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Influence of Social Media Networks and the Internet on the Study Habits of Students



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Abstract

This investigation sought to assess the use of social media and its influences on the academic performance of students. It was case study which focused on students of a leading polytechnic in Nigeria. The study revealed the level of access of students to the

Internet has improved tremendously - a large percentage of the respondents have mobile phones, laptops/palmtops with constant internet facility and internet sites. While many of these respondents spent between one and three hours on daily basis chatting, messaging with families and friends; also confirmed from the study that the use of social media sites, hand phones, laptops had affected the students' academic performance negatively. The study suggests that students would need to be encouraged to use social media for research and academic activities rather than irrelevant messages and chatting with friends. A majority of the students use the social media for activities and tasks not related to academics. On the other hand, library and information science professionals would need to re-invent their engagement modules for students as many of them shun the conventional library. It could be realistic to devise ways of making them use the "libraries on their palms and in their pockets" more meaningfully, especially for academic purposes.

Keywords: Academic performance, Study Habit, Internet Usage, Students, Social Media, Websites; Influence.

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Background Study

The incursion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the human environment has brought about rapid interaction of humans with their environment. The invention and use of the Internet came with many "search engines" created to assist man in searching for information often times this is called "surfing the net". Many users have easy interactions with one other in virtually all human endeavour. People exchange ideas and information through these search engines to update and keep up with events in the global world. The global world has been turned into an information hamlet where interaction and information spread across the globe.

Social network is or can be described as an avenue to exchange ideas and information within so many people, it can also be the use of websites designed to build and reflect social relations among people and organization who share connections, interest and activities.

Adomi and Ejirefe (2012) defined social networking as activities, practices and behaviour among communities of people who share information, knowledge and opinion online using interactive media. Also, Anderson (2009) described social media networks as the networked tools that allow people to meet, interact, artifacts and interest with each other. Shirk (2008) asserts that social media networks facilitate the creation of groups and the exploration of new ways of gathering and getting things done in a proper way.

According to Abdulahi, Samadi and Gharleghi (2014), the emergence of social network has positive and negative effects on individuals within communities. The network brought development to some areas and at the same time brought calamities of the highest order, while some communities, individuals, personalities rejoice over the emergence of the network some sing and are singing sad songs to erase off the calamities it wrecked in them.

It gives up to date information; faster to send information across; cheap and affordable; saves the time of the sender of information; guarantees safe and instantaneous delivery of information to where it is send; it also cut across boundaries, ethnicity and it is globally accepted..

The advantages of the social network also include; worldwide connectivity, communality of interest, real- time information sharing, targeted advertising and it also increase news circle speed. While the following were given as the disadvantages: Backlash, cyber booting and crime against children, risk of fraud and identity theft, time waster and corporate invasion of privacy. (Nansoh and Allahde, 2014)

Statement of the Problem

The use and misuse of the social media and The Internet have engaged researchers across the world in recent times. Reed (2015), has documented patterns of these research trends. In Nigeria, there is need for more studies on influences of social media on students for, among other reasons, the students are heavy uses of the Internet. As Folayan et. al. (2018) recently found, students use phone data more than any other social category in Nigeria. The particular patterns of these uses (and perhaps misuses) remain to be sufficiently studied. Some experts believe that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages when it concerns the student. (Owusu –Acheaw, & Larson, 2015; Zahim, et.al., 2016)..

Millions of students have become comfortable using smart phones to share information about themselves via mobile applications that access social networks such as face book, *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, *Instagram*, *Telegram* *Skype*, *2go* etc. In most Nigerian campuses today, it is common to see all the students with one type of mobile phone /handsets in which instant information is retrieved and sent. Generally, it is known that they use these communication tools to exchange ideas, information, pictures and videos; connect family and friends. The extent to which these are deployed for academic purpose have been on the increase in more developed societies. (Andrew Reed, 2015). Indeed, studies have shown that social networking has had impact on students' academic activities and performance – mostly negative impacts. (Odi,2007, Oye,2012, and Zahim, etal, 2016). Iro-Idoro and Jimoh (2017) also found that, often time users on face book perform poorly in academics; in the same manner it was found out that frequent use of mobile phones is correlated with academic difficulty and failure among universities students. They also found that the use of new media by teens and youths has changed their ways of thinking, working and communicating had become addicted to technology and it has changed some hitherto extroverts to introverts. (Iro-Idoro and Jimoh, 2017). However, social network has opened avenues of socialization to some of the youth or teens and gained more at an advantage position than their peers. (Junco, Heibergert and Loken. et al,(2011). Yet, the specific effects or impacts of technology-mediated socialization remain to be clearly understood, especially with regards to Nigerian students and their academic habits.

Related Literature

Owusu-Acheaw and Lawson (2015) opined that, academic habits can be thought of as effective routines for learning and they ultimately lead to academic skills and abilities. The Tree Utility of Habits are used repeatedly and can be informed as the student grows. Freedom and the nurture of habits: only the individual can develop his habits. Parents and teachers can help nurture good habits but they cannot force the development of good habits.

Parents can encourage and nurture their children's habits by:

- Creating routines at home for development of academic habits,
- Speaking with your children about the importance of their habits,
- Recognizing weakness and reinforcing effective academic habits,
- Remembering the true goal having your child become personally invested in his own work,
- Speaking with teachers and mentors about your child in order to gain perspective and new ideas,
- Telling your child about the importance of his/her habits is not as effective as showing your son the usefulness of a habit,
- The definition of success is when a student takes ownership of a useful habit and makes it his/her own,
- Proper monitoring and control of what children engaged with online should also be one of the parenting roles for our children and wards.

It is therefore necessary to discuss the following factors that promote successful Academic Habits which are;

- Having a distraction free, well-lit desk for study with a clock nearby.
- Finishing home work before dinner and before the student is tired at the end of the day whenever possible.
- Creating flash cards for memorization.
- Employing the help of parents to proofread essays.
- Working ahead when possible to avoid procrastination.

However, with the above mentioned factors that promote reading habits there are also hindrances to academic habits which are; Procrastinations, not getting enough sleep, wasting of weekend time, not paying attention in the classroom, and the highest of it all is the total absent at classes and lecture rooms.

According to Helou and Rahim (2014), the influence of social network and websites on the students' academic performance has elicited studies in the area of knowledge wrecking, and studies have shown that the effect of the social network and website is like a pendulum of the clock. It swings to the right and left creating a necessity to evaluate its importance

Academic habits were found to be mental attitudes and behavioural practices that facilitate a student's learning and make both learning and development possible during years of schooling. These habits are of the core of how a student learns and the methods through which he/she assimilates any course material. All types of habits are particularly influential in one's life because with time they become natural to an individual, that is, they are often followed without a mental decision to do so. The older the individual, generally the more effort it takes to acquire new habits and necessary self-discipline as they grow into adulthood. Daily habit is that daily constant routine that a student has deemed to be effective and put in to practice. (Owusu –Acheaw, & Larson, 2015). At first, actions are carried out from a sense of duty but the longer they are continued, the easier they become. Once the habit has been developed, the activity requires very little effort and has a

tendency to become second nature, though still requiring a choice of the will. Properly understood, all habits must also be recognized as freely chosen, repeatedly by the student. (Helou and Rahim, 2014)

Objectives

- To find out the kinds of social media networks mostly used by students
- To find how much time students spend on social networks and websites?
- To find out the purposes for which students mostly visit social network media
- To determine the extent do students rely on social networks and websites for study purposes

4) To investigate the extent to which social media patronage influence the academic habits of student.

Research Questions

- What are the social media networks mostly used by students
- How much time do students spend on social networks and websites?
- What are the purposes for which students mostly visit social network media
- To what extent do students rely on social networks and websites for study purposes

4) To investigate the extent to which social media patronage influence the academic habits of student.

Methodology

The location for this study is the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. Established about 40 years ago, the institution currently has about 12,000 students. The researchers decided to take primary (representative) sample from amongst students of the School of Communication and Information Technology because they are expected among the highest users of the social media, going by their professional calling/training. (The School comprises of Mass Communication, Library and Information Science, Office Technology and Music students and has 1, 900 registered students at the time of the study). A sample of One hundred and ten (110) students was drawn from this population, using a combination of stratified and systematic random-sampling techniques. thus: Library and Information Science (30), Office Technology Management (30) and Mass Communication (40) respectively. The sample size represented 15 per cent of the total students in the school's population.

The instrument used for data collection for this research work was questionnaire. To improve the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, it was pre-tested on 20 randomly-selected students of the School. The questionnaire were constructed based on the principal research questions for the investigation.

FINDINGS

Reasons students use the social media and websites

Figure 1: Reasons for using social media

Chatting is the major reason students and this is followed by Photos and Videos. Dating and creation of groups which comes next are forms of chatting. This indicates that more than 70 per cent of the time used on social media by the respondents were on social interaction.. As Fig 1 indicates, other purposes indicate from the data from the above table gave 12 (10.9%), 10 (9.1%) and 8 (7.3%) for online dating, group creation and knowledge update on academic courses respectively.

Table 1: Most preferred social network/websites by the respondents

Social Network and Websites	Frequency	Percentage
Twitter	9	8.2
Skype	4	3.6
YouTube	8	7.3
2go	6	5.5
Face book	11	10
Instagram	5	4.5
What Sapp	65	59.1
Blogs	2	1.8
Total	110	100

As shown in Table 2, 65 (59.1%) of the respondents prefer to use *WhatsApp*, this is followed by those who used face book that constitutes 11 (10%), while those who use *Twitter* and *You Tube* has 9 (8.2%) and 8 (7.3%) respectively. Other social media sites are also used but the prominent among them are the four mentioned above.

Table 3: Means of accessing social network and websites

Means	Frequency	Percentages
Laptops	11	10
Tablets	13	11.8
Mobile phones	75	68.2
Cyber cafes	6	5.5
All of the above	5	4.5
Total	110	100

Table 3 also suggests that mobile phone has the largest usage (75 respondents or 68.2% accessed information on the social network through the mobile phone). Tablets and Laptops are used by 13 (11.8%) and 11 (10%) respectively. Surprisingly, despite the preponderance of phone ownership and usage, the habit of visiting Cybercafes is still fairly prevalent among the respondents, (5.5%). Invariably, however, this means a larger percentage of students access the social network websites through their mobile phones.

Patterns of social media navigation

Figure 2: Frequency of use of social media network and website.

The data from Fig 2 indicate that 85 (77.3%) respondents use social media network and websites daily spending several hours, 11 (10%) also spend an average of an hour on the net, this is followed by once a week 6 (5.5%), twice a week has 5 (4.5%) and 3 (2.7%) use the social media network and websites occasionally.

Table 4: Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of Students.

CGPA	Frequency	Percentage
2.00-2.49	11	10
2.50-2.99	61.8	61.8
3.00-3.49	22.7	22.7
3.50-3.99	5.5	5.5
Total	110	100

The academic performance of the respondents (using the cumulative grade point) is presented in Table 4. The Table shows that 61.8% (n=65) of respondents were between (22.7%) were between 3.00-3.49, 11 (10%) respondents were between 2.00-2.49 and 6 (5.5%) were between 3.50-4.00. The foregoing data suggest that the respondents' academic performance is just above average generally. While the data do not provide sufficient causal relationship between use of social media and academic performance, the fact that academic performance is relatively poor suggest that a relationship might be existing between the two variables. This conjecture is strengthened by the time spend on social networks and websites per visit. Data from the field study indicate that a sweeping majority, 78 (70.9%) respondents spend between 2-3 hours per day on the social media network and websites. Given that these students have only about 5 'free' hours daily besides those spend in the classroom and in sleeping, it can be safely inferred that social media interrupts the time they would have spent on studying, especially because they spend less than an a tenth of their social media belt on academic matters.

Reliance of social media for academic purposes

Table 5: Ownership of an account with any social media network and websites.

Owns an account	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	95	86.4
No	15	13.6
Total	110	100

Table 5 indicates that 95 (86.4%) of the students understudy registered with at least one social media. A negligible 13.6 per cent said they were not networked at the time of the study. On reliance on social media, 80 (72.7%) of the respondents under study rely to some extent on social media network and websites for academic advancement while 22 (20%) rely greatly on it and 8 (7.3%) did not use social media and websites for any academic work.

Table 6: Influence of social network and websites on students' academic habits.

Influence of social media and websites	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
Reduce time for reading	21(19.1%)	76(69.1%)	4(3.6%)	7(6.4%)	2(1.8%)
Makes one sleep late	34(30.9%)	63(57.3%)	4(3.6%)	6(5.4%)	3(2.7%)
Make one miss class or become perpetual late comer to lectures	37(33.6%)	41(37.3%)	7(6.4%)	10(9.1%)	15(13.6%)
Distraction during reading	25(22.7%)	77(70%)	4(3.6%)	2(1.8%)	2(1.8%)
Increase socialization	52(47.3%)	28(25.5%)	10(9.1%)	9(8.1%)	11(10%)
Wasting precious time	12(11%)	38(34.5%)	25(22.7%)	30(27.3%)	5(4.5%)
Exposure to illicit behaviours	44(40%)	55(50%)	5(4.5%)	4(3.6%)	2(1.8%)

Table 6 shows clearly that social media networks and websites have effects on the reading and academic habits of the students. Indication shows that, they are always distracted during reading when their friends communicate with them, because 77(70%) strongly confirmed this. Next on the line is 'distraction' 25(22.7%) while 'reading;', while 4 (3.6%), 2(1.8%) and 2(1.8%) chose disagree, strongly disagree and undecided respectively. Reduction in time of reading as supposedly affected by the social media networks was also strongly agreed to by 76(69.1%) respondents, followed by 21(19.1%) respondents in affirmative while 7(6.4%) strongly disagree, 4(6.3%) disagree to it and 2(1.8%) could not decide. Also, 63(57.2%) respondents strongly agree that usage of social media has always been giving rooms for sleeping late, 34(30.9%) agree, 6(5.4%) strongly disagree, 4(6.3%) disagree while 3(2.7%) could not decide. Coming late for lectures because of concentration on the usage of social media networks and websites was strongly agreed by 41(37.2%) respondents, 37(33.6%) agree, 10(9.1%) strongly disagree, 7(6.4%) disagree and (13.6%) are undecided.

The data generated from the study also shows that 28(25.5%) strongly agree, 52(47.3%) agree while 10(9.1%) disagree. 9(8.1%) strongly disagree and 11(10%) is undecided. Close to half of the respondents (n= 44, 40%) agreed that social media networks and websites expose them (student) to elicit behaviours and (n=5 ,4.5%) disagree, (n=4, 6.3%) strongly disagree and (n=2 ,1.8%) are not sure of their stand on this issue. On whether the usage of social media and websites waste precious time of the students, there seems to be agreement to that effect. From data generated, n=38 ,34.5% strongly agree to the fact that social media network waste their time.

Discussion

There were indications that the purpose of which most students use the social network is for chatting with friends and families. This was attested to in Table1 where respondents confirmed this. This finding corroborates the finding by Iro-idoro and Jimoh (2017) (who affirmed that a greater percentage of students use facebook for connecting with friends though this research agreed more with *WhatsApp* for connecting with relatives. It is also a platform for keeping in contact with close associates, though this has greatly hampered reading habit and academic performance among students.

It was also found out that students spend precious time on the social media networks. This may have contributed significantly to their average academic performance and poor study habits of students, if only as an intervening variable. According to Das and Sahoro (2010), reading habit is rapidly degenerating or diminishing among youths in the recent time. Findings in this investigation have confirmed this assertion. Even the students admitted that the social media has been a major “time waster” for them. The power of “hook” inherent in social media however makes it difficult for these youths to resist the “time waster” The findings also show that students use social media networks for academic purposes only want to write examination, do assignments, do test, table showed this as the reason for using it academically. This implies that students only use social media networks and websites to provide answers not for learning and assimilation. This means they use is as a short cut to get academic duties off their necks. The fear in this trend is that even when the students use social media and the Internet for academics, it is not for serious learning. Often, it is to copy other people’s works, sometimes verbatim, thereby compounding the already weak attention given to academics.

From the findings, it can be inferred that despite the positive and important academic advantages and advancements of social media network and websites, many students use the social media in negative ways. Many of them are distracted while in class or reading because of their usage of the social media network and websites. Thus a positive relationship may be existing between electronic and social network usage and lower academic grades of students in higher institutions. (Oye, 2012) . There is a positive thread in the foregoing discussion: There are lots of benefits, advantages academically that are associated with the use of social media networks and websites. If students can explore these opportunities for self-study, they are likely to excel academically.

It is rather surprising that despite the objects of this study are students who should know the importance of using social media and the Internet for academic purpose, they still engaged these new media for less important things. Many students, decades ago had to go through learning and research with difficulty. It was difficult to lay hands on recent textbooks and journals. When they were available, books and journals were very expensive. But today, for

a relatively little amount of money and just several punches on the handset, the student is open to a huge pool of academic resources. Yet, these students hardly take advantage of such virtual resources. Social media network and websites have great and many advantages on academic activities that students can explore for personal, present and future development, judicious use of such for more beneficial reasons, especially in the academic setting.

Conclusion

This study confirms that students tend to use the social media network and websites to enhance relationships with friends, acquaintances, and family members. However, data generated suggest that the social media network and websites tend to distract students from lectures and good study habits because it reduces the time they have left for self-study (reading, carrying out assignments, etc.)

Information and Communication Technology has affected virtually all facets of human life. Social media network and websites have both positive and negative values. When properly used, it can be of immense benefits to students' academic advancement.

Recommendations.

1. Students should be enlightened on the disadvantages of excessive use of social network and website on their academic performance.
2. Institutions of learning should allocate time/hour which a student can make use of the wireless network provided by the school.
3. Academic Planning Units of tertiary institutions should encourage lecturers and technologists to give academic assignments to students via the social media.
4. Government at all levels should work with the National Communications Commission (NCC) to develop programmes and policies that would guide the usage of social media networks and websites for especially for academic purposes

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