

Research Article

Effects of Social Media Usage on Academic Activities of Undergraduate Students of University of Africa, Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated effect of social media usage on academic activities of undergraduates' students of University of Africa, Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey method. The population of the study comprises of all the students in University of Africa. Systematic sampling was used to select two hundred and seven four (274) respondents for the study. Five (5) research questions guided the study and data were collected using structured questionnaire. It was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings show that WhatsApp and Facebook are the two social media networks mostly used by students. It was revealed that the students spend lesser time (30 minutes to 1 hour) on social media per day and it was significantly used for academic purposes. On the effects of the use of social media on the academic activities of students, the findings reveals that social media had no negative effect on the academic activities of the students. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that social media usage does not affect the academic activities of the students. The study finally recommends that Libraries and University authorities should organize workshops to teach their students on how to exploit the educational advantages of inherent on social media sites and also create awareness on the effects of misuse of social media.

1. Introduction

The advent of the internet has empowered social media to gain wider acceptability and usage and it has become an important interaction tool among students, especially at the higher level of education. Social media has become an essential part of students' daily lives because it serves as an important platform for socialization, sharing information and it also provides better access to information resources. Social media usage is more common in tertiary institutions settings as lecturers use this technology to further improve their delivery to promote knowledge among students (Boahene and Sampong, 2019). According to Liburd and Christensen (2013) social media usage inspires students to participate and make very thorough and detailed learning through communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. Also, social media is an effective device in carrying out research and can be used to create groups strictly meant for educational purposes and improve e-resources functions by linking students with collective ideas for the purposes of working together (Brien, 2012).

As social media use continues to grow, its usage among university students is certain. More than 70% of Nigerian University students are exposed to the social media and they use the platform for diverse purposes. While the social media provides university students with the opportunities to engage in research and other academic work, the platform could be a menace to the student's academic performance especially when it is used excessively (Tseguy, Akogwu, and Terfa, 2016). The excessive usage of social media constitutes distractions to student's academic activities due to its great influence and entertaining features. This is because they spend more time chatting with their friends and relatives, opening malicious sites and doing online betting rather than engaging in research or read their books. So many studies has showed a decrease in the

academic performance and grades of students, because they spend too much time engaging in social media networks and not having enough time for their academic activities (Banquil, Chuna, Leano, Rivero, Bruce, Dianalan, Matienzo, Timog, 2009). This is the reasons why many universities around the world restrict access to social networks, this is done to help students focus more on their studies (Kolan and Dzandza, 2018). Arising from this concern, the purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of social media usage on academic performance of University students.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of social media usage on academic performance of students. The specific objectives are:

- To ascertain the social media networks mostly used by the students.
- To find out the frequency of usage of social media platforms used by students of University of Africa.
- To find out the reasons for the use of social media sites.
- To find out how many hours the students spend on social media per day.
- To determine the negative effects of social media on students' academic activities

1.2 Research Questions

The following questions will guide the study:

- What are the social media networks that are mostly used by the students?
- How frequent do the students use social media platforms?
- What are the reasons for using social media sites by students?
- How many hours do the students spend on social media per day?
- What are the negative effects of social media on students' academic activities?

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The advent of android phones and the dynamic nature of cyberspace have made the social media a popular tool among the youth. With various platforms coming up every day, youths would want to belong to as many platforms as possible. Even in lecture halls, in the library, students could be seen fiddling with their phones. Due to its widely acceptance, many parents and guardians are worried because some of these students spend too much time engaging in social media networks chatting with their friends and relatives, opening malicious sites, online betting and engross in other negative activities rather than engaging in research or read their books. Due to its popularity, it has been observed that many students devote more attention and time to social media than they do for their studies (Osharive, 2015). Addiction to the use of social media site can distract the students from full concentration to their academic work. As a result, there are great concerns over the possible impact of social usage could have on the student's academic performance. It's therefore in this regard that this study investigates the effect of social media usage on students' academic activities.

2. Literature Review

Social media have become a very common communication tool among university students in recent years, this is due to the availability of cheap internet enabled devices such as personal computers, mobile devices and tablets. Social media are Internet-based platforms which enable people to generate, distribute or exchange information in different forms such as text, images, audio and videos. It can also be defined as communication tools used to store, gather, distribute, and disseminate information with friends and colleagues using the internet. Arthur (2012) "defined social media as a broad variety of web-based tools and services that permit users to interact together, create content, circulate and search for information online". Social media involves the use of network applications to convert one-way communication into an interactive online conversation between two or more people (Dixon, 2012). This therefore means that social media is an instrument that help people to communicate with one another regardless of time and location.

But due to the numerous features embedded in social media, it has gained a lot of acceptance and become a major tool for education and entertainment especially among university students. This speedy acceptance by university students all around the world raises some important questions on the effects of its usage on academic performance (Johnston, 2013). This is why many studies have been carried out to discover the influence of the use of social media on the academic performance of students. Surprisingly, researchers have various results, some studies have found positive effects on academic performance while excessive use on the other hand can result in adverse academic results. Social media plays an important role in the lives of tertiary institution students because it can be integrated into their academic life as a means of communicating with

their classmates and lecturers about course related matters. According to Lambic (2016) social media enables students to engage in knowledge-sharing, discussions, easier access to information and gaining inspiration to study for better academic performance. Social media have created new changes like easy access to information, removal of information barrier, and increase in information provision, sharing of ideas, widening knowledge base and encouraging online discussion.

Social media also provide students with numerous information resources, ways to learn new strategies through shared educational YouTube videos and get updates and news of new trends influencing their fields. According to Salvation and Adzharuddin (2014) social media enables students to create group deliberations to share ideas and communicate with their lecturers as well as appeal to their friends about assignments. They revealed that lecturers share academic materials with their students and create student groups to team up on projects and communicate with other lecturers from other universities, therefore facilitating teaching and learning process and the improvement of academic performance. Students can also create communication avenues with their lecturers, gain greater motivation to learn, which often lead to better academic outcomes (Lisette, 2014, Sobaih and Moustafa, 2016). Another importance of social media is that it enables the students to manage their daily activities such as going to lectures and executing tasks effectively and continually (Thongmak, 2014). Once a student can thoroughly manage his programs, he is likely to significantly improve in academic performance.

Quansah, Dwamena, Kwabla, and Kanyir (2016) carried out a study on students' participation in the use of social media and its importance on the academic performance of 110 nursing training college students in Ghana. The results discovered that WhatsApp usage positively influences academic performance. Lambic (2016) studied 139 students in Sombor (Serbia) to ascertain whether there is a relationship between the rate at which Facebook is use as a learning aid and the academic performance of students. The results showed a positive connection between the rate of Facebook usage for educational purposes and students' academic performance. Junco, Heiberger and Loken (2011) stated that the use of twitter for academic and co-curricular deliberations have a positive effect on scores of college students. This is as a result of a prolonged engagement between staff and students by the use of twitter outside the conventional classroom activities. Salvation and Azharuddin (2014) who did a study on the impact of social network sites on students' academic performance in Malaysia, using a theoretical method. The result showed that more students prefer the use of Facebook and twitter in academic related deliberations in complementing traditional classroom teaching and learning process.

Several studies have established that through the use of social media, students achieve better academic performance. On the other hand, unnecessary use of social media may negatively influence students' academic performance (Junco, 2015). Students who use social media excessively are likely to be involved in performing multiple tasks at the same time (doing several academic and other social activities simultaneously) which reduces concentration and this often leads to poor academic performance (Burak, 2012). It has been shown that students who use social media daily have considerably lesser scores than those who do not (Abusbiha and Mustaffa, 2014). It is important to understand that time spent on social activities (using Facebook and other social media) will be on the account of academic performance. This judgment is essential irrespective of the positive side we see in social media. A study among students in one of the universities in the United States established a negative relationship between time spent by students on online social networks and their academic performance (Paul, Baker and Cochran, 2012).

Tariq, Mehboob, Khan & Ullah (2012) carried out a survey on the impact of social media, on the education of Pakistani students as well as the impact on their lives. The research concluded that the use of social media by youths could destroy their lives as well as have a bad impact on their academics. Social media distracts the attention and focus of students from their academic activities towards activities which are not educational and time wasting such as chatting on non-educational topics. Owusu-Acheaw & Larson (2015) conducted a study to evaluate students' use of social media and its effect on academic performance of tertiary institutions students in Ghana with a focus on Koforidua Polytechnic students. The study discovered that the use of social media had influenced their academic performance negatively because they spend too much time on social media socializing than engaging in their academic work. It was discovered in the findings of Karpinski (2009) that users of Facebook, Whatsapp, etc., usually give smaller time to their educations and this later leads to lower grades.

Tayseer, Zoghieb, Alcheikh and Awadallah (2014) surveyed the effect of usage of social networks on students' engagement in both academic and social aspects. The study discovered that students use social networks for social functions more than their academics. They see and use social media for entertainment and this makes them forget about their academics. Miguel (2009) examined the relationship between time spent on Facebook and the academic performance of students. The findings reveal that "additional time spent on Facebook may lead to having poorer scores. Gafni and Deri (2012) in their study

discovered that social activities on Facebook consumed a substantial amount of students' time, therefore, negatively affecting their learning process. Also Karpinski (2009) indicated that social media has a negative link with students' academic performance which is much greater than the benefits derived through the use of social media networks.

Landry (2014) stated that social media is a tool that could be used to make or mar ones academic performance, it all depends on the person usage. It can improve students' academic performance when used cleverly, at the same time be harmful when used unnecessary or over used. So there is the need for students to effectively manage their time so that they don't become too addicted to the use of social media to the extent that they care little or nothing about their studies.

2.1 Research Methodology

Survey research method was adopted for the study and structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The population of the study comprises of all the students in University of Africa. Systematic sampling was used to select two hundred and seven four (274) respondents for the study. Five (5) research questions guided the study and data were collected using structured questionnaire. A total of three hundred (300) copies of questionnaire were distributed and two hundred and seventy four (274) were retrieved and found usable. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results are presented below.

3. Results

The findings of the study are presented in the following tables with explanations

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Freq.	Per. %	Age Range	Freq.	Per. %	Level	Freq.	Per. %
Male	120	44%	15-25	218	80%	200	160	58%
Female	154	56%	26-30	50	18%	300	114	42%
			31 and above	6	2%			
Total	274	100%	Total	274	100%	Total	274	100%

According to Table 1, most of the respondents 154(56%) were female and 120(44%) were male. Majority of the respondents 218(80%) were within the age bracket of 15-25years, 50(18%) were within the age bracket of 26-30years whereas 6(2%) were 31years and above. Similarly, 160(58%) were in 200 level while 114(42%) were in 300 level.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Faculties

Respondents Faculties	Frequency
Basic and Applied Sciences	110(40.1%)
Social and Management Sciences	86(31.4%)
Arts and Education	78(28.5%)
Total	274(100%)

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents from the sampled faculties. It revealed that 110(40.1%) of the respondents are in faculty of basic and applied sciences while 86(31.4%) are in Social and Management Sciences whereas 78(28.5%) are in Arts and Education. This shows that majority of the respondents are from basic and applied sciences.

Table 2: Social Media Sites mostly used by Students

Research Question 1: What are the social media networks that are mostly used by the students?

Social Media Networks used	Yes	No
Facebook	260(95%)	14(5%)
WhatsApp	262(96%)	12(4%)
YouTube	190(69%)	84(31%)
Instagram	174(64%)	100(36%)
Twitter	82(30%)	192(70%)
2go	24(9%)	250(91%)
Badoo	2(0.7%)	272(99.3%)
LinkedIn	8(3%)	266(97%)
Telegram	6(2%)	268(98%)

From Table 2 above, majority of the respondents 260(96%) use WhatsApp, 262(95%) use Facebook, 190(69%) use YouTube, 174(64%) use Instagram while 82(30%) use Twitter. This implies that WhatsApp and Facebook are the two social media networks mostly used by the students.

Table 3: Frequency of usage of Social Media Sites

Research Question 2: How frequent do the students use social media sites?

Frequency of usage of Social Media Sites	Yes	No
Very often	82(30%)	192(70%)
Often	96(35%)	178(65%)
Occasionally	114(42%)	160(58%)
Not at all	-	-

According to Table 3, most of the students 114(42%) use social media occasionally, 96(35%) use if often while 82(30%) use it very often. This implies that majority of the students occasionally use the social media sites.

Table 4: Reasons for using the Social Media Sites

Research Question 3: What are the reasons for using social media sites by students?

Reasons for using Social Media Sites	Yes	No
To share and exchange academic information sources to read for exam and test	180(66%)	94(34%)
To communicate with my lecturers about course related work	80(29%)	194(71%)
To aid research	168(61%)	106(39%)
Online dating	20(7%)	254(93%)
For pleasure and entertainment	154(56%)	120(44%)
To chat and make new friends	142(52%)	132(48%)
To get information and news	220(80%)	34(20%)

Table 4 shows that 220(80%) of the respondents use social media sites for the purpose of getting information and news, 180(66%) use it to share and exchange academic information sources to read for examination and test, 168(61%) use it to aid research, 154(56%) use for pleasure and entertainment, while 142(52%) use it chat and make new friends and 80(29%) use it to communicate with their lecturers about course related work. This implies that most of the students use the social media for the purpose of getting information and news, sharing and exchanging academic information sources to read for test and examination and to aid research.

Table 5: Hours Spend on Social Media Sites per day?

Research Question 4: How many hours do the students spend on social media per day?

Hours Spent on Social Media Sites	Yes	No
30mins – 1 hour	138(50.4%)	136(49.6%)
1 – 2 hours	76(28%)	198(72%)
2 – 3 hours	32(12%)	242(88%)
3 hours and above	36(13%)	238(87%)

Table 5 reveals that majority of the respondents 138(50.4%) spend 30minutes to 1 hour on social media sites per day, 76(28%) spend 1 hour to 2 hours, 36(13%) spend 3 hours and above and 32(12%) spend 2 hours to 3 hours per day. This implies that the students spend lesser time on social media sites.

Table 6: Effect of Social Media usage on the Academic Activities of Students

Research Question 5: What are the negative effects of social media on students' academic activities?

Effects of Social Media Sites on Academic Activities	Yes	No
It affect my reading habit	130(47%)	144(53%)
It affect the rate at which I prepare for my examination and test	66(24%)	208(76%)
It affects the level of my concentration to do my take home assignments	88(32%)	186(68%)
It causes distractions to my studies	86(31%)	188(69%)

Table 6 shows that less than half of the respondents 130(47%) agrees that social media have a negative effects on their academic activities, while on the other hand, more than half of the students 144(53%) stated that social media doesn't have any negative effects on their academic activities, which in-turn doesn't affect their academic performance.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that:

- Majority of the respondents mostly use WhatsApp and Facebook. This is because WhatsApp and Facebook seem to be the most popular social media sites among undergraduates in Nigeria. This is in agreement with Okoroma and Okafor (2018) who also found out that WhatsApp and Facebook are the two social media networks mostly used by the students.
- Majority of the students use the social media for the academic purposes like sharing and exchanging academic information sources to read for examination and test, for research and to get information and news. This finding is against the study of Apuke (2016) and several authors who found out that most of the undergraduates use social media for the purpose of chatting and socializing.
- Most of the students spend 30minutes to 1 hour on social media sites per day and spend more time on their academic work. This is not in agreement with the findings of Olowu and Fasola (2012) who indicated that undergraduates in Nigeria spend too much time on social networking sites at the detriment of their studies and library use.
- Similarly, more than half of the students indicated that social media doesn't have any negative effects on their academic activities, which in-turn doesn't affect their academic performance. This is in agreement with the findings of Tseguyet al (2016) who claimed that social doesn't affect the academic activities of students.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Social media is an instrument that can improve students' academic performance when used wisely and at the same time it can constitute a nuisance if over used or misused. Based on the findings of this study, more than half of the students use social media sites for academic purposes like sharing and exchanging academic information sources to read for test and examination, for research and for information and news. It is therefore amazing to see that the students know how to explore the academic wealth inherent on social media sites in order to boost the academic performance. Libraries and University authority should organize workshops to reinforce the knowledge of the students on social media as a tool for academic enhancement as well as introduce them to latest platforms and ideas that may be new to them.

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