

The Postive and Negative Influnces of Facebook and Other Social Network on Educational Standard of Student's of Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Original research paper

This research work is aimed at examining the positive and negative influences of Facebook and other social network on educational standard of students of Imo State University, Owerri. To accomplish this, the study employed observation, surveys, and a research design that included the use of questionnaires to collect data from 500 participants. Findings show that majority of the respondents (students) have access to social media which is capable of influencing their academic performance. The study therefore, recommends that students should find out what exactly they want to do on social media. It is very obvious that no social media is bad; it depends on how the user accesses it either for chit chatting or knowledge seeking.

Keywords: Facebook, Social Network, Observation, Questionnaire, Chit Chatting.

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Introduction

Communication begins with language a unique human ability that has enabled the development of complex societies. It allows information to be shared between people, whether within a confined space like a room or assembly hall, or across a short open distance.

Communication is regarded as one of the basic tools to human existence. Today communication is easier than it's

ever been before. In the olden days, Town Crier stands as a medium of passing across information to the entire community. Obviously, our ancestors were reading news printed on stone slabs and metal for messages.

Hampton et al. (2011) view social media as a platform designed for dissemination through social interaction, utilizing highly accessible and scalable publishing methods. It leverages internet and webbased technologies to transform

traditional onetomany broadcasts communication into interactive, many-to-many social dialogues.

With the rise of technology and the widespread use of the Internet, communication methods have significantly evolved, enabling faster and more interactive exchanges across the globe.

“Social Networking “has become an activity that is done primarily on the internet, with sites like MySpace, Facebook, Skype, etc (Coyle et al., 2008). Many people especially students spend a lot of time on this site creating profile, updating or doing research concerning their career or academic work, while some just used it to chat with friends, post latest pictures of event they attended.

According to Lewis (2008) “with the advent of social media, it has become easy to get information on nearly every issue around the globe; Before now it is not easy getting information, you need to buy newspaper or stay close to your Television set or Radio to get information but internet has changed everything and social network has made it more flexible.

Social media has over the years, become habit for some people while some student find it difficult to study for one hour without login to one network site. Some student have become very smart and intelligent because of the information they get from these sites which aid them academically.

As Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Youtube and Blackberry Messenger gain popularity, they are also increasingly dangerous because the way students tend to allow it to distract them from their academics. Social media is what some people refer to as fun but excess of fun is also hazardous.

Statement of the problem

Naturally, human beings are understood to be social animals. They communicate and act among each other even before the evolution of modern transportation and telecommunication facilities in order to keep in touch or contact others people who may be friends, associates or relations.

Therefore, this study seeks to find out how social media has influenced academic performance of students of Imo State University, Owerri.

Objectives of the study

1. To actually know what content the students are exposed on various social media.
2. To find out how the use of social media has affected the academic performance of the students.
3. To find out the various social media students of Imo State University, Owerri have access to.
4. To determine the extent to which the students are exposed to social media viza viz their books.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised in the course of this study.

1. What are contents students have are exposed to on various social media?
2. How has the use social media affected the academic performance of the students?
3. What are various social media of Imo State University, Owerri student have access to?
4. To what extents are students of Imo State University, Owerri exposed to social media visavis their books?

Significance of the study

This study will add to the current literature on social media. It will provide an up to date knowledge, specifically on various social media usage and its positive and negative influences on students in Imo State University, Owerri.

It will also educates the university’s students to know how to utilize their time on social media and what they should exposed to on social networking site.

Literature Review

Historically, there are two conflicting versions about the origin of the internet which was opinionated by two schools of thought.

The invention of the internet brought a new dimension to the media landscape. It marked the beginning of technological transformation and socialization with a higher desire for information about everything.

This slowly developed into social media, which essentially is information about people. The internet has taken the process of information dissemination to a higher platform thereby going beyond being a mere medium of socialization or information seeking and has become something much more.

According to Lenhart (2011), three components typify social media: concept (art and information); media (physical, electronic, or verbal); and social interface (intimate, direct, social viral, electronic broadcast or syndication or print). One of the things that make social media unique is its interactive capabilities.

Like never before, social media are transforming the way in which people receive and share information. A lot of information, including text, audio and video, are available twenty four hours connctet users of the internet.

Dominick (2005, p. 310) argues that the social implication of the Internet and of social networking is that, it supplements the function of traditional mass media. The rape in Abia State University (ABSU), Nigeria, the 2013 ASUU strike, and the ALUU killings are some of the numerous instances where people racked up posts and articles on blogs describing the ordeal and taking steps to seek palliative measures.

Social media are the applications that employ mobile and web based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and community share, discuss and modifies user's generated content (Chwe(2013).

Karpinski and Paul, 2012. (2013, P.322) argues that the emergences of new, digital technologies signals a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources.

Junco (2012) in explaining new media, described three different kinds of communication media. He saw **interpersonal** media as one, mass **media** as on-to-many and **new media** as individual media or many-to many.

It is easy to confuse social media with social news because we often refer to members of the news as media. Adding to it, social news site is also social media site. Some media includes:

1. **Social Book Making:** Interact by tagging website and search through website book marked by others e.g. Blink list. Simple, Flirchi, Hotlinks, Blackflip, Clickmarks etc.
2. **Social news:** Interact by voting for articles and commenting on the e.g. Digg, Redddit, Newsvine, Propello etc.
3. **Social Networking:** Interact by adding friends, commenting on photo and profile, sharing groups for discussions e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp, Blackberry Messenger, 2go, Eskimi, Baddo, Myspace, LinkedIn, Xing, Skype.
4. **Social Photo and Video Sharing:** Interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on the user submission e.g. YouTube, Twitter, Fliki.
5. **Wikis:** Interact by adding articles and editing articles e.g. Wikipedia, Wikia, Devilfinder, Gmail (Retrieved Jan 31,201). (www.telegrap.co.uk).

Social media has become one of the major channels of chatting through platforms as Facebook, Whatsapp, Blackberry Messenger, 2 go, Eskimi, Blogger and Wiki. There has been an increase in the mobile social media which has created new opportunity for browsing (Retrieve December 3rd 2012) (www.census.gov).

Meier and Laurence (2013) classified social media into six different classes as follows:

1. Collaborative Project (Wikipedia)
2. Blocks and Micro Blogs (Twitter)
3. Content Communities (You Tube)
4. Social Network Site (Facebook, 2go, Blackberry Chat)
5. Virtual Game World (World of War Craft)
6. Virtual Second World (Second Life)

Social Media in the 20th Century

Technology began change very rapidly in the 29th century. After the first super computers were created in the 1940s, scientists and engineers began to develop ways to

creates networks between those computers, and this later lead to the birth of the internet.

The earliest forms of the internet, such CompuServe were developed in the 1960s. Primitives' Various forms of email were also developed during this period. By the 1970s, networking technology had advanced, and in 1979, Usenet was introduced, allowing users to communicate through a virtual newsletter system.

The first recognizable social media site, six degrees, was created in 1997. It enabled user to upload a profile and make friends with others users. It became quite popular, reaching around a million members at its peak, before shutting down in 2001.

Launched in 1999, Live Journal introduced a unique approach to social networking by centering its platform around regularly updated personal blogs.

Effects of Social Media on Academic Performance

Sound Quality education produces productive students who lead to the prosperity of their respective educational institution and subsequently are prove as strong contributors to the national wellbeing.

Lenhart (2011) defined performance as the apparent demonstration of understanding, Concepts, skills, ideas and knowledge of a person and proposed that grades clearly depict the performance of a student.

"Fred (2010) suggested that the Internet can be beneficial for both students and teachers; however, the impact of social networking site usage depends on how students use them. If students primarily engage with the Internet for leisure activities rather than academic purposes, it may negatively affect their academic performance."

Positive Influence

According to Chen and Bryer (2012), social media platforms enable students to carry out various online activities that are important to them, such as staying connected with friends and family, making new friends, sharing photos, and exchanging ideas.

It is obvious that middle and high school students especially students in tertiary institution are using social media to connect with one another on homework and group projects (Sturm, 2009).

- (i) Social media stand as room where music, video clips, photo of celebrities and application of various gaming are programmed (Rogers, 2003).

Negative Influence

- (i) Reduced Human Interaction: Excessive use of social media has diminished face-to-face communication. According to Kirschner and Aryn (2010), social media makes

interaction effortless, leading individuals to isolate themselves behind online identities.

(ii) Decline in Language Skills: Students frequently use slang and abbreviated words on social networking platforms. As noted by Rogers (2003), many now rely heavily on built-in grammar and spell-check tools, which may undermine their writing skills.

(iii) Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying involves the use of digital platforms to share false, harmful, or embarrassing content about others. It is one of the most prevalent online risks among students and typically occurs between peers.

(iv) Sexting: Sexting is defined as the act of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, images, or videos through digital devices. Sturm (2009) highlights that such content often spreads rapidly via mobile phones and the Internet.

(v) Social Media Depression: Researchers have identified a phenomenon termed “Social Media Depression,” which can occur when students or youth spend excessive time on platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, or Blackberry Messenger. Prolonged use can contribute to feelings of loneliness or inadequacy.

(vi) Reduced Critical Thinking and Learning Skills: Christakis and Moreno (Year not provided) argue that students increasingly depend on readily available information on social media and the web, which may hinder their ability to think critically, create original content, and conduct meaningful research.

Social Media and Nigeria Burden

The study emphasized the negative impact of dedicating excessive time and attention to online socialization on students' academic performance. Researchers noted that the 21st century ushered in new media, characterized by the rapid exchange of information via the Internet, which has become widely used for entertainment, networking, and educational purposes (Balanarayan, 2009). The study critically examined the obsessive use of social media among Nigerian youth, highlighting the urgent need to address the significant amount of time they spend engaging in casual online conversations.

Furthermore, the study linked the rise of social media with an increase in harmful activities, such as murders and gang rapes, suggesting that some individuals exploit these platforms to propagate dangerous schemes. Additionally, it was observed that many students frequently engage in texting and chatting during lectures, diverting their focus from learning, academic research, and innovation. This misallocation of time often results in academic setbacks due to distraction (Jacobsen & Forte, 2011).

Diffusion of Innovation Theory by E.M. Rogers

The Diffusion of Innovation theory, developed by E.M. Rogers, is one of the earliest and most influential theories in

social science. Originally rooted in the field of communication, it explains how new ideas or products gradually gain acceptance and spread throughout a specific population or social system over time.

The key adoption is that, the person must perceive the idea, behavior or product as new or innovative (that is, doing something differently than what had previously) Roger's diffusion of innovations theory is the most appropriate for investigating the adoption of technology in higher education and educational environment (Medlin and Parisot (2011).

Rogers defines diffusion as” the process in which innovation is communicated through certain channels, time, and social system are the four key components of the diffusion of innovations.

According to Katz et al (2012) “diffusion is the process of spreading a given idea or practice overtime via specifiable channels, through a social structure such as neighborhoods. Their work on the diffusion of innovation records that for a new idea or innovation to diffuse, there must be:

- i. Awareness stage
- ii. Interest stage
- iii. Evaluation stage
- iv. Trial and adoption stage

Rogers offered the following description of an innovation: “An innovation is an idea, practice, or project that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption”(Rogers, 2003,p.12) An innovation may still be an innovation for them. The newness characteristics of an adoption are more related to the three steps (knowledge, persuasion and decision) of the innovation.

The Diffusion of Innovation theory by Rogers (2003) explores how new ideas and technologies are communicated and adopted among people through various media channels. It aims to explain the process, reasons, and speed at which innovations spread across different cultures.

Methodology

This study adopts several methodologies to explore the positive and negative influences of social networks on the educational standards of students at Imo State University, Owerri. The key components include research design, area of study, population of the study, sample size and sampling procedure, instrument of data collection, and methods of data presentation and analysis.

Research Design

The research focuses on the effects of social networking on students' academic performance at Imo State University, Owerri. To ensure the originality of data collected, both observation and survey methods were employed.

Area of Study

The study was conducted in Owerri, the capital city of Imo State.

Population of the Study

The total student population at Imo State University, Owerri is 10,400. For this study, students from 100 to 400 levels across six faculties Management Sciences, Agricultural Technology, Engineering Technology, Social Sciences, Environmental Sciences, and Law Technology were considered as the study population.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling technique was used to select 500 respondents who represented the overall student population.

Instrument of Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into two sections:

- Section A: Questions related to respondents' personal information.
- Section B: Research questions addressing the topic.

The questionnaire comprised both open-ended and closed-ended items and was administered face-to-face to ensure comprehensive responses.

Data presentation and Analysis

The data collection would be tabulated and itemize according to the response obtained from respondents. The simple percentage will be use to analyze the responses as contained in the questionnaire.

Table I: Gender Distribution

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
Male	370	74
Female	130	26
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Table I above shows that out 500 respondent, 370 (74%) were male while 130(26%) were female. This means that majority of the respondents were male.

Table II: Age Distribution

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
15-19years	38	7.6
20-24years	200	40
25-29years	190	38
30 years above	72	14.4
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Table II above shows that out of 500 respondents, 38 (7.6%) were between ages of 15-19 years, 20-24years were 200(40%), while those within the 25-29 were 190(38%) and ages bracket 30 years above were 72(14.4%).

Table III: Marital Status

Table I: Gender Distribution

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
Single	279	55.8
Married	200	40.0
Divorced	21	4.2
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Data in table III explains that 279(55.2%) respondents were single, married were 200 (40.0%) while divorced respondents were 21 (4.2%).

Table IV: Faculty

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
Management Science	90	18
Agric. Tech	90	18
Engineering Tech	90	18
Law	90	18

Social Sciences	70	14
Environmental Tech	70	14
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Data in table IV above narrates that out of 500 respondents, 90(18%) were Management Sciences students, 90(18%) were Agric. Tech students, 90(18%) were Engineering Tech, 90(18%) respondents were Law students and 70 (14%) respondents were Social Sciences, while 70 (14%) were students from Environmental Tech.

Table V: Respondents Answer Showing They Have Handset that Internet

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
Yes	500	100
No	-	-
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Table V shows that all the respondents represent 100% have handset that they access internet. This means that all the respondents would have more knowledge about the questions

Table VI: Respondents Answer on Frequency They Access Social Media

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Daily	350	70.0
Weekly	90	18.0
Occasionally	60	12.0
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Table VI explains 350(70%) respondents access to social media every day, and 90(18%) respondents access to social media weekly, while (12%) do access to social media occasionally.

Table VII: Respondents Answer on Hours they check their Social Media Account A day

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
Below 5 hours	180	36.0
5 - 7 hours	170	34.0
8 hours above	150	30.0
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Table VII above shows that out of 500 respondents, 180 respondents represents (36%) check their social media account at maximum of 5 hours in a day, and 170(34%) check social media account between 5-7 hours in a day while 150 respondents (30%) spend more than 8 hours online in a day.

Table VIII: Respondents Answer on various media they have access to

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
Less than 2 account	10	2.0
3-5 social media accounts	180	36.0
5-8 social media accounts	220	44.0
More than 8 account	90	18.0
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Table VIII shows that 10(2%) respondents have less than 2 social media accounts, 180(36%) respondents have 3 to 5 social media accounts, 220(44%) respondents have 5-8 social media accounts, while also 90(18%) respondents have more than 8 accounts.

Table IX: Respondents answer on years they have been using social media

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
1-3 years	45	9.0
4-6 years	190	38.0

7-10 years	165	33.0
10 years	100	20.0
Total	500	100

Source: Administered Questionnaire

Table IX shows that out of 500 respondents, 45(9%) respondents fall on 1-3 years they have been social media, 190(38%) respondents were within 4-6 years, and 165(33%) respondents have been using social media within the range of 7-10 years while 100(20%) respondents have been using social media more than 10 years.

Table X: Respondents' answers on whether they consider choice in using social media

Responses	Frequency	Percentages %
Yes	290	58.0
No	210	42.0
Total	500	100

Sources: Administered Questionnaire

Table X shows that 290(58%) respondents said 'Yes' that they consider choice in using social media, while 210(42%) respondents said 'No' that they access any social media that is available.

Table XI: Respondents' answers showing social media influence on academic performance

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	417	83.4
No	83	16.6
Total	500	100

Source: Administered questionnaire

Table XI shows that 417(83.4%) respondents said 'Yes' that social media influences their academic performance, while 83(16.6%) respondents said 'No' that social media do not influence them academically. With this response, it is noted that social media influences majority academically.

Findings

Most of the respondents (83.4%) agreed on the fact that social media influence their academic performance both positively and negatively. This means that social networking sites provide necessary document that respondents need in their studies. In one way or the other, it helps them, likewise affect their performance due to the fact that they rely and copy assignments and article from social media.

On this note, it is our considered opinion bases analysis that there are merit and demerit of social media on academic performance of students in tertiary institution

Summary

In reference to the literature review under study; Innovation of Diffusion Theory according to Medlin & Parisot (2011), says "average Nigerian students spend about 6-7 hours daily on the internet, and some spend all night surfing Tweeting, browsing, Facebook and updating profiles on different social networks and this made easier and more convenient with the mobile phones and other handheld devices".

No social media is bad; is depends on how user uses it, i.e. for wasting time, generating income or capacity building. Knowing and using a social network for a specific purpose can help identifying your need and the best solution for it. Facebook is great to stay connected with latest news, friends and Family; Twitter can be used for instant feedback, Whatsapp for information generating and social life while YouTube is meant for video downloading.

Conclusion

The fact that technology is becoming more readily available at a lower cost has given more options and alternatives for users to carry out their lives and daily activities.

The study concluded that many users primarily utilize social media platforms for learning and sharing ideas and knowledge. For instance, numerous individuals use YouTube to access educational videos, while others unfortunately engage with inappropriate content such as nudity and immoral videos.

Recommendations

At the end of our findings, the following recommendations were arrived at:

1. Site administrators should implement measures to block nude images, videos, status updates, tweets, and other content that violate the terms of the user agreement established during registration.

2. Users should avoid using slang and abbreviations in online chats, as this can negatively impact their writing skills, especially during examinations.
3. Students should stop to go online when they are in lecture room, or on an important assignment; they should know the right time as there is time for everything.
4. All the students should be encouraged to avoid spending or commenting on irrelevant messages instead they should use it for academic purposes

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