

Students' Perception of the Impact of Social Media on their Academic Performance in Benue State University, Makurdi

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Abstract

This study investigated perceptions of students on impact of social media on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated for the study. Ex-post-facto research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 23,498 students in eight faculties in the university. A sample of 377 students was used for the study. The selection was done using multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Social Media and Academic Performance Questionnaire" (SMAPQ) with reliability index of 0.72. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that there is significant students' perceived impact of facebook and whatsapp on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that school administrators and parents should monitor the activities of the students in school and at home respectively, especially those who engage in social media throughout the day do desist from such act and concentrate on their studies.

Keywords: social, media, academic, performance, facebook

Introduction

The upsurge of academic failure among the students is a menace that has stared both the government and stakeholders in the face. There is a consensus of opinion about the fallen standard of education as a big problem that is hindering the progress of the nation in terms of manpower resources. This appears to be found in many universities across the globe, Benue State University, Makurdi inclusive. This could be seen in their cumulative grade point average, poor attitude to lectures, poor completion of home assignment and participation in the class activities. Factors like social media appear to contribute to these challenges. This is because many students prefer to engage their friends on social media

platforms such as facebook, Whatsapp, twitter, blog, 2go, instagram, yahoo messages, youtube and myspace and this seems to affect their academic performance.

Social media is a form of electronic communication which facilitates interaction based on certain interests and characteristics. Lenhart and Madden (2007) defined social media as any website that enables users to create public profiles within the websites and form relationships with other users of the same websites. Social media networking sites can be described as community- based websites, online discussion forum, chat rooms and other social spaces online. Social media networking sites affect individual relationships, expand their personal networks. Therefore, it is an online service that facilitates the building of social relations among people who share the same interests, activity, backgrounds or real life issues. Social network services consist of a representative of each user; for example, a profile, social links and other services in the network (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008).

According to Enikuomehin (2011), there is a direct relationship between social media usage and academic performance of students in university. Academic performance as measured by the examination results is one of the major goals of a school. According to Kathryn (2010), academic performance also refers to excellence in all academic discipline, in a class as well as extra-curricular activities. It includes excellence in sporting behaviour, confidence and communication skills. However, the darker side within technological evolution has resulted in dilemma such as the setback of real values of life, especially among teenage students who form the majority of users interacting through the use of social networking sites. With so many social media sites displayed on the internet, students are tempted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference for online chatting with friends. Many students are now addicted to the online rave of the moment, with facebook, Whatsapp, twitter, blog, 2go, instagram, yahoo messages, youtube and myspace. However, this study focused on whatsapp, twitter, blog and facebook. The choice of these variables is based on the interaction of researchers with students in Benue State University, Makurdi. The interactions indicate that most common platforms used by students are whatsapp, twitter, blog and facebook.

Facebook, according to Alvarez, Rodrigues, Borsi and Gillott (2015), is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. Anyone can be a registered user of the website. Users create a profile and add other friends; they can exchange messages, post status, updates and photos, share video and receive notifications when others update their profiles. Osharive (2015) found that a great number of students are addicted to facebook with disturbing effects on their academic performance thereby resulting in lower Grade Point Average. Similarly, Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014) found that students use facebook for entertainment, relaxing/escaping, and passing time, but not for academic and social information. Also, spending time on facebook has negative effect on their academic performance.

Similarly, a whatsapp is another social media that students indulge in during school hours. According to Fawzi (2015), it is a mobile application used for instant messaging purposes to replace the normal phone short message service (SMS) because of its capacity to send large volume of messages and media files unlike the SMS. Once Whatsapp application is installed, users can then create their personal whatsapp account which will be visible to other whatsapp users in their phone contact lists upon synchronization. Whatsapp therefore enables two people to chat and make video or voice call, and groups of people to make group chat using internet/Wi-Fi connection or data charges. However, Eberechukwu and Nwaizugbu (2018) reported that no significant difference existed between the mean values of the two groups at post-test level. Hence, supplementing the classroom teaching with newer technologies such as whatsapp group discussion offer the students all times and on-the-go learning opportunities.

Social media generally have one common goal which is to encourage new ways to communicate and share information. It also provides great opportunities for members including students' academic performance in Benue State University who use it to promote the services of the library and also get first class information of what is happening around them. The students thus, benefit from the postings in some sites because some postings can be informative and educative and the students after reading such posts can comment on them. However, some university students have formed the habit of visiting different social media sites which may be reason for poor students' academic performance in Benue State University. It is in the light of this that this study sought to investigate the impact of social media on students' academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities especially Benue State University, Makurdi in particular has been an issue of great concern. Parents, teachers, curriculum experts and school counsellors have also expressed considerable concern about this students' poor performance in their semesters and final year results. This students' poor academic performance seems to be attributed to the use of social media. However, social media platforms are supposed to be used to promote and uplift their academic pursuit, but the reverse is the case, as these set of students are often observed during school time in various hiding places either chatting or watching immoral videos.

It seems that many students are addicted to social media activities, abandoning homework and reading time in preference to chatting with friends, even at lecture times; many students are on phones engaging in one form of chatting or the other which can be quite distracting and loss of concentration most times. The academic performance of students is thus, facing a lot of neglect and divided attention between social media activities and their academic work. It is also observed that students devote more attention to social media sites than they do to their studies. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the

impact of social media on students' academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do students perceive impact of facebook on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi?
2. What is the students' perceived impact of the use of whatsapp on their academic performance?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant students' perceived impact of facebook on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi.

Ho2: There is no significant students' perceived impact of whatsapp on their academic performance.

Methodology

Ex-post-facto design was used by the researchers. According to Emaikwu (2010), ex-post-facto research is a research in which the independent variables have already occurred and in which the researcher begins with the observation of an independent variables followed by a retrospective study of possible relationship and effects. The population comprised 23,498 students in eight Faculties in the university. The sample size was 377 students. This sample size agrees with Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for determining sample from a given population. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. The choice of multi-stage sampling procedure was because of the large population of students that were involved in the study and it allows the use of several stages, hence different sampling techniques were used to arrive at the final selection of the respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents from each faculty with the used of Hat and draw method. The simple random sampling technique was used in order to guarantee equal chances for all the students to stand the chance of being selected into the sample.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled, "Social Media and Academic Performance Questionnaire" (SMAPQ). The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A contained instruction to the respondents. Section B contained 10 items on two variables of the study. The instrument was validated by three experts from Educational Management from Department of Educational Foundations, Benue State University, Makurdi. The instrument was trial test on 32 respondents and yielded reliability coefficient of 0.72. The questionnaire was structured on four rating scale of VHE=4, HE=3, LE=2 and VLE=1. Data gathered were analysed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research questions and chi-square was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Research Question 1: To what extent do students perceive impact of facebook on their academic performance in Benue State University?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of facebook on students' academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi

Item No	Item Description	N	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1.	I usually have unlimited access to Facebook and this has affected my academic performance negatively.	330	3.51	0.71	VHE
2.	Chatting on facebook sometimes distracts me from my studies.	330	3.00	1.22	HE
3.	The hours spent on facebook can never be compared to the number of hours I spend on reading my book.	330	3.01	1.09	HE
4.	There is no improvement in my grades since I engaged in facebook usage.	330	3.12	0.97	HE
5.	I used facebook to facilitate academic discussion.	330	3.26	1.16	HE
Cluster Mean			3.18	1.03	HE

Table 1 shows that items 1 to 5 had mean scores of 3.51, 3.00, 3.01, 3.12 and 3.26 with corresponding standard deviations of 0.71, 1.22, 1.09, 0.97 and 1.16 respectively. Based on the criteria for decision making, it means that all the items were rated above the cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.18 with standard deviation of 1.03 is also above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviation scores of the respondents are small signifying homogeneity for the items raised. This implies that students perceive Facebook usage as having impact on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi.

Research Question 2: What is the students' perceived impact of the use of whatsapp on their academic performance?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of impact of whatsapp on students' academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi

Item No	Item Description	N	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
6.	I make use of whatsapp to disseminate knowledge to my classmates	330	2.89	1.15	HE
7.	Engaging in academic group on whatsapp improve my rate of understanding.	330	3.19	1.05	HE

8.	The use of whatsapp affects my attention in class	330	2.58	1.13	HE
9.	I exchange visual materials that are not related to my subjects on Whatsapp which affect my concentration to class lesson.	330	2.95	1.16	HE
10.	I engaged in private discussion with my classmates through whatsapp which distracts me from learning.	330	2.59	0.87	HE
Cluster Mean			2.84	1.07	HE

Table 2 shows that items 6 to 10 had mean scores of 2.89, 3.19, 2.58, 2.95 and 2.59 with corresponding standard deviations of 1.15, 1.05, 1.13, 1.16 and 0.87 respectively. Based on the criteria for decision making, it means that all the items were rated above the cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.84 with corresponding standard deviation of 1.07 is also above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviation scores of the respondents are small signifying homogeneity for the items raised. This implies that students perceive the use of whatsapp as having impact, to a high extent, on their academic performance.

Ho1: There is no significant students' perceived impact of facebook on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi.

Table 3: Chi-square for the Students' Perceived Impact of Facebook on their Academic Performance in Benue State University, Makurdi

Opinions	Observed N	Expected N	Level of Sig.	Df	χ^2 -cal	P-value	Decision
VLE	6	82.5	0.05	3	290.24 ^a	0.00	Sig.
LE	23	82.5					
HE	99	82.5					
VHE	202	82.5					

Table 3 revealed that χ^2 -cal is 290.24^a, with a df of 3 and p-value of 0.00. Since p-value of $0.00 < 0.05$ at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant students' perceived impact of facebook on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi is therefore, rejected. This implies that there is significant students' perceived impact of facebook on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi.

Ho2: There is no significant students' perceived impact of whatsapp on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi.

Table 4: Chi-square for the students’ perceived impact of whatsapp on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi

Opinions	Observed N	Expected N	Level of Sig.	df	χ^2 -cal	P-value	Decision
VLE	50	82.5	0.05	3	94.80 ^a	0.00	Sig.
LE	89	82.5					
HE	39	82.5					
VHE	152	82.5					

Table 4 reveals that χ^2 -cal is 94.80^a, with a df of 3 and p-value of 0.00. Since p-value of 0.00 < 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant students’ perceived impact of whatsapp on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi is therefore, rejected. This means that there is significant students’ perceived impact of whatsapp on their academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi.

Discussion of the findings

The study revealed that Facebook has significant impact on students’ academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi. The study found that students usually have unlimited access to Facebook and this has affected their academic performance negatively. They also reported that chatting on Facebook sometimes distract them from their studies as many spent hours on Facebook which cannot be compared to the number of hours they spend on reading their books. This finding is in agreement with Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014) who found that students use Facebook for entertainment, relaxing/escaping and passing time, but not for academic and social information. Also, spending time on Facebook has negative effect on their academic performance. This result also corroborates with Osharive (2015) who found that a great number of students are addicted to Facebook with disturbing effects on their academic performance thereby, resulting in lower Grade Point Average.

The study indicated that there is significant perceived impact of whatsapp on students’ academic performance in Benue State University, Makurdi. This is because the study found that they make use of whatsapp to disseminate knowledge to their classmates and they also engage in academic group on whatsapp which improve their rate of understanding. The study also found that the use of whatsapp affected their attention in class because they exchange visual materials that are not related to their subjects on whatsapp which affect their concentration to lectures. The study found that most students engaged in private discussion with their classmates through whatsapp which distracts their learning. However, this result disagrees with the finding of Eberechukwu and Nwaizugbu (2018) who found that there is no significant difference existing between the mean values of the two groups at post-test level. Hence, supplementing the classroom teaching with newer technologies such as whatsapp group discussion offer the students all times and on-the-go learning opportunities.

Conclusion

The advent of technology which has introduced social media platforms such as Facebook, blogs, twitter and whatsapps have been impacting on students' academic performance. These social media platforms have made many students to share ideas which have facilitated their accomplishment of academic tasks. Social media has also impacted negatively on students' academic performance as many students prefer engaging their course mates on chatting on topics that are not related to academics. Hence, they spent hours on chatting unnecessary things instead of spending the hours in engaging on academic activities. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that social media has significant impact on students' academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. School administrators should embark on regular inspection of students to fish out students who engage in Facebook during school hours and be punished if caught so as to serve as deterrent to others.
2. Parents should also monitor the activities of their children at home especially those who engage in whatsapp throughout the day to desist from such act and concentrate on their studies at home.

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