

Academic Performance of Universities and Polytechnics Students: The Impact of Social Media

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ABSTRACT: *Do social media indeed have an effect on the academic performance of students? And is the social media being fully utilized for the right purpose? These questions are some of the issues that this research tried to answer. This research is on the academic performance of university and polytechnic students and the impact that social media has on the students' academic performance. Six institutions were used for the study; three polytechnics and three universities were selected. Students were randomly selected from the various institutions and the total population was 200 students. The study found out that students used more of facebook and whatsapp as social media for their various interactions and activities on social media. Facebook accounted for 60% of the population of the study that used it while the remaining 40% was for whatsapp. Even though some students used other media they predominantly used these two more frequently. The study found out that there is an impact that social can make on the academic performance of students if their habits can be changed in the positive direction.*

KEYWORDS: social media, academic performance, students

INTRODUCTION

There is the rising concern by so many people both young and old about the impact that social media has on the academic performance of students and in this case university/polytechnic students. Some concern for the use of social media citing the positive impact while others feel it has brought down the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. Education today has gradually shifted from traditional base to technological based as knowledge is no longer in the hand of the teacher/lecturer. As students can learn almost anything from scratch, without the aid of a physical class teacher to guide them. Gone are the days when students took group study and discussion very seriously; that is no longer the case, as with technology you could discuss with a group of friends at any point in time for any reason whatsoever. There is indeed a metamorphosis in the way we do things and this would be indeed a constant phenomenon.

We are talking about social media and there is the need to explicitly talk a bit on the subject as so many different pictures can be painted on it. Social media means different things to different people but this fact is based on their knowledge of what they think that the social media is and can be used for. Hence we would attempt to expatiate on the subject matter carefully and know what it entails. Social media are interactive web 2.0 internet based applications (Obor & Wildman (2015) and Kaplan & Haenlein (2016)). Social media is a collection of technologies that facilitates communication, interaction, collaboration, and content sharing by using a computer network or in an online community. Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share and exchange information, ideas, documents, files and have various kind of collaboration.

Social media platforms are very numerous and we would only some of the prominent and popular ones in our region for the purpose of this research. Some of them are listed below; Facebook, Yookos, Twitter, Skype, Google+, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Youtube, Badoo, Viker, Youtube, wechat e.t.c.

The world today is indeed driven by people who want to socialize using various social media. Interestingly, there is so much benefit that could come out of the use of social media. However, there is still the need to raise awareness of all students in the appropriate use of such technology since it has become part of their way of life. This is because their academic performance would always be affected and any existing or new electronic learning system. The traditional method of a teacher being in a class room physically and dishing out knowledge is no longer sustainable in our present day where sustainable self development is the order of things.

Most institutions are still behind when it comes to technological innovation and their applications and availability to facilitate the positive impact of the social media and information technology. There is the need to adopt electronic learning systems in institutions of higher learning, (Okereke & Lucky 2014). In 2009, a draft manuscript suggested that facebook as a social media platform might be related to larger academic achievement in colleges and graduate schools (Karpinski, 2009). Ogedebe, Emmanuel & Musa (2012), opined that social media networking has taken over the world.

Oghenetega & Ejedafiru (2014) opined that social media have affected communication between people in educational community positively since the past decade. This can be seen to be very true as most lecturers who are well already using the social media for education purposes can be seen in their discussion with their students on project issues and assignments and of course discussing students' challenges. Some even go further to share files or documents as part of course materials with their students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of social media on the academic performance of university/polytechnic students in Nigeria. This purpose was achieved however with the following objectives;

- ❖ To investigate if there is any impact that the social media has on university and polytechnic students in Nigeria.
- ❖ To find out and determine the academic performance of students that use social media in universities and polytechnics in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to five universities; Delta State University, Abraka, University of Benin, Benin-City, Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun, Novena University Ogume, and Western Delta University, Oghara, while the five polytechnics in Nigeria included Delta State Polytechnic Ozoro, Petroleum Training Institute Warri, Federal Polytechnic Auchi, Delta State Polytechnic Otefe-Oghara, and The Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas Bonny all in Nigeria.

Research Design

This research made use of the questionnaire in generating the data that was used for the study. The population of the study was 200 selected randomly from the six tertiary institutions. We used survey method also in the research.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Our analysis is based on the questionnaire that was used for the study, and it is in-line with the questions that students responded to.

Table 1: What is the impact of social media on your academic work (performance?)

Social Media Impact	Responses	Percentage %
Positive impact	600	24%
Negative impact	1900	76%
Total	2500	100%

The table above shows that the six tertiary institutions (three polytechnics and three Universities respectively students) showed that 76% (1900) agreed to the fact that social media has a negative impact on their studies while 24% (600 students) of the students however showed that there was a positive impact of social media on their studies. This shows that social media has both positive and negative impact and if more awareness on positive usage is created, the balance required would be created.

Table 2: Do you use social media for academic purposes?

Usage of social media	Responses	Percentage %
Yes	700	28%
No	1600	64%
Undecided	200	8%
Total	2500	100%

As can be seen about 28% of the students only used social media for academic purposes. 64% representing a very large number of students from all the institutions selected use social media for other purpose and 8% representing the smallest part of the population were undecided as to whether they use it for academic purpose or not. This we felt was even a more serious issue to deal with as not knowing what they use the social media for would indeed be of great concern. It is like asking someone why he/she is on facebook and they respond; they don't know. From the table above the researcher concluded that there is the need to incorporate the social media in teaching and for the purpose of assignment and group academic discussions. This was said because the idea will yield a positive impact of social media. With a look at how much an average student spend on social networking sites, some spend a minimum of 4 hours per day on social media.

Table 3: Do social media help you in the following?

Academic activities of social media in school	Responses	percentage%
Assignment	50	2%
Research	200	8%
Information	500	20%
Other activities	1750	70%
Total	2500	100%

This particular question was quite interesting as some students indicated that they use social media for more than one or all of the items listed and so we allowed them to indicate but indicate more clearly by ticking twice the one they use most. And for the purpose of this research we would concern ourselves with the one they use more often. From the results we got after our analysis, it was discovered that some of the other activities that students were involved with included updates, posts, chatting, watching videos and picture uploads. A larger percentage of 70% used social media for other activities that were outlined above and 20% of students used it for information only. 2% and 8% used it for assignment and research respectively. This table gives us a general view of what students used the social media for more frequently.

Table 4: What social media do you always use more frequently?

Social media often used by students	Responses	Percentage %
Twitter	-	-
Skype	-	-
Yookos	-	-
Facebook	2000	80%
Youtube	-	-
Badoo	-	-
Snapchat	-	-
Instagram	-	-
linkedIn	-	-
Whatsapp	500	20%
Total	2500	100%

Of the several social media that were more frequently used by students all the students either use facebook or whatsapp, with facebook accounting for 80% usage and whatsapp 20%. Most students didn't even know some of the other Medias and some of the students who used them rarely did. This indicate that students spend a larger part of their time on either facebook or whatsapp alongside one or two other platforms like instagram which shows that if tertiary institutions can take advantage of these two and others, students attitude towards their usage would change in the positive direction.

Table 5: How much time do you spend on social media activities every day?

Time spent in minutes and hours	Responses	Percentage %
30 minutes	320	12.8%
1-2 hours	250	10%
3-5 hours	1580	63.2%
6 hours and above	600	24%
Total	2500	100

From our analysis, and as shown in the table above, 63.2% of students used social media between 3-5 hours on a daily basis, 12.8% of the students used the social media just 30 minutes, 10% said they used it between 1-2 hours and only 24% used it 6 hours and beyond. This is indicating that students spend so much time outside the class room for some cases on social media activities and less time studying.

Table 6: What do you use social media for?

Reasons for using social media	Responses	Percentage %
For dating/Relationship	75	3%
For information purpose	275	11%
Making friends	150	6%
Fraud	-	-
For information about academics	125	5%
To keep in touch with friends	1587.5	63.5%
To socialize and be famous	287.5	11.5%
Total	2500	100%

From the table and our analysis, we can see that 3 % of the population used social media for dating/relationship, 11% used it for information purpose, while 6% used it for making friends, no student ticked using social media for fraud and 5% of the population used it for information about academics; like lecture time, assignment questions and assessment questions, change of venue, and when to submit an assignment e.t.c. 63.5% which represented the largest part used it to keep in touch with friends and 11.5% said they used it to socialize and become famous. This gives us an idea of what students used the social media for more frequently. And interestingly no student agreed to using social media for fraud even though we know there is a fraction that do so. This lets us know that they know that it is wrong to defraud people using any medium possible.

FINDINGS

Social media platforms are indeed the fastest way to send and receive information. Of all the beautiful things that the social media is used for, it was discovered that social media was rarely used for academic purposes and therefore there is the need to turn the light on the positive impact that it has. Most of the time that students use social they do so just to keep in touch with their friends and to update their profiles with their thoughts and pictures. It was also found out that students spent so much time on social media more than they spend with studying their books.

CONCLUSION

Communication is indeed very vital in our world today, because without it there would be no social media and life would be so meaningless. There is so much more that can be achieved in academics with the use of social media in more positive and effective manners that would encourage students to change their socialization habits on the web and help to give them more value for their time on social media. In this research we have looked at a number of things ranging from what students spend their time on social media, how much time they spend if they spend time on academic work or not. And in general the response was on the negative. Showing that students spend a lot of time on social media with none of those time spent for academic purposes. It is therefore recommended that institutions and lecturers respectively should take advantage of the social media and begin to use it for academic purposes more than ever before. institutions of learning should create the necessary policies, technological infrastructures, like free Wifi and internet service to enable speedy compliance to the use of social media.

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