

Influence of Social Media on the Academic Performance of the Undergraduate Students of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examines the influence of social media on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Kogi State University. The rationale behind the study is to find out whether the exposure of the students to social media has effect on their academic performance. The paper is anchored on two theories; namely: social information processing theory and media equation theory. The survey research method was adopted, employing the questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. The findings show that undergraduate students of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria, have access to social media and that their exposure to social media is to a very great extent. Findings also show that exposure to social media has effect on the students and that the effect is negative. Findings also show that facebook is the most used social media by undergraduate students of Kogi State University. Based on the findings, the paper concludes that exposure to social media by the undergraduate students of Kogi State University has negative effect on their academic performance. To this end, the paper recommends that the students should pay minimal attention to social media and focus more on their academic activities.

Key Words: Social Media, Academic Performance and Undergraduate Students of Kogi State University

Introduction/ Problem Statement

The world is today celebrating the improvements in communication technology which has broadened the scope of communication through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Ufuophu and Ayobami (2012:129) observe that the ICTs include internet, satellite, cable data transmission and computer assisted equipment.

Social network is a social structure made up of individuals or organisations 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 (Adeboye, 2012, cited in Asemah and Edegoh, 2012). Social network can also be referred to as a map of specified ties, such as friendship, between the nodes being studied. The nodes, to which an individual is thus connected, are the social contacts of that individual; the network can also be used to measure social capital – the value that an individual gets from the social network. Social networking sites include: Yahoo Messenger, Facebook Messenger, Blackberry Messenger (BBM), Google talk, Google+Messenger, iPhone, Androids and so on. These networking sites are used by most people to interact with old and new friends, physical or internet friends (Adeboye, 2012, cited in Asemah and Edegoh, 2012).

The expansion in technology has also affected internet software, thus leading to chatting sites known by the name “social media”. With social networking sites, one can send and receive messages almost immediately. However, lack of regulation of the internet has led to its excessive use. McQuail (2008:154) avers that the internet penetrates more homes.

It is a common sight to see a youth chatting in sensitive and highly organised places like church, mosque and lecture venues. Some are so carried away that even as they are walking along the high way, they keep chatting. The manufacturing and distribution of equally sophisticated cellular phones has complicated the situation, as youths no longer need to visit a cybercafé before they send and receive messages. Attention has been shifted from visible to invisible friends, while important ventures like study and writing are affected in the process. This phenomenon has become a source of worry to many who believe in knowledge and skill acquisition.

The emergence of social media as a result of advancement in technology and expansion in internet software has raised eye brows among academics on its (social media) impacts on studies. Students at all levels of learning now have divided attention to studies, as a result of available opportunities to be harnessed from social media. Whether these opportunities promote studies is a question that needs to be answered. Thus, the problem this study investigates is the effect of social media networks on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. to determine whether undergraduate students of Kogi State University, Anyigba are exposed to social media networks;
2. to determine the frequency of exposure to social media;
3. to determine the social media network that the students are more exposed to; and
4. to ascertain the influence of the exposure on their academic performance;

Theoretical Framework

The theories considered most appropriate for this study are: social information processing theory and media equation theory. Social information processing theory explains online information. The theory was developed in 1992 by Joseph Waither (Asemah 2011:219). Social information processing theory is an interpersonal communication theory which suggests that online interpersonal relationship development might require more time to develop than face-to-face relationships, but when developed, it has the same influence as face-to-face communication. This means, the more students use social media, the more they influence their disposition to studies, given the fact that friends from social media will begin to exert influence on each other.

Media equation theory, as noted by Griffin (2000), cited in Asemah and Edegoh (2012) was propounded by Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass. The theory proposes that media are equal to real life and that electronic media in particular are being given human attributes. In most cases, people talk to computer as if they were talking to human beings. More so, in most cases, you talk to your television as if you are discussing with human beings, hence you talk to television sets as if you are discussing with people. That is, people have personalised the media of mass communication to the extent that they now see them, just the way they see human beings. Thus, Griffin (2000, p. 273), cited in Asemah and Edegoh (2012) notes that media are equal to real life. He further noted that what Reeves and Nass's equation suggests is that we respond to communication media as if they were alive. This theory says that people now treat computers, television and the new media like real people and places. Going by the media equation theory, we tend to give human attributes to inanimate objects in our homes. According to Griffin (2000,p. 373):

The practical implication of the media equation is that once we turn on a television or boot up on computer, we follow all the rules of interpersonal interaction that we have précised throughout life. Thus, the word interface is particularly apt when describing human media relations. This natural social response goes way beyond occasional words yelled at the television set or our frantic play for the computer to retrieve lost data. Reeves and Nass maintain that the media equation is so basic that it applies to everyone; it applies often and it is highly consequential.

The above assertion aptly captures how the audience members now tend to engage the media in a discussion as they do to human beings. The relevance of the theory to the paper cannot be overemphasised. People treat the media like human beings, so whatever people see in the media, they tend to believe because they respond to the new media, the way they will respond to human beings.

Review of Related Literature

Different researchers have conducted research to ascertain the influence of social media on users; for example, Moon (2011) in a study on "impact of facebook on undergraduate academic performance", averred that social media have negative impact on students. According to the result, the more students use facebook, the more it affects their academic performance. Similarly, Oye (2012) notes that most of the younger students use social networking sites mainly for socialising activities, rather than for academic purpose. Oye (2012) further observed that most of the students do feel that social networking sites have more positive impact on their academic performance. In another study conducted by Shana (2012), it was revealed that students use social network mainly for making friends and chatting. The result showed that only 26 percent of the students (respondents) indicated that they use social media for academic purpose.

Young (2006) in a study titled “the effect of internet use and social capital on the academic performance of students” observed that the internet expands its reach to teenagers’ school life. Young noted that students are more reliant on the internet to access information that is involved in school life as well as entertainment. The researcher further added that internet, though consumes time, has less effect on studies. Yang (2003) notes the effect of social media depends large on the degree of usage.

Yoon (2000) observed that the type of social media or network subscribed to by a teenager exerts influence on him or her to visit the internet. Jeong (2005) noted that internet addiction is significantly and negatively related to students’ academic performance, as well as emotional attributes. Seo (2004) corroborates Jeong’s assertion when he opined that the negative influence of internet is only on excessive users and not on all users. Rather (2013, p. 69) avers that:

The Social networking sites and blogs which are being used today with tremendous passion and zeal have transformed the way of using internet in recent years by describing online tools and utilities which allow users for communication, participation and collaboration of information online. Today’s young generation, especially teens and youth are using technology through innovative ways due to which they are referred to as Millennials and have changed the ways we think, work and communicate even though they are in formative years of their life. Today’s youth because of these social networking sites have become technology addicts and are quite introverted.

A new research study finds that widespread use of media among freshman college students may compromise academic performance. The study is one of the first to explore mechanisms of media effects on academic outcomes. Investigators determined that use of media, from texting to chatting on cell phones to posting status updates on Facebook may lower grades for freshman female students (Nauert, 2007).

Methodology

The research design for this study is survey. Ohaja (2003:11) defines a survey as the study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning, which enables a researcher to make generalisation concerning his population of study. The instrument of data collection for the study is the questionnaire. The area of study is Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. The researcher limited the study to only undergraduate students. The purposive sampling was used to select mass communication undergraduate students while the simple random sampling was used to select the 282 students that form the sample size for the study. To determine the sample size for the study, the Cochran statistical formula for determining sample size was used (See appendix for computation).

Data Presentation/ Analysis

Table 1: Exposure of Undergraduate Students of Kogi State University to Social Media

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	282	100%
No	Nil	Nil
Total	282	100%

The data in table 1 shows that the undergraduate students of Kogi State University students have access to social media. All the respondents agreed that the students have access to social media.

Table 2: Extent of Access to New Media

Question	Frequency	Percentages
Very Great Extent	190	68%
Great Extent	62	22%
Not at all	Nil	Nil%
Low Extent	21	7%
Very Low Extent	9	3%
Total	282	100%

The result of the analysis shows that majority of the respondents are exposed to the social media to a very great extent. A sizeable percentage (68%) of the respondents was of the opinion that it was to a very great extent.

Table 3: Social Media Network Most Exposed to by the Undergraduate Students of Kogi State University Students

Question	Frequency	Percentages
Face book	158	56%
Twitter	12	4%
2go	63	22%
My Space	19	7%
Netlog	30	11%
Total	282	100%

In table 3, a large percentage of the respondents (56%) were of the opinion that facebook is the most used social media network among the undergraduate students of Kogi State University.

Table 4: Exposure to social media has Negative Influence on the academic performance of the Students

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	UD	D	SD	X	DECISION
1.	Kogi State University undergraduate students spend more time on social media than reading their books	60	199	10	2	0	4.1	Accepted
2.	The students now rely on social media to do their assignments without consulting other sources	71	181	10	7	2	4.1	Accepted
3.	Students' exposure to social media have effect on their academic performance	107	149	7	4	4	4.2	Accepted
4.	The influence of social media on the academic performance of students is negative	13	104	27	0	2	4.3	Accepted
5.	Students who spend more time on social media are likely to perform poorly in their academic activities than those who do not.	77	177	17	0	0	4.2	Accepted

Discussion of Findings

Findings show that the undergraduate students of Kogi State University have access to social media and that the extent to which the students have access to social media is high. This is evident in the majority of the respondents who agreed to that effect (68%). The implication of this is that the students of Kogi State University have access to social media. This is mainly because they use social media for various purposes. This is in line with the uses and gratifications theory which says that audience members use the media to satisfy various purposes.

Findings further show that the facebook is the social media network that is most used by the undergraduate students of Kogi State University. This is evident in the majority of the respondents who agreed that facebook is the social network mostly used by the students of Kogi State University. This however corroborates Asemah and Edegoh (2013) who noted that facebook is the most used new media by students of Kogi State University.

The facebook, as noted by Asemah and Edegoh (2013), is a social networking site, which allows participant to create a profile, search and receive friend request. Participants can upload profile pictures, tags pictures and comment on pictures of friends. It also gives participants the opportunity to upload and share information, either public or private. There is also room of privacy in which participants grant access to selected participant within his or her group of friends. Face book is one the fast developing social networking site, particularly popular with people under the age of 40, with nearly 500 million users worldwide. In many cases, it is just a way for people to keep in touch with each other and exchange news and photographs. Increasingly,

though, young people prefer it as a source of news and information, rather than listening to radio or watching television (Asemah and Edegoh, 2013).

The findings also show that the exposure of the undergraduate students of Kogi State University have effect on their academic performance. This is also evident in table 4 where majority of the respondents answered in the affirmative. Similarly, items in table 4 show that social media have negative influence on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Kogi State University students. Students who spend more time on social media are likely to perform poorly in their academics. This is because, instead of reading their books, they spend their time chatting and making friends via the social media and this will definitely have negative effect on their academic performance, because when you do not read, there is no way you can perform well academically.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the collected and analysed, it can be concluded that the exposure to social media by undergraduate students of Kogi State University students is high and this has negative effect on their performance. The paper therefore makes the following recommendations:

- i. Students should reduce their exposure to social media and pay more attention to their studies.
- ii. Students, especially those willing to record huge academic success should guide themselves against the use of social media.
- iii. The government, schools and other well to do individuals should encourage hardwork by rewarding successful students through scholarship schemes and other incentives.
- iv. The government should consider the possibility of evolving a policy on teenagers' exposure to social media.

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Appendix

Sample Size Determination

$$NO = \frac{Z^2 PO}{e^2}$$

Where NO = Initial estimates of the sample size.

Z = the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area of the tail.

P = the estimated population under consideration which is 13,098

e = level of significance given as 0.05

Q = 1-4

Note: if $\frac{NO}{Population}$ is negligible then NO is satisfactory

While n can be obtained as follows:

$$n = \frac{1 + NO - 1}{N}$$

Where n = sample size

N = population

NO = Initial estimate of the sample size therefore, using Cochran's formula

$$NO = \frac{Z^2 PQ}{e^2}$$

Z = 1.68 an estimate gotten from 50 percent point under normal distribution table using one tail with a level of significance of 0.05% of the estimated population which is assumed as 0.5 through

$$\frac{50\%}{100} = 0.5$$

$$e = 100\% - 99.95\% = 0.05$$

$$Q = (1-P) 1-0.5 = 0.5$$

$$\text{Therefore, } NO = \frac{Z^2 PQ}{e^2} = \frac{1.68^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2}$$

$$NO = \frac{2.8334 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.0025} = 282.24$$

$$NO = 282.24$$

Since NO which is 282.24 = 0.0215 is negligible then the initial estimate population 13,098.

OF NO = $\frac{Z^2 PQ}{e^2}$ is satisfactory

Note that $\frac{NO}{Population}$ is gotten from $n = \frac{1 + NO - 1}{N}$

$$n = \frac{1 + 282.24 - 1}{13,098}$$

Where NO = 282.24

$$N = 13098$$

$$n = \frac{282.24}{13,098} = 0.0215$$

Hence, the sample size (n) for the entire population is 282

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