

Social Media and Academic Performance of Business Education Students in South-East Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to analyze effects of social media on academic performance of business education students in south-east Nigeria. To achieve this, an instrument was designed and sent out to four universities in south-east Nigeria. Out of the 600 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 520 were completely filled and returned giving a return rate of 89%. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Research findings showed that the students of business education in south-east Nigeria use facebook more than any other social networking site. The students' use it mostly to keep in touch with themselves. To this end, the researcher recommended that facebook sites should be expanded and new pages created to enhance academic activities and avoid setbacks in the students' academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

With the advent of the internet world around us today and how students are engaged in it, there is growing concern on how it affects business education student performance in their studies. The internet is more than just a means of seeking information. People discovered that the internet could be used to connect with others, whether for business or commercial purposes, to make new friends, reawaken old friends and recover long lost relatives. The emergence of social media simplified the whole process of communication because they are easier to use.

Social media comprises of activities that involve socializing and networking online through words, pictures and videos. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web2.0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. It depends on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content. In line with this, Sherwin (2013) stated that social media introduced substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities and individuals. These changes are the focus of the emerging field of techno-self-studies.

Social media's most distinctive aspects are that it has the potential to transform from a way of pushing content outward to a way of inviting conversation, of exchanging information, and of invoking unparalleled individual, industrial, societal, and even global changes. The availability of high speed internet broadband connection with massive use of desktop computer, laptops, e-readers, facebook, youtube, and smartphones enables millions of people to actively engage in social media, text messaging, content sharing, online-learning and much more. Peters in Ezenwafor (2012) observed that since technology is ruling the world in all disciplines and activities, the modern office ranks highest in innovation development and use of the ever changing technologies requiring adequate integration of ICT in business education.

The use of social media like (facebook, Youtube, twitter and whatsapp) by business education students today is resulting to mass failure of business education students in academic achievement (David, 2014). This is because students these days spend more time chatting with their friends rather than engaging in research or reading their books. A growing number of Nigerian scholars agree that addiction to social media sites have become a distractive technology to students' academic work in higher education. Among the scholar is Oluwatoyin (2011) who surveyed 1,860 Facebook users from the Lagos State University and found that 90percent of the students could not get up to cumulative grade point average (CGPA) above 3.50 because they had spent a large part of their time on social media than on their home work and study time (which could contribute to higher grade).

Statement of the Problem

Business education students in south-east of Nigeria are always very busy with their handset and laptops. Social media gives most students access to the Internet and this has resulted or affected the students' academics.

Through the use of Facebook, chatting, checking their email, ping, whatsapp, youtube, and MySpace students spend lots of time away from studying. It is speculated that an average Nigerian youth spends about six to seven hours on the internet daily, some even do all night browsing. When do they have the time to read/study their books or undertake research? Literature reviewed shows that students who use facebook had grade point averages (GPA) between 3.0 and 3.5, while non-users had grade point averages (GPA) between 3.5 and 4.0. Users of social media spend one to five hours a week studying, while non-users study 11 to 15 hours per week, (Kapinski & Kirschner, 2011). This paper investigates the effect of social media on business education students' academic performance in south-east zone of Nigeria.

Significance of the study

The study will be of immense benefits to students, parents and guardians and school teachers. The study will be most beneficial to students who need to learn to manage and balance their time so as to be greater contributors to the development of the society. They should learn to explore the social networking potential benefits as it will boost their creativity and technical skills but not at the expense of their primary responsibility which is reading. It will equally benefit parents and guardians as they need to wake up to their roles of monitoring their children and wards. They should ensure that their children pay more attention to their studies. This study will also serve as a guide to school teachers in order to teach the students the need to develop good reading habits and best ways to maximize the benefits of social networking sites.

Scope of the Study

The focus of this study is to investigate the effects of social media on business education students academic performance in south-east Nigeria. However, the study is limited to business education students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of social media on business education student academic performance in south-east zone of Nigeria. Specifically the study:

- 1) Ascertained the rate of usage of the social media by business education students;
- 2) Assessed the effects of facebook on academic performance of business education students in south-east zone of Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- 1) How often do business education students use social media in their academic work?
- 2) What are the effects of facebook usage on student academic performance?

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

Business education is an aspect of educational programme offered at the higher institutions of learning which prepares students for careers in business. It is education designed with the primary aim of elevating one's skills as well as providing citizens with the required skills to secure gainful employment as to earn a living and to succeed in life through further education.

Business Education according to Okoli (2010) is that aspect of the total educational programme that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform effectively in the business world as a producer and/or consumer of goods and services that business offers. Business Education is a programme which provides the recipients with competencies and skills needed in managing personal business affairs and using the services of the business world, (Ezenwafor, 2012).

According to 2015 Information Handbook of Standard Academic Programme, Vocational Education Department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa, the objectives of introducing Business Education at university level are:

- 1) To produce competent degree graduates who can be self-employed;
- 2) To produce competent degree graduates who can teach Business Education courses in secondary school and higher institutions;
- 3) To produce competent degree graduates who can inculcate business ideas into the economy;
- 4) To produce competent degree graduates who can help in formulating economic policies.

Social Media is all about getting connected to one another. Users of social media are connecting to each other regardless of national boundaries, culture or religion within fields and across industries (Ranjiha, 2010). The Wikipedia (2010) defined social media as web-based and mobile based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among organizations, communities and individuals. Social media is a

confluence of different online platforms and tools that people use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, and to interact with others. It can simply be referred to as the websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Furthermore, Gupta (2014) stated that social media includes social networking sites like facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, internet forums, chat rooms and message boards where people meet and discuss topics of interest, video and photo sharing sites like youtube, flicker and video blogs, wikis, and social book marking.

Social media, which include blogs (political Blog), networks (Facebook, Twitter), video sharing (YouTube) audio sharing (Podcast), mobile sites (2go), image or picture sharing (flicker), etc have the capacity of boosting participation because of its openness, conversation nature, connectedness, and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeal (Abubakar, 2011). The common platforms in the social networks have become hubs where people can express and share ideas and experiences with the world. Business educators can use social media in a variety of ways to improve their teaching and learning processes and avail multiple benefits for collaborative professional development (McCulloch, McIntosh & Barrett,2011; Menon,2013). Some of the key benefits include peer networking, reflection and sharing of classroom practices, knowledge sharing, locating learning resources, post conference, workshop, and training discussion. Social media sites allow teachers adequate time to learn about and share effective practices. It also allows teachers to connect with their peers operating all around the globe in order to share plans and approaches and for support and motivation. Social media helps teachers connect with their students about assignments, upcoming events, useful links, and samples of work outside the classroom. Students can also use it to contact classmates about questions regarding class assignments or examinations as well as collaborate on assignments and group projects. One of the most popular social networking sites currently in use is facebook.

Facebook is social networking website launched in February 2004, and it is privately operated by facebook, Inc (facebook, 2004). Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and others when he was a student at Harvard. When the site was initially launched it was restricted to Harvard students only. Later the privilege was extended to high school students and later to everyone that is 13 years older (Boyd, 2007). As of July 2010, facebook had more than 500 million active users. Facebook was ranked as the most used social network worldwide in 2009. Paxson (2010) and Abubakar (2011) opined that facebook is used to keep users connected with those around them and what is happening in the world at any given time. Facebook has been described as one of the important social media networks and websites . It is one of the new media networks which provides users with the mix of interpersonal and mass communication capabilities that have not existed before, and which place emphasis on interactivity and mobility (Paxson, 2010).

Advantages of Facebook

David (2014) discussed the advantages of facebook from three distinct standpoints, namely: friends, groups and entertainment.

- 1. Friends:** Facebook functions primarily to connect and network with friends and family. Using search and connection tools you find it easy to find current or long lost friends and to share content with friends and view content offered by them as well. Content includes anything from a post on your page (known as your wall) to photos, videos and a personal bio. A user has the option to share little or as much with friends as he/she desires. These interactions offer users the opportunity to stay in touch with people, often some of whom the users would not be otherwise connected with on regular basis (David, 2014).
- 2. Groups:** Users of facebook can create groups and event pages for special gatherings or topics. The primary purpose of these groups usually is to create (or bring) awareness to causes, such as in the aftermath of natural disasters, to provide information on how to donate money to help victims. A group may also be made up of a circle of friends or as a means to promote an upcoming event or gathering. A user can make his/her created pages private or public to allow the information to be seen by only those he/she prefer or anyone that has access.(David, 2014)
- 3. Entertainment:** Facebook offers many types of games that can be played with friends and other users. These interactive games may offer a user the opportunity to pretend to run everything from a farm to his own mafia. This can be an interaction to share with current friends, meet new ones or simply pass the time. Many other applications also exist for entertainment purposes that offer everything from surveys to ones biggest fan (David, 2014).
- 4. Promotion:** Social media including facebook are being used to promote scholarship by youths in institutions of higher learning across the globe. Overholser (2010), while citing a group of students in Annenberg College of Journalism, quotes:

... “We at Annenberg have done it patchily by bringing in people to do series of workshops for students and faculty”.

Social media can be used as an effective tool to help increase collaboration, communication, and cooperation

skills in students. Social media can provide a way for teachers and students to become more interactive.

Disadvantages of Facebook

However, the following are disadvantages of facebook as a social medium, they include:

- I. It involves more and more people;
- II. Long distance relationship weakens;
- III. It contributes to wide range procrastination;
- IV. It creates terrible addiction;
- V. It makes stalking possible;
- VI. Acquaintances are labeled as friends.

Other Forms of Social Media

Blogs: Are a form of online journal. They can have a single author, or several. Most blogs allow readers to post comment in response to articles or posts. Reuben (2014) stated that blogs are being used by some colleges to post news articles to open conversations about them.

Twitter: According to Reuben (2014), twitter is a social networking and micro blogging service, utilizing instant messaging, signs or a web interface enabling its users to send and read messages.

YouTube: YouTube is a popular video sharing website where users can upload, view, and share video clips. YouTube has become an enormously popular form of web 2.0 new media. A recent article in Wired cites an average of 65,000 upload and 100 million videos viewed per day on YouTube (Godwin-Jones, 2007).

MySpace: Is an online community that lets people to meet their friends' friends, share photos, journals and interest. Unlike facebook, myspace allows users to fully customize their profile by completely changing the appearance, background and format of their pages (Reuben, 2014).

Wiki is a group of Web pages that allows users to add content, similar to a discussion forum or blog, but also permits others (sometimes completely unrestrictedly) to edit the content. Arreguin (2004) said that what distinguishes wikis from blogs, discussion form, or other content management systems is that there is no inherent structure hard-coded: wiki pages can be interconnected and organized as required, and are not presented by default in a reverse-chronological, taxonomic-hierarchical, or any other predetermined order. In essence, the wiki offers a vast simplification of the process of creating HTML pages, and thus is a very effective way to build and exchange information through collaborative effort (Arreguin, 2004)..

Theoretical Framework

According to Jean Piaget (1975) constructivist learning and teaching is based on active processes and the construction of knowledge that originates from learning by doing. Social media brings perception habits that help a constructivist to create new environments. The constructivist theory asserts that technology, especially the facebook, incisively shape how individuals think, feel and act and how societies organize themselves and operate. The relevance of the theory to this study cannot be over-emphasized. The constructivist theory has altered our environment to the extent that students have the opportunity to be exposed to other ideas, cultures, and forums on global issues. Students can work on collaborative projects, which may come in the form of a networked writing project, or the building of separate phases of an engineering project that enables them to receive and give instant responses. Students also can now easily share ideas, photos, videos, likes and dislikes and thereby offer to humanity a chance to be engaging one another in study irrespective of distance, culture and social class level.

Theoretical Studies

Benefits of social media to business education students

The use of social media to business education supports sociological constructivism, which claims that social interactions, combined with learner experiences, help to construct new knowledge (Young, 2008). Through social networking, microblogging, and backchannel forums, students are able to provide feedback on course content and lectures, and they can build on their own understandings through their peers' comments and questions.

Social media also enhances cognitive flexibility, a component of a constructivist learning environment (CLE). Since students are able to connect with peers in their classes as well as within and beyond their communities, they will be exposed to various perspectives on issues (Jonassen, 1999). Another essential part of constructivist learning environments (CLE) is 'rich sources of information' that should be 'learner -selected' and 'Just -in-time' (Jonassen, 1999). Instructors are able to send links to new information via Twitter feeds or posts on social network sites, and students are able to share current and useful sources with peers via social bookmarking sites.

Moreover, computer-mediated communication through social media can help to develop communities of learners (COLS), as there is 'an atmosphere of individual responsibility coupled with communal sharing', (Barab and Duffy, 2000). Students are able to construct their knowledge and undergo restriction of ideas while

working with others and achieve similar understandings of issues. Communities of learners (COLS) can be further developed by having students apply online research skills and then share their information through bookmarking sites. This can help to develop new understanding and a common mind and voice.

Specifically social media contributes immensely in furtherance of educational development in the following ways:

- a) Cost –effective: many social media platforms are free of charges to use for schools and districts
- b) Students have the chance to develop intercultural awareness: having the opportunity to connect with peers all over the world will allow students to build tolerance and develop attitudes, knowledge, concepts, and skills as they learn about their own and others' social, national, and ethnic cultures (IBO, 2008).
- c) Allows education to be more open: social media not only promotes open communication between students and teachers, but also between teachers and administrators, teachers and parents, and amongst educators (Couros, 2011).

Effects of social media on students Academic performance:

According to Metropolitan school of business and management (2013), there is no doubt that social networking communities are here to stay because since the last decade, the popularity of the social networking sites have increased rapidly. In many ways, social media has led to positive changes in the way people share information and communicate. This is not to say that there are no negative sides to the use of social media, in fact the negative effects outweigh the positive ones. With most social media platforms having well over 200 million users, there is no doubt that students are actively engaged in these networking sites. It has been proven that students who are actively engaged in social media networking sites perform more poorly than other students who are not.

It is easier to get distracted by the various social media networking sites. Business education students are more likely to be faced with the temptation of surfing the web, chatting with friends and visiting the various social and media websites rather than focus on getting their school work done in time. For a business education student, the negative effects of social media networking sites on academic performance include:

1. **Decrease in productivity:** Social media networking sites decrease productivity as so many students end up spending the better part of their study hours checking those sites. Rather than get their assignments done, they spend the whole time either tweeting or posting messages on facebook. There is bound to be a reduction in students focus of attention when they are studying and at the same time trying to get involved in activities on these social sites. This often time causes a drastic reduction in their academic performance.
2. **Encourages Poor Grammar usage** Not only does the active involvement in the social sites encourage the poor use of grammar but also spellings, as students mostly use slang or shortened forms of words. Using twitter as an example, twitter limits its users to the use of 140 characters. Therefore users will have no other option than to abbreviate their words as much as they can, just to enable their thoughts fit into the 140 character provision. "There is, after all, only so much information that can be obtained in 140 characters. While the option to dig deeper may be present through embedded links in Tweets, for example, there may be little reward in pursuing those connections for students." As a result of the excessive use of abbreviated words and slang by students on social networks, they start to rely on the computer grammar and spell checkers on their devices. This results in the reduction of their command over English language and also their writing skills (David, 2014).
3. **Reduction in research capabilities:** Learning and research capabilities have experienced drastic low reduction as a result of students relying more on the information accessible easily on these social networking sites and web in general.
4. **Addiction:** Constant visitation to social sites can become very addictive and this is not a good thing because it is sure to affect one's academic performance. A greater part of students' time is spent on the social sites and they do not even have time for themselves let alone their studies. Being addicted to social sites will turn students mind from important things like studies to trivial ones and this will tell on their grades as they are most likely to experience a drastic drop in their grades. And it will certainly lead to bad academic performance.
5. **Reduction in real human contact:** Students spend so much time on social sites that they begin to spend little or no time at all socializing in person. As a result of this, students are not able to effectively communicate in person. It should be known that effective communication skills are key to success in the real world and employers are getting more and more dissatisfied with the communication skills of graduates due to this reason.

Also, Olubiyi (2012) lamented that Nigerian students (business education students in particular) are so engrossed

in the social media that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, the Oubiya observed that some students are always busy *pinging*, *2going* or *Facebooking*, while lectures are on. Times that ought to be channeled towards learning, academic research and innovating have been crushed by the passion for meeting new friends online, and most times they are busy discussing trivial issues. Hence most students' academics suffer setback as a result of distraction from the social media. In Obi, Bulus, Adamu and Sala' at (2012), it was observed that the use of these sites also affects students' use of English and grammar. The students are used to short forms of writing words in their chat rooms; they forget and use the same in the classrooms. They use things like **4** in place of *for*, **U** in place of *You*, **D** in place of *The* etc. and this could affect their classroom assessment. Ibrahim (2012) posited that most students prefer being on the site than reading their books. Students are often being observed during school time in the various hiding places either discussing social networks or browsing with their phones

Empirical studies

Oladipo and Mamman (2014) carried out a research on student's perceptions regarding the impact of social media on business education in Nigerian universities. They found out that facebook and email emerged as the favorite site (in terms of popularity) for students (99 percent) among other thirteen sites, instant messaging (85 percent) while others were less favorites. This study is related because they both seek to investigate effects of social media on students academic performance, they also used questionnaire to collect data, adopted a descriptive design and similar method of data analysis.

David (2014), carried out a research on effect of facebook on students academic performance. It shows that 26 percent of respondents agreed that the use facebook affect their academics positively, 32percent are not affected in any way by their use of these social media while 42percent are affected negatively. This implies that students' activities on facebook have effect on their academic performance. This study is related to the present study because the two studies seek to find out effects of facebook usage on students academic performance, both studies are descriptive surveys research design and used survey questionnaire to seek for information from the respondents.

Method

A descriptive survey design was adopted which enabled the researchers to collect and analyze data from a sample of the entire population without any manipulations.

The study was carried out in South-East of Nigeria which comprises of five states namely, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo state, each with a federal and a state university. This area is dominantly Ibo speaking. The people are very hard working and determined to meet up with the developments in other states despite the adverse effects of the civil war. They are highly interested in education and all the states except one belong to the educationally advantaged states in Nigeria. This implies that they are highly interested in education and matters leading to educational developments.

The study population was made up of four universities (two states and two federal) in South-East of Nigeria. The choice of these universities (state and federal) is governed by the fact that all have similar sources of funding by either the state or federal government and are also under same supervision of the Nigerian University Commission (NUC). The participants involved are the final year business education students 2014/2015 session.

A multistage sampling approach was employed; firstly, a deliberate sampling method was used to select all the four universities that offer business education courses from the ten universities in South-East zone of Nigeria. Secondly, from the four selected universities, a convenient sample of one hundred and fifty (150) final year students, (70 males students and 80 females) were selected from each of the four universities giving a total of 600 (280 male and 320 female) students used for the study.

The instrument used for data collection for this survey was the questionnaire. This was because of the nature of information required and the form of analysis to be conducted. Questionnaire tagged "effects of social media on academic performance of business education students (EFAPBES) was designed and administered to students from four different institutions of higher learning situated in south-east Nigeria. The institutions include:

| S/N | University | State |
|-----|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Abia State University Uturu | Abia State |
| 2 | Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka | Anambra State |
| 3 | Ebonyi State university, Abakaliki | Ebonyi |
| 4 | University of Nigeria Nsukka | Enugu state |

The questionnaire was designed in anonymity to enable the students fill them truthfully without fear of intrusion of privacy. Out of the 600 copies of the questionnaires administered, 520 were returned adequately

filled

The research instruments were subjected to face validation by three test experts in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. One expert was one in Measurement and Evaluation while two experts from the Department of Vocational Education.

Data collected were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentage. Below are the analyses.

Research question 1:

How often do business education students use social media in their academic work?

The responses of respondents are shown in tables 1 and 2

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of respondents on rate of using social media

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| Very Often | 265 | 51 |
| Often | 146 | 28 |
| Occasionally | 83 | 16 |
| Not at all | 26 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 520 | 100 |

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of respondents on use of social media for academic work.

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| Very Often | 30 | 6 |
| Often | 45 | 9 |
| Occasionally | 64 | 13 |
| Not at all | 355 | 72 |
| Total | 494 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey (2014)

Table 1 shows the responses of the respondents on the frequency of Facebook usage. Fifty-one (51) percent of the respondents who use Facebook very often use it for information exchange; twenty-eight (28) percent responded that they often use Facebook, a total of sixteen (16) percent occasionally use Facebook while five (5) percent of the respondents do not use facebook.

Table 2 shows that of the 494 respondents that use social media, only six percent use it very often for academic purposes. 9 percent use it occasionally. 72 percent do not use it at all for academic purposes.

Research question 2:

What are the effects of facebook usage on students academics?

Table 3: Respondents frequency and percentage responses on the Effects of facebook on students academics.

| Effects | Frequency | Percentage % |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Positive | 139 | 27 |
| Negative | 381 | 73 |
| Total | 520 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey (2014)

Table 3 shows that twenty-seven (27) percent of respondents agreed that the use facebook for academic work affected them positively. Seventy three (73) percent indicated that using facebook affected them negatively.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study shows that the students of business education in south-east Nigeria use Facebook (almost all the students have Facebook account) more than any other social networking sites followed by 2go and Youtube. This shows that Facebook is the most popular social media used by students in south-east Nigeria. The study also revealed that students mostly use these sites for keeping in touch with themselves. They do this by updating their status regularly, writing on friends' walls and uploading pictures. Some of the students also go online just to while away their time; those times would have been used for more important things in that they allocate more time for social media and less time for studying. The outcome of this study tends to agree with previous findings of David (2014), who observed that students' activities on facebook have negative effects on their academic performance and most of the students spent enough time browsing facebook ,that is, as soon as they are free they logged on to their facebook account .

Conclusion

The study revealed that business education students have effectively keyed into the capabilities and potentials of social media, especially, Facebook. About 95 percent of the sampled population use Facebook platform for social relationships and interactivity.

However, it is a thing of concern that only 28 percent of the respondents use Facebook for academic

purposes. In view of the fact that the platform was created by a student and for the use of fellow colleagues, one would have expected business education students to consolidate and expand the platform for the exchange of academic materials.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, this paper recommends the following:

- 1) Facebook sites should be expanded and new pages created to enhance academic activities and avoid setbacks in the students' academic performance.
- 2) Students of business education should create a balance between facebook chart and academic activities, rather more attention should be directed to research.
- 3) There should be a decrease in the time spent by students when on facebook.
- 4) Parents should monitor their children to see what they do with their time.

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