study developed the fourth hypothesis.

H4: The positive and significant relationship between SMU and thriving is moderated by self-regulation.

The formulated hypothetical statements about the relationships between SMU, thriving, and JP were integrated and presented in the research framework in Figure 1. Summarily, the study argues that SMU influence on JP will be effective if it stimulates thriving. However, the SMU-thriving link may be somewhat ambiguous because there could be certain boundary conditions (self-regulation) enabling this link.

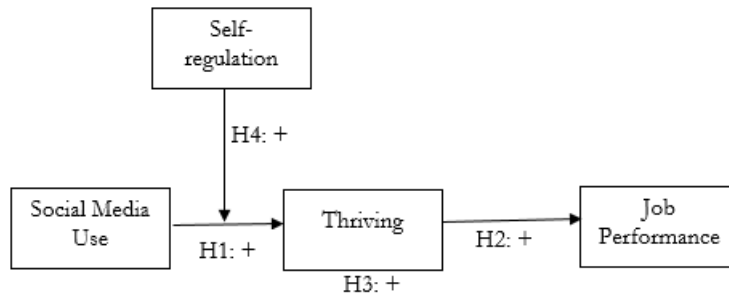


Figure 1: The research framework

Source: Developed by the Researchers, 2022.

Data and Methods

The participants are academics employed at Delta State University, Delta State, Nigeria. The random sampling technique, which gives an equal opportunity for the selection of respondents, was utilised for data collection from the state-owned universities. As knowledge workers, academics often engage in knowledge exchange within and outside organisational boundaries to enrich work practices in teaching and research. Mauroner (2016) observes that many of them recognise the huge potential of SM applications for visibility and constructive conversation, which are necessary to trigger knowledge-related behaviours, such as knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, knowledge combination, etc. Bik and Goldstein (2013) add that SM is increasingly used by

academics to share articles, express their informed opinions and thoughts, post updates about or from conferences and meetings, and disseminate information about professional opportunities and any other events incidental to academic growth and development. The study purposively selected tertiary education organisation because they actively encourage staff to be on academic SM platforms or groups to network and exchange information, furthering education and research. Hence, they will be able to provide credible information on the subject matter.

Consent from management was sought before invitations were sent out to participants. The participants who voluntarily agreed to be subjected to the survey probe were approached and informed about the purpose of the research. The research purpose, assurances of response anonymity, and expected questionnaire completion time were explicitly captured in the cover letter, which was accompanied by a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included a bio-data section and a section for questions on the study variables. The survey was conducted in person in November 2022. Reminders were sent out fortnightly to improve the response rate. The participants were guided with explanations for questions or comments during the survey exercise. The 274 questionnaires collected had no missing values and were deemed usable for data analysis. Of them, male participants were 143 (52.2%) and females were 131 (47.8%). The age of participants ranged from 36 to 57 years, with a mean age of 43.7 years. The graduate degree was classified as a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate, for which the number of participants was 0, 166, and 108, respectively. The mean tenure of the participants was 13.7 years.

The structured questionnaire utilised in the survey was taken from validated scales in extant literature (please find the measurement items in the appendix). The questionnaire was rated on a five-point Likert scale of strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Five SMU question items were adapted from Park et al. (2017). Sample items include "I use social media often in the workplace", and "I use social media to obtain work-related information". Ten question items for thriving were taken from Porath et al. (2012). Sample items include "I feel alive and vital at work", and "I find myself learning often at work". Five question items for JP were taken from Lee and Lee (2020). Sample items include "I always perform better than the acceptable level" and "The quality of my work is

excellent". Seven question items on self-regulation were adopted from Diehl et al. (2006). Sample items include "I can concentrate on one activity for a long time, if necessary" and "I can control my thoughts from distracting me from the task at hand". Before administering the questionnaire, a pilot study was first conducted to determine the quality and appropriateness of the research instrument. This was performed on 15 participants who were randomly sampled from the target population. The pilot study was conducted from 10th to 14th October, 2022. Some of the questions were rephrased slightly to conform with the comments of the respondents. This, alongside the use of validated scales from prior studies, established content validity (Ononye, 2021). Because modifications were made to the questionnaire, the study considered it imperative to remove the responses from the pilot study to avoid contamination of the data from the final sample. Using the Cronbach alpha, the scales of SMU (.722.), thriving (.871), JP (.840), and self-regulation (.797) demonstrated good reliability. This test was performed with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 20.0.

The data analysis was performed in line with the structural equation modelling (SEM) two-step approach espoused by Anderson and Gerbing (1998). The study determined the validity and reliability of the measurement model (or outer model) through confirmatory factor analysis and, thereafter, estimated the significance of the structural model (or inner model) for hypothesis testing. The partial least square (PLS) SEM was adopted as the data analytical tool and aided by the SmartPLS 3 software. The study followed the rule of thumb in Hair et al. (2017) for interpretation of results.

Findings and Discussion

The applicability of the dataset for factor analysis was determined using the KMO measure of sampling adequacy, and the resulting values (SMU = .725, thriving = .803, JP = .788, self-regulation = .741) were above the minimum limit of .60. The Barlett's test of sphericity scores were all significant at $p < 0.05$, confirming that the dataset was factorable. Because the study made use of self-reported cross-sectional data, Harman's single factor test was conducted using SPSS 20.0 software to ensure there was no concern of common method bias (CMB). The variance explained by the general factor was 32.57, which is

less than the satisfactory total variance limit of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, the issue of CMB was not serious in this study and would not compromise the validity of the results. The study proceeded to establish the validity and reliability of the measurement model. Following the acceptance criteria in Hair et al. (2017), factor loadings [FL] for each latent construct should exceed the cut-off point of .707, composite reliability [CR] should be above .70, and average variance extracted [AVE] should be above the acceptable limit of .50. Table 1 showed that the FL, CR, and AVE values satisfy the acceptance criteria. In other words, satisfactory item reliability, construct reliability, and convergent validity were achieved with FL, CR, and AVE, respectively. Additionally, using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, there was no discriminant validity issue because the correlation of each construct (bolded correlation values) was greater than the inter-construct correlations (non-bolded correlation values). Having confirmed the quality of the measurement model, the study proceeded to the next step, which is the estimation of the structural model for hypothesis testing of the direct, mediation, and moderation effects in the hypothesised paths. More so, the bootstrap method using 1000 sub-samples was applied to examine the significance of the hypothesised relationships (Hair et al., 2017). The product indicator calculation approach was used to test the moderation effect of self-regulation.

Table 1: Assessment of the Outer Model

Constructs		FL range > .70	CR > .70	AVE > .50	1	2	3	4
1	Thriving	.726 - .814	.727	.604	.777			
2	JP	.731 - .822	.768	.550	.105	.742		
3	Self-regulation	.792 - .875	.820	.591	.297	.095	.769	
4	SMU	.765 - .793	.776	.634	.118	.209	.098	.796

Source: Research results, 2023

Table 2: Assessment of Inner Model

	Paths	β	P-value	Remark
1	SMU → Thriving	0.117	0.000	Significant
2	Thriving → JP	0.283	0.000	Significant
3	SMU → JP	0.108	0.061	Insignificant
	SMU → Thriving → JP	0.120	0.000	Significant
4	Self-regulation*SMU → Thriving	0.109	0.020	Significant
Note: P < 0.05 R ² = .457, β = beta values				

Source: Research results, 2023

Table 2 presents the structural model estimates for the hypothesised paths. The R² indicates that the research model explains 45.7% variation in JP, which suggests a moderate predictive power as recommended by Chin (1998). H1 predicted that there is a positive and significant relationship between SMU and thriving, and the result ($\beta = 0.117, p = 0.000$) is highly supportive of this statement. The positive and significant PLS estimate confirms support for H1. This finding concurs with Ostic et al. (2021) and Liu et al. (2021) on the positive connection between SMU and thriving. It also agrees with the arguments drawn from Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) socially embedded model of thriving that SM provides a social environment and support system, effectuating positive changes in one's experience of thriving. The positive and significant link may be connected to the fact that some antecedent variables of thriving form part of SM functions or benefits to its users (Abid & Contreras, 2022; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Kleine et al., 2019). It is plausible to state that the activation and reinforcement of thriving can be one of the psychological benefits of SMU.

H2 argued that there is a positive and significant relationship between thriving and JP. The PLS result ($\beta = 0.283, p = 0.000$) confirmed the validity of this argument. Thus, H2 was accepted. As expected, this finding agrees with the position of previous studies (Ali et al., 2018; Elahi et al., 2019; Hussain et al.,

2022) that reported the same positive and significant thriving-JP relationship. This finding affirmed the arguments drawn from the socially embedded model of thriving that thriving influences employees' adaptive functioning to enable them to achieve better JP. This is because the shared experience of learning and vitality enables employees to build additional resources necessary for introducing positive changes into the productive aspects of their job.

H3 proposed that the positive and significant relationship between SMU and JP is mediated by thriving, and the PLS result ($\beta = 0.120$, $p = 0.000$) found this proposition to be true. Thus, H3 was supported. The finding is consistent with Ali et al. (2018), Elahi et al. (2019), and Spreitzer et al. (2005), who found that thriving is an important intermediary variable in relationships involving work behaviours and performance outcomes. More so, it aligns with the argument of Kasćelan et al. (2020), Khan et al. (2021), and Zhao and Yu (2023) that SMU effects on performance outcomes are conveyed by specified intervening knowledge-related behaviours and practices, such as knowledge sharing and learning. The partial mediation role of thriving was established in the relationship, which suggests that there may be other contextual variables not included in this relationship at play. Given that the specific indirect effect ($\beta = 0.120$, $p = 0.000$) is higher than the direct effect ($\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.061$) in the SMU-JP link, optimality in effect can be achieved through the mediational pathways of thriving. It can be inferred that a stronger effect is achieved when complementary variables, like thriving, are introduced and developed to form a mediatory pathway between SMU and JP

H4 stated that the positive and significant relationship between SMU and thriving is moderated by self-regulation. The positive and significant PLS result ($\beta = 0.109$, $p = 0.000$) demonstrates that moderating influence exists in the stated relationship, which provides proof to support H4. The finding revealed that self-regulation plays a significant role in SMU determination of thriving among employees. This reinforces the position of past studies (Khan et al., 2021; Reinecke et al., 2022) that self-regulation is an important boundary condition in a SM context. This is because the ability to self-regulate makes the use of SM intentional in achieving desired outcomes, like thriving. When SMU is properly managed, employees can effectively adjust behavioural patterns to changing contextual demands and requirements, which improves their adaptive

functioning at work. This helps to buffer the negative side of SMU to ensure employees can purposefully cultivate a positive sense of progress and momentum through self-control, thereby improving their JP. It can be argued that thriving and JP are positive outcomes of SMU when self-regulation is applied in practice. The implications for theory and practice are discussed in the next section.

Conclusion

The study proposed a hypothetical research framework to examine the relationship between social media use, thriving, and job performance, given self-regulation as a moderating ability. In doing so, data were collected from 274 academics at Delta State University, Delta State, Nigeria, and subjected to the partial least square (PLS) protocol. Given the PLS results, the study concluded that the interaction between self-regulation and social media use affects thriving and, in turn, enhances job performance. This has important implications for theory and practice.

From a theoretical perspective, the results were presented in the research framework to indicate the contextual variables enabling the social media use and job performance link. This broadens our understanding of how social media use influences job performance because studies have suggested that the impact of social media on performance outcomes is complex and cannot be determined by simple causality (Kascélan et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Zhao & Yu, 2023). The study focused on the roles of certain psychological factors (self-regulation and thriving) previously ignored that underpin the social media use and job performance link. In doing so, the study provided clarity on self-regulation conditioning of the adaptive use of social media, which has been lacking in empirical studies, as indicated in Reinecke et al. (2022). Furthermore, the study extends the burgeoning empirical information on Spreitzer et al.'s (2005) socially embedded model of thriving that self-regulated social media use fosters the shared experience of thriving and, in turn, performance outcomes because some of its functions form part of the antecedents of thriving. This is among the first study to determine the mediating role of thriving in a social media context, as studies have focused on behavioural antecedents connected to social media affordances (e.g., knowledge sharing, supportive relationships/environment, friendship, relationship-building, psychological/cognitive engagement) (Abid &

Contreras, 2022; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Kleine et al., 2019). Elahi et al. (2019) observed that previous investigations on the mediational role of thriving were conducted in a Western country context; this study extends the literature by confirming the mediating role of thriving in an African country context (Nigeria).

From a practical perspective, managers should encourage the regulated use of social media to ensure it stays effective for the realisation of desirable work benefits. This calls for the training of staff to enable them to address conceptions and misconceptions of SMU, and develop competencies and strategies for the regulated and productive use of social media applications. Further, with the increasing social media use among employees, communication may likely occur with or without management's approval. Managers should formulate a clear social media policy or framework to ensure the appropriate and guided use of this technology in the workplace. Even so, they should have an evaluation mechanism for this policy so it cultivates social practices triggering the implicit motivation for thriving. Specifically, managers can encourage employees to engage in discussions and sharing of social media experiences and their implications on job performance. Best practices can be learned from such constructive conversations to guide employee and organisational action on social media use. Considering the centrality of thriving in the social media context, a psychometric evaluation of thriving can be conducted periodically to enable them to determine the effectiveness of social media in furthering employee performance on the job. Additionally, social media presents ubiquitous communication and knowledge-related opportunities of benefit to both employees and organisation, however, it cannot completely replace, but complement or assist, other existing communication systems or practices. This calls for intelligent adoption because its use in the workplace is nascent, and there is still more to know about this emerging communication tool.

Although the study provided a snapshot of the link between social media use, thriving, and job performance, given self-regulation as a moderating variable, it was restricted to a tertiary education organisation in Southern Nigeria using cross-sectional data. Future studies should expand the sectorial, organisational, and geographic scope to improve the generality of the findings. More so, they

should make use of longitudinal datasets for better inference drawing. The study equally examined the effects of social media use on the composite experience of thriving dimensions: learning and vitality. Others may determine how social media use impacts these dimensions separately because its effect may be more on one than the other.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Appendix: measurement items

Social Media Use

1. I use social media often in the workplace
2. I use social media to obtain work-related information and knowledge
3. I use social media to disseminate work-related information and knowledge
4. I use social media to maintain and strengthen communication with others within and outside work
5. I use social media to develop new contacts within and outside work

Thriving

6. I feel alive and vital at work
7. At work, I have energy and spirit
8. I do not feel very energetic at work
9. I feel alert and awake at work
10. I am looking forward to each new day
11. At work, I find myself learning often
12. I continue to learn more and more as time goes by
13. I see myself continually improving at work
14. I am not learning at work
15. I have developed a lot as a person

Job Performance

16. I always perform better than the acceptable level
17. I often perform better than can be expected from me
18. I often put extra effort in my work.
19. I intentionally put a great deal of effort in carrying out my job.
20. The quality of my work is excellent.

Self-regulation

21. I can concentrate on one activity for a long time, if necessary
22. If I am distracted from an activity, I don't have any problem coming back to the topic quickly.
23. If an activity arouses my feelings too much, I can calm myself down so that I can continue with the activity soon.
24. If an activity requires a problem-oriented attitude, I can control my feelings.
25. I can control my thoughts from distracting me from the task at hand.
26. After an interruption, I don't have any problem resuming my concentrated style of working.
27. I stay focused on my goal and don't allow anything to distract me from my plan of action.