

Social Media and Academic Performance in English Language Among Undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State

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Abstract

The study examined the Influence of social media on the academic performance of undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. Correlational survey design. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population consisted of 8380 of undergraduates as at the time of conducting this study with sample size of 350 students drawn using Taro Yamane scientific method. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select students from the entire population. The instruments for data collection were self-structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Social Media on the Academic Performance of Undergraduates (ISMAPU)” and English Performance Test (EPT). The instruments were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling. The reliability coefficient was obtained through test-retest method with a reliability coefficient of 0.76 and 0.80. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was employed in analysis of research questions and test of hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between social media and academic performance of undergraduate students in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt based on gender. Government should consider the possibility of evolving a policy on teenagers’ exposure to social media, empower hard work by remunerating effective students through grant plans and different impetuses. Also, students should be guarded on the successive utilization of social media.

Keywords: Social media, Academic performance, Undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, there is massive honour on the planet today because of the imminent and change in the communication pattern which has helped the scope of communication by means of Information and communication technology (ICTs). The ICTs include internet, satellite, cable data transmission and computer assisted equipment. Social network is a social structure made up of individuals or organizations called “nodes”, which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual

relationships or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige (Ayobami, 2012). Social media has emerged to be one of the most vital communication means. It exists so as to ease communication among people regardless of the expanse, making it open to people to easily share information, files and pictures and videos, create blogs and send messages, and conduct real-time conversations. These systems are referred to as social, simply because they allow communication with friends, course mates, teachers, project supervisors, lecturers etc so easily and effectively. Social media which are a form of electronic communication that has become the highest activity on the internet.

Asemah and Edegoh (2012), mentioned that social media are used by most people to interact with old and new friends, physical or internet friends. The world has been changed rapidly by the evolution of internet technology; this has resulted into the use of technology as the best medium to explore the wide area of knowledge. The evolution of internet technology has led to its use as the best medium for communication. Whereby, two-third of the world's internet population visits social networking or blogging sites, thus serving as a communication and connection tool. The advancement in technology and communication leads to a considerable improvement in social networking such as Facebook used to keep in touch or share information with other individuals.

Kim and Kim (2010) stated that Social media are the emerging digital communication channels which create a user-oriented information sharing ground where any people can generate or subscribe information content as both information provider and consumer. Buettner (2016) sees social media as computer mediated tools that allow people or companies to create, share exchange information, career interest, ideas, pictures/ virtual communities and network. Through Social media, individuals can with no much of stretch trade profitable information which can enhance their profession interest, thoughts and so on. It additionally helps in sending pictorial outlines of thoughts.

Andreas and Micheal (2010) asserts that social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Kietzmann & Hermkens (2011) elaborates on this, stating that social media depends on Mobile and Web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communications between communities and individual.

In contribution, Ganiyu and Akinreti (2011) assert that the emergence of social media has increase interactivity among people, making them to be producers and consumers of information in a simultaneous manne. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, 2go etc have brought tremendous improvement in the communication system which enhances learning, it has provided different entertainment functions which serve as a tool for social change and fast exchange of information. With the aid of the internet students can form their own page, access to news and lectures notes via email sent to him/her by a lecturer. An additional benefit of social technologies provided on the internet is that they are frequently free or require marginal investment, eliminating a potential barrier to adoption (Brown, 2010).

Facebook is a single-page application (SPA) which offers a well-organized web page where users can store their personal info and make connections with same type of users. This functionality allows users to traverse from friends' profile to anywhere, so that individual's social network grows rapidly across the world. This ability or capability is the backbone of Facebook and became the only reason of its rapid growth when compared with other social networking sites. Students use Facebook in various ways to accomplish a wide range of social responsibilities and just for fun too. In student's perspective the widespread social media website is Facebook, anywhere between 85 and 99% of students use Facebook. The heavy use of Facebook or the Internet for entertainment could alter students' habitual behaviour in reading, writing, and attention for completing academic tasks. It is

referred to as academic distraction, which could lead to a ripple effect on academic achievement eventually. (Boyd, 2007). WhatsApp Messenger has been around for a while but recent updates have improved the functionality of the application since its date of release. The main purpose behind this application is to replace SMS with a cross platform mobile messenger that works on an internet data plan. It is currently available for iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Nokia Symbian 60 and S40 and Blackberry. It is popular because there is no cost to message friends and family other than the internet data plan that users already have on their phones.

There has been various overview and opinions which recognized four major advantages of social media use in higher education. These include, enhancing relationship, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material, and developing collaborative abilities. This means that social networking activities have the possibility of enhancing student contact and is used to improve their participation in class, particularly where introverted students are involved. Students can function in online group learning, with less or no anxiety of needing to raise questions before peers at school (Wheeler, et. al., 2008). Academic performance gives us a view of how a student has performed in academics in the course of studying giving the number of years. It involves the assessment of students' learning progress in task that is required of them (Anene, 2005).

With so many social networking sites displayed on the internet, students are tempted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference for chatting online with friends. However, social media addicts can be identified by pointing out those who spent more time in their computers or phones, browsing or networking. They derived joy in chatting than any other thing. The people neglect other important responsibilities, commitments in favour of Facebook. Kist (2012), stated that those who spend a lot of time thinking about Facebook or planning how to use it feels urge to use Facebook more and more. It is also observed that they use Facebook in order to forget about their personal problems. They always become restless or troubled if they are prohibited from using Facebook. They also use Facebook so much that it has had a negative impact on their relationships. Folorunso, et al., (2010) enumerated some of the risks associated with social media which included criminal activities such as identity theft and fake contacts which is prevalent today, sexual abuse or harassment and unsuitable advertising. Owusu & Agatha (2015), in their study also revealed that majority of students were engrossed in social networking sites. This brought to light that most users utilized these sites for chatting and downloading purposes only which affected their academic performance negatively. Haseena & Rasith, (2016) view that most respondents in their study experienced negative effects such as poor grammar spelling, late submission of assignments, less study tie and poor academic performance as a result of usage of social media.

Academic achievement has become a thing of concern and interest to all learners, teachers, parents etc.; as a result, educational stakeholders have been working effortlessly to ensure that those factors that are capable of hindering academic achievement of students are brought under control. Academic achievement is referred to the way(s) students deal with their studies as well as the actualizations of different tasks assigned to them by their teachers. Academic achievement is referred to as the product of education-the extent to which students, teachers or institutions have achieved their educational objectives. Academic achievement can thus be seen as observable and measurable behaviours of an individual within a particular situation. Grade Point Average (GPA) and test results represent students' academic achievement; it is one of the current educational problems of public interest based on poor level of students' academic achievement especially in secondary schools and post-secondary schools (Kolawale, & Dele, 2012). Aina and Olanipekun (2014) equally maintained that academic achievement of students both at secondary and post-secondary schools is worrisome. Furthermore, such factors as economic, social and psychological factors have been identified as likely threats to students' academic achievement (Mlambo, 2011). These factors may have strong

influences on students' academic achievement; however, the influences could vary from one person to another and from country to another. Most previous studies on academic achievement of students have focused on factors such as socio-economic background, class environment, gender differences, family educational background and teaching and learning style preferences. These factors identified have been viewed as factors responsible for students' poor academic achievement in schools. It is therefore necessary to understand that no matter how well conceived a country's developmental plans may be, low academic achievement is capable of ruining everything. This therefore implies that poor academic achievement and high failure rate are indicators of underdevelopment of a society (Baldwin, 2017).

It has been indicated that social media networks often directly or indirectly necessitate access to information and knowledge attainment; more so, that these networks have influences on student academic achievement. However, poor academic achievements in the recent times have been traced to technological developments. While technological advancement is gradually gaining dominance in the present society, the study habits of students are also fast vanishing into thin air (Ezema, & Ekere, 2009). On this background this study examined the influence social media have on student's academic performance with specific reference to undergraduates' students' academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The use of social media been associated with the steady decline in the quality of Nigerian education system and the students they produce is the very fact that the system had in a recent time being with the wide range of educational laxity. This worrisome, uncultured behaviours beside their influence among students also tends to cut across all strata of the school system. Of recent is now a common knowledge that most students in tertiary institution not only possess Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc., accounts, but also that most of them are now addicted to the online crave of the moment. With so many social networking sites displayed on the internet, many students are tempted to abandon their assignments and reading times in preference for chatting online with friends more than their academics that disrupt the educational equilibrium in the use of English in our school system and even the society at large. Some studies have found a drop in students' grades and academic performance, and lack of time for studies as consequences of social media network participation which results in their poor performance in examinations in the English language. In Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State, there is a serious concern about the increase in social media network problems such as: wrong spelling, use of acronyms, waste of time and energy in chats, twitter, Facebook, examination malpractice etc. For instance, the students are used to short forms of writing words in their chat rooms; they forget and use the same in the classrooms. They use things like 4 in place of 'for', U in place of 'You', D in place of 'The', etc. This affects their class assessment and also most of them perform badly in English language in schools for they negatively turns to posting and accessing write-ups in distorted grammar and both leads to increase in grammatical errors, increase in wrong spellings, high rise of spelling distortions/corruption of words, high rise in use of slangs and street expressions. There is need for this distortions and anomalies to be corrected. Based on this foregoing, therefore, this study is designed to examine the influence of social media academic performance in English Language in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study examined the Influence of social media on the academic performance of undergraduates in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. Precisely, the study sought to:

1. find out if social medium influences undergraduate students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State based on gender.
2. determine if WhatsApp influence to undergraduate students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.
3. investigate if Facebook influences undergraduate students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent does a social medium influence undergraduate students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State based on gender?
2. To what extent does a WhatsApp influence to undergraduate students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State?
3. To what extent do Facebook influence undergraduate students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

1. Social media does not significantly influence undergraduate students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State based on gender.
2. WhatsApp does not significantly influence undergraduate students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.
3. Facebook does not significantly influence undergraduates’ students’ academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 8380 undergraduate students in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State. The stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. The sample of study consisted of (350) students, which was obtained using Taro Yemen formula. The instruments for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Social Media on the Academic Performance of Undergraduates (ISMAPU)” and English Performance Test (EPT). The instrument was segmented into two sections. Section A contained information on bio-data of the respondents, while sections B contains information on influence of social media on academic performance of students. The research instrument was responded on a modified 4-point Likert scale and weight as follows:

- Very High Extent (VHE)..... 4
- High Extent (HE).....3
- Low Extent (LE).....2
- Very Low Extent (VLE).....1 respectively.

The instrument for data collection was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation, department of educational psychology, Guidance and counselling. The reliability of the instrument was obtained through test-retest in which the initial and final scores were correlated using Pearson's product moment correlation which yielded 0.76 and 0.80 reliability co-efficient respectively.

Letter of introduction dully signed by my project supervisor in the department of Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rivers State, was attached to the questionnaire to enable the students fill the questionnaire. The questionnaires were self-administered

to the undergraduate by the researcher and three other trained assistants. At the end the total questionnaire collected were 350 copies for data analyses.

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson's product moment correlation was used for the test of hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

Results

Research Question One

To what extent does a social medium influence undergraduate students' academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State based on gender??

Hypothesis One

Social media does not significantly influence undergraduate students' academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State based on gender.

Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Social and Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance Gender (Male)

Variables	Mean	Std	N	α	r-value	p-value	Decision
Male	4.10	1.45	165	0.05	0.265	0.01	Significant
Academic Performance	2.30	0.40					

Table 1 reveals that the mean score for male was (\bar{x} =4.10) with a standard deviation of (SD=1.45), while that of academic performance was (\bar{x} =2.30) with its corresponding standard deviation of (SD=0.40). This implies that social media has a negative influence on academic performance of male students.

Again, the Pearson's product moment correlation results reveal (r 0.265, P= 0.01<0.05), which is less than the 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between the social media and academic performance of male undergraduate students in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Social and Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance Gender (Female)

Variables	Mean	Std	N	A	r-value	p-value	Decision
Female	3.45	1.26	215	0.05	0.315	0.025	Significant
Academic Performance	2.25	0.20					

Table 2 reveals that the mean score for female students was (\bar{x} =3.45) with a corresponding standard deviation (SD=1.26), while that of academic performance was (\bar{x} =2.25) with a standard deviation of (SD= 0.20). This implies that social media has a negative influence on academic performance of female students.

Again, the Pearson's product moment correlation results reveal (r 0.315, P= 0.025<0.05) which is less than 0.05 level of significance. This indicate that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, is significant relationship between the social media and academic performance of female undergraduate students in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rivers State.

Research Question 2

To what extent does a WhatsApp influence to undergraduate students' academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State?

Hypothesis 2

WhatsApp does not significantly influence undergraduate students' academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State

Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between WhatsApp and Undergraduates' Students' Academic Performance

Variables	Mean	Std	N	A	r-value	p-value	Decision
WhatsApp	3.55	1.30	380	0.05	0.158	0.03	Significant
Academic Performance	2.35	0.50					

Table 3 shows that the mean for WhatsApp was ($\bar{x} = 3.55$) with a corresponding standard deviation of ($SD = 1.30$), while that of academic performance was ($\bar{x} = 2.35$) with a corresponding standard deviation of ($SD = 0.50$). Again, the Pearson's product moment correlation result reveals r-value of 0.158 with its corresponding p-value of 0.03 which is less than 0.05 the chosen level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This therefore indicates that there is significant relationship between WhatsApp and undergraduate students' academic performance of students in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.

Research Question 3

To what extent do Facebook influence undergraduate students' academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State?

Hypothesis 3

Facebook does not significantly influence undergraduates' students' academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.

Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Facebook and Undergraduates' Students' Academic Performance

Variables	Mean	Std	N	A	r-value	p-value	Decision
Facebook	3.68	1.39	380	0.05	0.215	0.02	Significant
Academic Performance	2.35	0.50					

Table 4 reveal that the mean and standard deviation for Facebook was ($\bar{x} = 3.68$; $SD = 1.39$) while that of academic achievement was ($\bar{x} = 2.35$; $SD = 0.50$) respectively. The Pearson's product moment correlation results reveal r-value of 0.215 with a corresponding p-value of 0.02 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicate that there is significant relationship between Facebook and undergraduates' students' academic performance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in table 1 and 2 revealed that social media has a negative influence on academic performance of male and female students. There is a high positive relationship between social media and student's academic performance in English Language where the null hypothesis is rejected since $p < 0.05$ the chosen level of significant. Hence, there is significant relationship between social media and student's academic performance in English Language. This result is in line with Maya (2015), who revealed that media use contributes to lower academic performance, low self-perceptions and less interest in college-oriented carriers. This was supported by Adeniyi (2022) who mentioned social media such as Facebook, and Twitter and so on are using negatively and inappropriate to the levels in which they cannot benefit from it. In addition, many students of secondary schools in Nigeria today acquired antisocial behaviours such as fraudulent habit and other bad characters which peculiar in social media while thousands the of students in our country podcasting their reading culture because they are spending much time on the social media. Similarly, social media affect the reading culture of many secondary students in Nigeria because they prefer to spend many hours on the social media than to read their books.

Table 3 revealed that WhatsApp has a positive influence on academic performance of students in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State. It enables effective participation of students in academic forums. Students also acquire knowledge which helps in boosting their grades while some students see it as a distraction. Yebaoh & Ewur (2014) also posits that the use of WhatsApp increases the provisions and access to learning materials, anywhere, anytime and in various formats, and also has the potential to enhance students' capabilities. Levent (2017) agreed that students developed positive opinions towards the use of WhatsApp in their courses and he went further to suggest that the use of WhatsApp in education process should be encouraged as a supportive technology.

Table 4 revealed that face book enables students to participate in academic forums dissemination and acquire knowledge pertaining their studies while it could also be distracting to some students. Students use Facebook in various ways to accomplish a wide range of social responsibilities and just for fun too. Further analysis on the testing of the hypotheses showed that the use of Facebook can influence academic performance of students Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State. The study also revealed that Facebook and WhatsApp are the most conversant social media among students. They would prefer to open account with Facebook and WhatsApp than any other social media form.

The findings is in line with Asemah, and Edegoh, (2013) who mentioned that Facebook is the most used social media by undergraduate students in their study. The majority of students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt spend at least 4-5 hours or so daily surfing the internet. This shows that most of them go online as revealed in the study. Seyi, (2012), criticized the obsessive attitude of Nigeria youths towards social media. It pointed out that the rate at which youths devote their quality time in chatting, calls for urgent attention. Most students prefer to chat than do any other thing on social media. This finding concurs with Seyi, (2012) who observed that "some students are always busy pinging and going while lectures are on rather than concentrating and this affects their academic pursuit". Findings of this study reveal that students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt students spend more time on social media than reading their books, this makes them rely on social media to do their assignments without consulting other sources. The study also revealed that students' exposure to social media has negative effect on their academic performance. Further findings revealed that students who spend more time on social media are likely to perform poorly in their academic activities than those who do not.

CONCLUSION

The result from the findings of this study showed that, though Social media have negative effects on student such as; disrupting undergraduates from their academic work. Example, students can form online communities in order to plan for a project, have group discussions about class material, or use the Social networking sites (SNS) as a way to keep in contact when a student who has been absent needs to be updated on current academic information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government should consider the possibility of evolving a policy on undergraduate's exposure to social media.
2. Undergraduates should decrease their introduction to social media and give careful consideration to their studies.
3. Students particularly those ready to record gigantic scholarly achievement should guard themselves against the successive utilization of social media.
4. Social Networking Sites should be expanded and new pages created to enhance academic activities and avoid setbacks in the students' academic performance.
5. Through counselling intervention programs Students should be able to understand themselves better and how to manage their study time and prevent distractions from social media.
6. School counsellors should be able to educate students on the negative and positive influence of Social media on their academic performance.

Implications for Counselling

Counselling can play a major role in curtailing the negative influence of social media networks on students' academic performance. Makinde (2007) (as cited in Shaterloo & Ghasem, 2011) defined guidance and counselling as an interaction process co-joining the counselee, who is vulnerable and who needs assistance and the counsellor who is trained and educated to give this assistance, the goal is to help the counselee learn to deal more effectively with himself and the reality of his environment. The reality of every University student's environment is to study hard to achieve good grades but when social media networks begin to pose distractions for them, they tend to live in a lie instead of their reality. School counsellors provide counselling programs in three domains: academic, career and personal/ social. Their services and programs help students' resolve emotional, social or behavioural problems and help them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction (Shaterloo & Ghasem, 2011). A student addiction to social media can be termed a behavioural problem which falls under the personal/social counselling intervention programs organized by the school counsellor. Counsellors can assist students facing social media addiction problem by organizing individual counselling program as he/she meets face to face with these students to assist them in their personal difficulty. The group counselling programs can also take place whereby all students facing a common challenge meet with the counsellor to interact and be assisted. Group counselling enables a student discover that his/her problem is not peculiar to him/her alone, it also helps to build their self-confidence. When a student successfully goes through these counselling intervention programs there tend to be a change in behavioural patterns which would be of great benefit to the student in his/her academic performance.

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