

Perceived Influence of Social Networks Usage on The Academic Performance of Students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Nigeria

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Abstract

Social networks have become integral to modern communication, enabling global connections and fostering both personal and professional relationships. This study therefore takes a look at how the attitude of students to this social network either positively or negatively affects the academic performance of the students of Federal college of education (Technical), Asaba as a case study. Data were collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of twelve (12) items and was divided into two clusters: extent of social network utilization and how the use of social network affects students' academic performance respectively. The study used the descriptive survey design method and was analyzed mean and standard deviation statistical analysis for research questions. While the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 significance. The result showed that social network has negative impact on the academic performance of learners when there is too much concentration at the expense of educational discussion on the platform. The hypothesis revealed significant relationship between social network usage and academic performance of students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba. It is therefore recommended that there should be regulation for students on campus on the use of social network so as to help them focus on their study.

Keywords: Social networks, Influence, Academic performance, Students

Introduction

Social networks, which are an integral part of the internet, have evolved as a relief to mankind. It has come to assist human beings to improve upon various aspects of their lives. For example, internet helps in the areas of education, social relationships, information dissemination and knowledge advancement to mention a few (Hamat, Embi & Hassan, 2012). In recent years, the proliferation of social networking platforms has significantly transformed the way individuals interact, communicate, and share information own (Gokhale, 2011). According to Hargittai & Hsieh (2016), among the population most affected by this digital revolution are students in tertiary institutions. Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, like many other educational institutions, has witnessed an increasing integration of social networks into the daily lives of its students. This trend has sparked significant interest among educators, parents, and researchers regarding its potential impact on students' academic performance. The use of social networks among students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, has become pervasive, with platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp serving as primary channels for communication, collaboration and socialization. While these platforms offer numerous opportunities for connecting with peers and accessing educational resources, they also present challenges that may affect students' academic pursuits.

Several factors underscore the importance of studying the influence of social networks on the academic performance of students in this specific educational context. First and foremost, understanding the patterns of social media usage among students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, is essential to adapting teaching methodologies to align with their digital preferences and needs. Furthermore, investigating the impact of social networks on academic performance can shed light on potential distractions, time management issues, and challenges related to information overload that students might face (Kuss & Griffith, 2015).

Additionally, exploring the correlation between social media usage and academic performance is crucial for the development of informed policies and interventions within the institution. Hence, Hargittai (2018), noted that identifying the factors that contribute positively or negatively to students' academic outcomes can guide educators and administrators in promoting responsible digital citizenship and fostering a conducive learning environment.

In light of these considerations, this study aims to comprehensively investigate the usage patterns, impact, and implications of social networks on the academic performance of students enrolled in the

Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba. By conducting this research, educators, administrators, and policymakers can make data-driven decisions to enhance the overall learning experience and academic success of students in this esteemed institution.

This study is premised on the theory of constructivism as expounded by Lev Vygotsky's Social learning Theory and Collaborative Learning Theory. Social learning theory helps us to understand how people learn in social contexts (learn from one another) and informs us on how we, as teachers, construct active learning communities (Bandura, 1977). Vygotsky, a Russian teacher and psychologist, first stated that students learn through interactions and communications with others; and examined how the social environments influence the learning process. Vygotsky suggested that learning takes place through the interactions that students have with their peers, teachers, and other experts. Consequently, teachers can create a learning environment that maximizes the learners' ability to interact with each other through discussion, collaboration, and feedback. This learning process is known as collaborative learning.

Collaborative learning is the term used for a variety of approaches in education that involves joint intellectual efforts by students or students and teachers. Collaborative learning refers to methodologies and environments in which learners engage in a common task in which each individual depends on and is accountable to one another. It involves the use of small groups so that all students can maximize their learning and that of their peers. It is a process of shared creation: two or more individuals interacting to create a shared understanding of a concept, discipline or area of practice that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own. Collaborative learning activities can include collaborative writing, group projects, and other activities. The students are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own (Gokhale, 2011).

Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. Collaborative learning activities vary widely, but most center on students' exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher's presentation or explication of it. In a collaborative learning environment, knowledge is shared or transmitted among learners as they work towards common learning goals; that knowledge is created and shared among peers, not owned by one particular learner after obtaining it from the course materials or instructor and that the learning process creates a bond between and among learners as their knowledge construction depends on each other's contribution to the discussion (Brindley, Walti, Lisa & Blaschke, 2019).

In a meta-analysis of over 150 studies representing diverse disciplines and class sizes, Hillyard, Gillespie and Littig (2016) found that students demonstrated significantly greater learning gains, in terms of recall of basic knowledge and critical thinking, when collaborating than when working independently. Students also reported greater motivation and persistence regarding problem solving tasks when working collaboratively. Educators recognize the value of collaborative learning and also note that students do not learn well when they are isolated. Chima (2021) added that frequent use of group work in the classroom enhances students' motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem and success. Indeed, students must overcome isolation in order to collaborate in their learning such as peer review workshops, collaborative research assignments, group presentations, collaborative papers, discussion groups, and so on, for active learning to exist. Brindley *et al.* (2019) concluded that quality learning environments which include opportunities for students to engage in interactive and collaborative activities with their peers have been shown to contribute to better learning outcomes, including development of higher order thinking skills.

Collaboration can be achieved in many ways and social network services (SNS) such as Facebook, Skype, Twitter, MySpace, WhatsApp and 2go are among such ways. These platforms can be used to host events, debates, reviews, aggregate resources, support courses and reading circles as well as providing space for discussing ideas for learning. Social media network creates a more collaborative and communicative learning environment for students by providing opportunities for discussions and interactions with their peers. The researcher's intuition is that when students are allowed to actively engage and collaborate, it will make a whole lot of difference in achieving their academic success (Tarantino & McDonough, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The widespread adoption of social networks has transformed the way students interact, share information, and engage with each other. While these platforms offer numerous opportunities for communication and collaboration, there is a growing concern about their impact on academic performance. Specifically, the students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba find themselves immersed in various social networking platforms, dedicating significant time to these online activities; these challenges include distraction from their academics and problem of time management. Other challenges include: change of study habits as a result of being too glued to social networks, peer pressure and academic pressure as a result of academic competition, information overload, social

isolation from real-life interactions and mental health. Understanding the nuanced relationship between social networks and academic performance among the students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba is crucial. By identifying the specific challenges posed by social networks, this study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations to help students navigate the digital landscape effectively while maintaining a focus on their academic pursuits.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is the perceived influence of social networks usage on the academic performance of students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. The extent to which students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba utilize social networks.
2. How the use of social networks affect students' academic performance in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba

Research Questions

1. To what extent does students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba utilize social networks?
2. How does the use of social network affect students' academic performance in the College?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant relationship between social network usage and the academic performance of students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study used the survey research design. Survey research design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group (Ugwumba, 2017). It was deemed suitable for this study because it examined the perceived influence of social networks usage on the academic performance of students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Nigeria.

The population for the study comprised 450 students of 2022/2023 NCE full-time and part-time students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State. The sample size for this study comprised a total of eighty students (80) who were selected through simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was made up of two sections; Section A was centered on the respondent's personal information. Section B focused on the questionnaire items. The instrument was structured on a four (4) point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The research instrument was validated by two experts, one in Measurement and Evaluation and the other in Computer Education, Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba. The experts made their corrections which led to the modification of the instrument before production of the final copy. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot testing using 20 students from College of Education, Warri, Delta State. Cronbach Alpha was used to analyze the data and it yielded a coefficient value of 0.78 showing internal consistency of the instrument was reliable.

80 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the students in the college. Thereafter, the copies of the questionnaire were collected back from the respondents. The data collected were used for analyses. The data collected and collated were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics. Mean score of 2.50 was obtained by addition of the weighted points and divide by four ($4+3+2+1/4 = 2.50$). The decision rule was that mean scores of 2.50 and above were regarded as Agree while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as disagree. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS. Where the P-value is greater than 0.05 the hypothesis was accepted but where P-value is less than 0.05 the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

In this section, results of data analysis were presented in tabular form and discussion of findings are presented.

Research Question 1: What is the extent to which students of Federal college of education (Technical), Asaba utilize social networks.

Table 1: Mean Response Scores on extent to which students of Federal college of education (Technical), Asaba utilize social networks (N = 80)

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1	I often use social network sites in school	32	21	17	10	3.1	0.84	Agree
2	I always use social media network to interact with friends	35	23	11	11	3.02	0.91	Agree
3	I spend a lot of time chatting with friends on social network	30	27	15	8	2.82	0.88	Agree
4	I prefer using social network than reading in the school	21	24	17	18	2.23	1.02	Disagree
5	I usually feel bad whenever I have no access to social network	40	20	13	7	3.01	0.85	Agree
6	Social network site is more important to me than any other thing in life	12	18	20	30	2.10	1.01	Disagree
GRAND MEAN/SD						2.71	0.92	Agree

Analysis on Table 1 shows mean and standard deviation scores on the extent to which students of Federal college of education (Technical), Asaba utilize social networks. The analysis revealed that the respondents rated 4 out of the 6 items above a mean score of 2.50, which implies that most students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba utilize social networks to a high extent as agreed in most of the items. This is further evident in the grand mean score of 2.71, indicating the same view.

Research Question 2: How does the use of social network affect students' academic performance in the College?

Table 2: Mean Response Scores on how the use of social network affect students' academic performance in the College (N = 80)

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
7	Social media network utilization have negative influence on my CGPA greatly	27	22	17	14	2.7	0.94	Agree
8	I use social network sites as a means of dating	26	23	15	16	2.82	0.81	Agree
9	Use of social network sites influences my speaking and writing skills	32	27	11	10	2.80	0.87	Agree
10	Use of social network sites influences my academic performance negatively	26	24	18	12	2.23	0.91	Agree
11	Use of social network sites influences my study time greatly	35	25	12	8	3.00	0.81	Agree
12	I use social network site to download pornographic videos and pictures instead of study materials	25	22	16	17	2.50	0.71	Agree
GRAND MEAN/SD						2.6	0.84	Agree

Analysis on Table 2 shows mean and standard deviation scores on social network utilization among students of Federal college of education (Technical), Asaba. The analysis revealed that the respondents rated all the items above a mean score of 2.50, which shows how social networks affect the students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba. This implies that social networks affect the students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba in a negative way as seen in the grand mean of 2.6.

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between social network usage and the academic performance of students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test of independent sample on relationship between social network usage and the academic performance of students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Nigeria

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std Error mean	t-value	p
Low Usage	33	67.81	9.53	5.55	3.97	0.00016
High Usage	47	59.52	9.17	17.33		

It was revealed on table 3 above that student with lower social network usage had a significantly higher mean score (67.81) compared to those with higher usage (59.52). The p-value (0.00016) is much less than the standard significance level (0.05). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicated a significant relationship between social network usage and academic performance.

Discussion of Findings

The research question 1 result shows that the utilization of social network is high among the students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba. It is in line with the findings of (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011) who stated that mass appeal of social network on the internet could be a cause for concern, particularly when attending to the gradually increasing amount of time students spend online. Students spend more time on social network through smartphones that are now in abundance among these students. Many students cannot go for two-three hours without checking and updating their profiles on these social networks even at the detriment of other activities such as educational and career pursuit. This is also in line with the finding of Khan (2014) who stated that network users often experience poor performance academically due to the long-time spent on social network sites chatting with friends and loved ones instead of reading.

The second finding as revealed in table 2 shows that excessive use of social network negatively influences the academic performance of students of Federal college of education (Technical), Asaba.

The findings are in line with Hamat et al (2012) who concluded that social networking site users spend more time for socializing rather than learning. This indicates that excessive use of social network sites reduces student's academic performance since; time meant for studies is used on non-academic activities like chatting and making friends. The findings of Gafni & Deri (2017), reveal that over involvement or obsession with social networking by students can have negative impacts on academic performance.

Finally, there is significant relationship between social network usage and academic performance. Higher usage of social networks is associated with lower academic performance among students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba. In relation, Junco (2012) found that excessive use of social networking sites, particularly for non-academic purposes, negatively affects students' academic performance due to distractions and reduced study time.

Conclusion

Social networking sites are thought to have an impact on students' academic performance based on the aforementioned research. In order to provide sufficient information, communication, dissemination, discussion, and mobilization of high-quality information, social networks can be a direct source of reaction. In order to avoid being addicted to social media and losing sight of the main goal, it is crucial that students and users in general utilize them sparingly.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. There should be regulations for students on campus on the use of social network so as to help them focus on their studies.
2. Students should desist from excessive concentration on social networks at the expense of their academic study.
3. Obsession with social networks should be discouraged by both parents and teachers to give room for high academic performance. Parental restrictions should be placed on children phones to check mate the kind of websites they login to.
4. Government at all levels should sensitize the parents, schools as well as general public through media on the negative effects of over concentration on social network at the expense of students' academic work. The Government could as well provide platforms and materials such as

computers, internet, phones and other gadgets for teachers and students to be able to access social medial platforms.

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