

***Social Media Related Variables and Students' Academic Performance in Economics
in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria***

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Abstract

The study investigated social media related variables and students' academic performance in economics in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. Two instruments, Social Media Related Variables and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SMRFASAPQ) and Students' Performance Test in Economics (SPTE), were used for data collection. A sample of 200 students was selected using simple random sampling technique. This included ninety nine (99) female and one hundred and one (101) male drawn from five (5) senior secondary schools randomly selected from the study area. Pearson product moment correlation was used for data analysis and the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that time spent and uses of short forms on social media have significant relationship with academic performance in economics. Based on the findings, it was recommended, amongst others, that school management should prohibit the use of mobile phones during classes so as to enhance the teaching and learning of Economics in particular and other subjects in general.

Keywords: social, media, academic, performance, economics

Introduction

Communication as a means of passing information from one place or one person to another is very essential in every field of endeavour. However, the mode of communication varies from traditional means to an advanced or technological means; this technology has given birth to social media as a means of communication which has come to stay. The advent of social media in the 1980s-1990s, has brought with it positive and

negative effects on the lives of Nigerian youths, especially the students who are high users of this ICT innovation. Over the years, poor academic performance of students in senior secondary schools are attributed to various factors ranging from parental, environmental, peer influence, to social and school related factors (Nduke, 2013). Scholars as well as stakeholders in education and researchers have carried out series of researches, seminars, debate, symposium and town hall meetings on what would have been the reasons behind students' poor academic performance especially in economics. From the various findings and observations of some scholars, poor performance amongst students has been linked to excessive involvement on social media usage. According to Nwazor et al. (2015), social media posed distraction, deviation and divided attention between students' academic work and social media activities; while some scholars are saying that social media has done more good than harm to the students.

Social media is defined, according to Kaplan and Haenlian (2010), as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web and allow the creation and exchange of user generated contents. This implies that social media is a product of modern technological advancements, which helps to draw the world closer. It is an agent of globalization. Lusk (2010) opined that social media is the use of facebook, blogs, twitter, whatsapp for the purpose of communications, sharing photos, documents as well as videos. This definition conceives that social media is a tool for communication and interactions between people irrespective of distance and place; it permits online transfer of document from one person to another. Social media can also be seen as online networking site that allows people from diverse place and works of life to communicate freely over the internet. Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interest and other forms of expressions via virtual communities and networks.

Social media has in many ways led to positive changes in the way senior secondary school students in economics share information and communication, ideas and classroom activities. Economics students in senior secondary school can equally use these media to connect or contact their classmate on questions regarding class assignment or examinations as well as collaborate on assignment and group projects. However, there is also the negative side of the use of social media on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics. The negative effects outweigh the positive ones as some of the economics students see it as a hobby. Many of the students spend their time chatting with friends instead of engaging on their academic work like reading, writing, research, compiling of notes, and assignment (Nduke, 2013).

Nwazor et al. (2015) also observed that some of the negative effects of social media on students in senior secondary school include poor grammar usage, reduction in research capabilities, reduction in real human contact, and addiction to social media sites. Similarly, Nduke (2013) observed that the use of these sites also affects students' use of English grammar. Students are used to short form of writing words in their chat room; they unconsciously use same in the classrooms. They use words and figures like "4" in

place of “for”, “U” in place of “you”, “D” in place of “the” and these could affect their classroom assignment.

Ibrahim (2012) posited that most students prefer being on social media sites than reading their books. They prefer staying in their various hiding places either discussing social media issues or chatting with their phones. He went further to say that, social media platforms have over 200 million users; there is no doubt that students are actively engaged in these social media sites. The author further noted that students who are actively engaged in social media sites perform poorly than their counterparts. With the advent of social media and how students are engaged in it, there is a growing concern on how it affects senior secondary school students’ academic performance, especially in economics subject. Social media sites have become popular, giving young people a new way to interact with one another and communicate with the outside world.

Academic performance is a measure of how well one does in an educational setting; the report card for example is an indication of one’s academic performance in school. Academic performance is also explained as a gradual measurable grading of achievements as evident in grades earned, Grade Point Average (GPA), high school certificate, diploma, bachelor’s degree. Similarly, Michael (2018) sees academic performance as the scholastic standing of a student at a given moments. This scholastic standing could be explained in terms of grades obtained in groups of subjects. This definition implies that academic performance of economics in secondary school is the final grade earned in the course of study.

Academic performance can equally be seen as the summary of duties and grades earned by students during and at the end of a course of study in a school system for the attainment of educational goals. But it is observed that some secondary school students in economics are not effective in carrying out their academic duties; this is evident in their poor class attendance, note taking, and poor habit of doing assignment or class work, responding to questions in the classroom and poor reading culture. This is because of the time spent, use of short form and students’ interest on social media.

The time spent on social media may in one way or the other affect students’ academic performance either positively or negatively. This is an act in which many students carry their phones with them all the time chatting with peers, keep it under their pillows at night, rather than engaging in researches or reading their books or doing their assignments. Olabiye (2012) cries out that majority of Nigerian students (Economics students in senior secondary schools inclusive) are so engrossed in social media activities that they are almost 24 hours online, as they are on the platforms even in classrooms, libraries and lecture theaters. He equally observes that some students are always busy pinging, using whatsapp or facebook while classes are on. All the time which is supposed to be directed towards academic research, learning and innovative thinking has been abused by the desire to make new friends online. Hence, many students’ academics suffer setback as a result of distractions from social media sites. Time spent on social media has to do with the numbers of hours spent on these various platforms. Some students spend over 24 hours

pinging, chatting as well as video chatting without paying attention to their studies. Most times, these activities are performed during examinations where attention should be given to studying. This is because time management plays a vital role in determining the rate of success or failure of any student. Students that lack proper time management easily become victims of negative influence which social media platforms present to its users. This means that economics students in senior secondary school who cannot manage time effectively will experience the harmful effects of social media sites.

As economics students in senior secondary school spend most of their time on social media sites for ordinary chats, posting of pictures/videos rather than engaging in productive activities like reading, research and doing of assignment, they will experience a set-back in their academic pursuits. This is justified by Paul et al. (2012) who established that social media platforms affect students' academic performance. They equally noted that as time spent on social media sites increases, the academic performance of students is seen to deteriorate. This implies that as senior secondary school students spend time on non-educational activities such as chatting on whatsapp, facebook, YouTube and posting on instagram instead of educational activities, their academic activities will crumble.

In a study by Pampek et al. (2009), the amount of time spent daily on social media sites varies greatly. However, an analysis of the data indicated that most participants spend approximately thirty minutes a day socializing, mostly during the evening hours between 9.00pm to 12.00am. Students spend an average of forty seven minutes a day on Facebook and instagram. Nwazor et al. (2015) surveyed 1860 facebook users in the Lagos State University and found out that 90 percent of the students could not get up to 3.50 cumulative grade point average (C.G.P.A) because they have spent a larger part of their time on social media than on their homework and study time which would have contributed positively to their performance in school.

Long (2012) posited that it is common these days that many young people are addicted to social media activities, abandoning their homework and reading in preference to chatting with friends. Similarly, Samiguel (2009) focused on the relationship between time spent on whatsapp and academic performance of students. The overall findings indicated that "more time spent on social media sites equals slightly to lower grades." In this study, the average social media user had a G.P.A of 3.0 to 3.5 while the non-user of social media has a G.P.A. of 3.5 to 4.0. Also the average social media user studies for 1-5 hours per week while the non-user of social media would study 11-15 hours per week. Furthermore, Choney (2010) posited that in looking at the time spent on social media and its effect on academic performances of students, users of facebook have an average G.P.A of 3.6 while non-users have an average G.P.A of 3.9 and above. This implies that there is a negative relationship between students' G.P.A and time spent on social media platforms. Hence only students, who invest most of their time on social media platforms like whatsapp, facebook in preference to reading, note taking or making and doing assignment, will experience low grade point average (G.P.A.).

Nwazor et al. (2015) observed that social media has led to positive change in the way people share information and communicate. The authors equally noted that teachers can connect with their learners through social media about assignment and upcoming events and students also can contact classmates on questions regarding class assignment, examination as well as collaborate on assignment, group project among others. The authors further added that this is not to say that there are no negative sides to social media; that in fact the negative overshadows the positive. Olabiyeyi (2012) asserted that students are always seen all day online spending time either on facebook or whatsapp even when classes are ongoing. The time they are supposed to channel towards academic activities and innovative thinking have been squeezed by the enthusiasm for meeting with friends and classmates, and most times they are busy discussing inconsequential issues. Hence most students' academics suffer setback as a result of distraction from social media platforms.

Many of the researches and literature in Nigeria including that of Seyi (2012) has proven that there exists a negative relationship between time students spent on social media and their academic performance. The author condemned the obsessive attitude of Nigerian youths and students towards social media and pointed out that they devoted their reading, assignment and home school activities' time to chatting and browsing the internet leaving the academics to suffer failure, thereby endangering the society and promoting illicit acts by the youths in the society. The use of short forms in social media communication is a type that has adverse effects on student's academic performance. Short message services (sms) language is a term for abbreviations that is used in mobile phone text messaging etiquette. It has affected the mode of communication among students because they are used to short codes, and adopt same in writing examinations hence they perform poorly academically. As a result of this, new linguistic varieties and forms have begun to emerge, particularly in informal peer-to-peer communications. One particularly interesting and widespread example of this phenomenon is the short message service (sms) language or texts, which is an informal register that uses shortened and abbreviated spellings. It is very common among youths and is usually used in texting, chat and social media. Acronym and short codes are just two tools that are widely used in computer mediated, text-based conversation, such as on social media or through texting. This form of informal communication is referred to as sms language or texts. It is believed that texting adversely affects writing and destroys Standard English. The use of abbreviated words will affect the standard form of language in a long run. There are negative effects of short message service (sms) in the formal writing of senior secondary school students in economics.

With the ever increasing use of text messaging by students, especially teenagers, there has been a growing concern among educators, parents, researchers and general public that this practice is damaging the use of language in speaking and writing and will affect the standard form in a long run. Efforts are made to find out the effects of short forms or short message services (sms) on students' academic performance in economics especially in formal writing as many exams, assignments, reports are based on written work of students. If there exists, how strong this impact is on the spellings and punctuation the students use in such writings. Numerous distinguishing features give novelty to written texts, but none

of them is linguistically novel. Most of them were used in chat room interaction before the arrival of mobile phones. All communication is context bound and messages are sent between people who know each other's texting abbreviations and versions well. Texting involves immediate turn taking. So they opt for abbreviated forms and omit punctuations and ignore capitalization which requires pressing extra keys and consumes more time and efforts and cost the recipient extra patience in taking his/her turn and slows down the process of communication. British Broadcasting Corporation (March 4, 2003) reports that text messaging has long been blame for declining standard of spelling and grammar, particularly in paper and pencil writing.

According to Johnson (2017), much popular and public discourse attends to the perceived communicative scarcity of young people. Students sometimes confuse the lines between formal English and the very informal sms language. This is thought to be causing them to make a lot of spellings and grammatical errors in their assignments and tests, and make it difficult for teachers to decipher what they are trying to say. According to Mehmood and Taswir (2003), short message service has overcome the requirement in language versatility and is increasingly being used in social communication, business transaction and even in advertisements. Technology plays an important role in communication today and short message services are popular especially among the young generation because it provides economy of time and money. Learners have the tendency to use it as an official, accepted and standard language and thus make different errors from incorrect spellings to even poor grammatical sentence constructions.

One of the major goals of second language educator is to inculcate and enhance the language proficiency of the learners. Language proficiency consists of the ability to listen, speak, read and write with comprehension, observing grammatical, syntactic as well as semantics rules governing that language. The short message service (sms) language affects two aspects of the learners' language proficiency. This includes skill to express oneself eloquently through writing, and skills and ability to use words appropriately in a context. Texters tend to write the spellings of some words as they are spoken and omit punctuations and overuse it in their test, assignment and reports which sometimes hamper comprehension of the message they want to convey. They are thus unable to differentiate the context and situation for the use of sms language. They do not only mix these with standard English but are bound to consider them as correct since they are surrounded by this language in the form of text messages, television, billboards, comics, books, newspaper and sometimes circulars from their institutions.

Based on the above, this has posed the need for studying the influence of social media on academic performance of Economics students in senior secondary schools; which this research therefore sought to examine the influence of social media on Economics students' academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Does time spent on social media has a relationship with academic performance of Economics students?
- ii. Is there any relationship between the use of short forms on social media and student's academic performance in economics?

Hypotheses

Ho1: Time spent on social media has no significant relationship with academic performance of Economics students.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between use of short forms and academic performance of Economics students.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was ex-post facto design. This implies that the study was carried out after facts had been known or the events had taken place. Isangedighi (2012) and Joshua (2009) said that this design is usually used in a situation where the variations in the independent variables have occurred naturally and no random assignment or manipulation is possible. This implies that since the time spent on social media and the use of short forms on social media site have already been in existence, and the relationship on students' academic performance cannot be manipulated by the researcher, then this design was considered appropriate for this study. A population of two thousand, one hundred and eighty seven (2,187) students in SS1, having nine hundred and fifteen (915) as males and one thousand two hundred and seventy two (1,272) as female from sixteen (16) public secondary schools in Obudu Local government Area of Cross River State. A sample of 200 students was selected using simple random sampling technique; out of which ninety nine (99) females and one hundred and one (101) males were drawn from five (5) senior secondary schools randomly selected from the study area (Cross River State Education Board 2017). An instrument titled Social Media Related Variables and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SMRVSAPQ) and Students' Performance Test in Economics (SPTE) were the instruments used for data collection. The instruments were validated using face and content validity by an expert in Measurement and with a reliability coefficient of 0.87. The two hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Ho1: Time spent on social media has no significant relationship with academic Performance of Economics students.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of time spent on social media and students' academic performance in Economics

Variables	N	\bar{x}	S.D	R	Sig
Time spent	200	14.26	2.508	.145	.041
Academic performance		8.82	3.012		

Significant at .05, df = 198, critical r = .138

The result presented in table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value of .145 is greater than the critical r-value of .138 at .05 level of significance and 198 degrees of freedom. Based on this result, the alternate hypothesis was retained implying that time spent on social media has a significant relationship with students' academic performance in Economics in the study area.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between use of short forms and academic performance of Economics students.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis on the relationship between uses of short form and students' academic performance in economics

Variables	N	\bar{x}	S.D	R	Sig
Use of short forms	200	13.11	3.261	.199	0.049
Academic performance		8.82	3.012		

Significant at .05, df= 198, critical r .138

The result presented in table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.199 is greater than the table r-value of .138 at .05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. This result implies that the alternate hypothesis was retained indicating that the use of short form has a significant relationship with students' academic performance in Economics.

Discussion of the findings

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that time spent on social media has a significant relationship with students' academic performance in economics. This implies that the poor performance of students in economics in the study area may be as a result of the fact that they spent most of their time on social media. This finding is in support of Olabiye (2012) who opined that majority of Nigerian students (Economics students inclusive) are so engrossed on social media activities that they are almost 24 hours online. According to the author, students are busy on social media even in classrooms, libraries and lecture theaters as they spend all their time to make new friends online. Most times, these activities are performed during examinations where attention should be given to studying. Similarly, this finding agrees with Sandra and Jsmail (2016). According to them, time management plays a vital role in determining the rate of success or failure of any student. They further observed that lack of proper time management among students make them to easily become victims of negative influence which social media platform present to its

users. This finding further corroborates Paul et al. (2012), who observed that social media platforms affect students' academic performance. They equally noted that as time spent on social media sites increases, the academic performance of students is seen to deteriorate. In consonance with this finding is the study of Pampek et al. (2009) that revealed that the amount of time spent daily on social media sites varies greatly. According to them, most participants spend approximately thirty minutes a day socializing, mostly during the evening hours between 9.00pm to 12.00am.

Also supporting this finding is the findings of Long (2012), and Choney (2010). In their various studies, they find out that time spent on social media has a negative influence on students' academic performance. Their finding further revealed that the cumulative grade point average (C.G.P.A) of students who are social media users are usually between 3.0 and 3.5 while the non-users of social media have cumulative grade point average of 3.5 to 4.0. In agreement to this finding also is the observation of Olabiye (2012), that students are always seen all day online spending time either on facebook or whatsapp even when classes are ongoing. They spent the time they were supposed to channel towards their academic activities and innovative thinking to the enthusiasm of meeting with friends and classmates online discussing inconsequential issues. The author further observed that time students spent on social media has a negative effect on their academic performance. The author condemned the obsessive attitude of students towards social media and pointed out that they devoted their reading, assignment and home school activities time to chatting and browsing the internet leaving their academics to suffer failure, thereby endangering the society and promoting illicit acts by the youths in the society.

On the contrary, Nwazor et al. (2015), disagreed with this finding, as he observed that social media has helped in information dissemination. The authors equally noted that there is connectivity between the teachers and the students in terms of class work, class assignment, examination as well as group project among others.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between the uses of short form on social media and students' academic performance in economics. The implications of this is that poor students' performance in economics in the study area is linked to their continuous use of short form in writing either test, assignment, projects as well as examinations. This result is in support of some of the scholars' findings, observations, and assertions as well as opinions of others. Students actually sometimes confuse the lines between formal English and the very informal short messages services (sms) language. Similarly, Nwazor et al. (2015) also observed that social media has affected students negatively ranging from poor grammar usage, reduction in research capabilities, reduction in real human contact and addiction to social media sites. In the same vein the opinion of Nduke (2013) is also in agreement with this result. According the author, the use of this platform has affected students' use of good grammar. He concluded that students are used to short form of writing words in their chat room; they forget and they use same in the classrooms. They use words and figures like "4" in place of "for", "U" in place of "you", "D" in place of "the" and these could affect their classroom assignment, test as well as examinations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that time spent as well as the uses of short forms on social media has a significant relationship on students' academic performance in economics in the study area.

Recommendations

It was recommended that:

1. Students should spend more time on their study and less on social media.
2. The use of short form in writing examination should be discouraged by Government and other stakeholders in education as it affects students' academic performance negatively.
3. School management should prohibit the use of mobile phones during classes so as to enhance the teaching and learning of Economics in particular and other subjects in general.

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