

Influence of Social Networking Sites on Academic Performance of Undergraduate Social Studies Students

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Abstract: Education has never stopped and will never stop solving problems of the society as long as they keep surfacing and resurfacing. This study examined how social networking sites affected social studies students in Kwara State. This study adopted descriptive survey design. The population for the study was all Social Studies undergraduate students in Kwara State, while the target population was all 300 and 400 level Social Studies students. A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument used for this study was a well-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Social Networking Sites on Academic Performance of Social Studies Undergraduate Students". Test retest was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Reliability co-efficient of 0.64 was derived. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) were used to analyze the demographic data obtained from respondents. T-test and PPMC were used to answer the research questions and the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed among other that social networking sites have been accepted as veritable tools, though with some effects. It was recommended among others that University educators should enhance the latest technology and discover ways to harness students' engagement for activities that work in conjunction with and not against their pedagogical philosophies and learning goals; more interactive environment should be provided for students to enable them have greater chances to manage and control their online social environment; lecturers should guide students and be the moderators and advisor throughout the learning process.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, Academic Performance, Undergraduate Social Studies Students

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INTRODUCTION

Education is meant to solve the problems of the society. Since new problems keep surfacing in the society from time to time, education too must respond accordingly to maintain relevance (Audu, 2001). It is this issue of relevance in education that led to the emergence and development of new disciplines and curriculum in the area of education from time to time. The dynamism in education led to the introduction of Social Studies in the school curriculum as a discipline soon after World War II. The introduction of Social Studies into the curriculum of schools in Nigeria has been a major development in the education of the country. Within the short period of the introduction of Social Studies, it has become a core-subject at the primary and junior secondary levels of our education.

Social Studies as a separate subject in the Nigerian school curriculum was prompted by certain philosophical considerations. The subject was introduced

as an integrated program to make education real to life, so it addresses social issues and problems of life in their interconnectedness as they appear in real life situations. Social Studies as a curriculum area has no universal definition. This is because it changes its focus from time to time and this accounts for the differences in its definition. Collins (2014) asserted that Social Studies is made up of courses in Geography, Economics, History and other subjects. Zarrillo (2013) suggested that Social Studies is the study of people as it helps students acquire knowledge, master the process of learning and become active citizens. It is concluded that Social Studies deal with humans, human institutions, human environment and human relationship.

Although Social Studies is wide in scope, it is not like any of the social science subjects neither is it an amalgamation of the social sciences. It is a subject specifically designed for the study of man and how his

problems are solved (Ogundare, 2011). Social Studies, unlike the social sciences and humanities offer the opportunity to study man as a whole, because the religious, political, economic, social and cultural aspects of man are all connected and none can be realistically separated from the other. Through Social Studies, some of the philosophies of Nigerian education as stated in the National Policy on Education (N.P.E, 2013) can be achieved.

The teaching and learning of Social Studies have been enhanced through the development of technology as a lot of Social Networking Sites are now being used to find specific information or resources. Social Networking Sites are regarded as internet based applications and an online platform that people use to build social relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds, or real life connections. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define Social Networking Sites as a group of internet based applications that is built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 which allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Examples of Social Networking Sites include Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram e.t.c. The availability of the internet and mobile technologies such as cell phones, tablets and so on have made Social Studies easy. Social Networking Sites have so many impacts on people which can be negative or positive, depending on how it is being used. The usage of Social Networking Sites is not only limited to professionals or elders, but it is being widely used in educational sectors. Students make use of Social Sites for many reasons such as study purpose, entertainment purpose and advertisement.

Social Networking Sites have become thoroughly rooted in modern culture and students have woven these Social Sites into their daily routines. As a matter of fact, social media has come to stay and whether the good effects are less than the bad, there is nothing else to do about it (Aun et al, 2020). These sites make students more peer based, they are motivated to learn more from each other than from adults and it makes it easier for them to meet people all over the world, most of whom they will never have met without these technological advances and most students fall victims of abductors because their relation could go wrong and be with bad people (Vishranti, 2016). If there is awareness about the risk of Social Networking Sites in our community, it will not lead to anything bad but there is always lack of public awareness and as mentioned earlier, the graph of internet users is getting higher, while we are still far in the field of education, thus public awareness is very difficult in societies with lack of education. Social Sites have become an integral part of students' social life in Nigeria and they are learning

platforms that can be utilized to enhance student's engagement and performance. However, these Social Sites have influenced students' academic performance as they have become a major distraction to students, causing the overall performance of students to decline (Prafulla, 2016).

Educational activities are geared towards ensuring that students achieve mastery of educational objectives. In school, the extent to which these objectives have been achieved is determined by their level of academic performance. Academic Performance is one of the learning outcomes of students which includes knowledge and ideas acquired through their course of study within and outside the classroom environment (Kathryn, 2010). It is the performance of the students in the subjects they study in school which determines the students' status in the class and gives them opportunity to develop their talents, improve their grades and prepare them for future academic challenges (Padney, 2008).

Academic Performance encompasses students' ability and performance. It is multidimensional, it is intricately related to human growth and cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. It is not related to a single instance but occurs across time and levels through a student's life. Academic Performance in school is evaluated in a number of ways. For regular grading, students demonstrate their knowledge by taking written and oral tests, performing presentations, submission of assignments and participating in class activities and discussions. Teachers evaluate in the form of assignment, test and examination to describe how well a student has done.

Another variable that influences students' academic performance is residence. Students from residence located in urban areas may tend to perform better academically than students whose residence are located in rural areas. Uche (2010) pointed out that residence is an important variable that influences academic performance of students. Residence in urban areas are well equipped with material resources needed to enhance learning. The type of accommodation provided to students also affects his ability to learn and his subsequent academic performance. Pleasant and conducive environment when provided gives rise to pure thought, better concentration and understanding while noisy, overcrowded and busy environment tend to affect the rate of concentration of students and lower their academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Recently, it has been observed that there has been a dwindling trend in the academic performance of Social Studies undergraduates in Kwara State.

Curriculum experts, lecturers and several other stakeholders have also expressed considerable concern about the poor performance of Social Studies students in examination. This group of individuals tend to point accusing fingers on social networking sites as being

responsible for poor academic performance. Below is a table showing the outcome of the performance of Social Studies Students in University of Ilorin, Kwara State, from inception till date.

Table 1: Table Showing Students' Class of Degree in Social Studies from 2016-2017

Year	1st Class Honours	2nd Class Honours (Upper Division)	2nd Class Honours (Lower Division)	3rd Class Honours	Pass
2016	Nil	12	6	Nil	Nil
2017	Nil	5	40	2	Nil

Source: University of Ilorin Order of Proceedings 2016 & 2017.

From the above table, it has been discovered that no student have been able to attain the 1st Class Honours Degree from 2016-2017 as a result of low academic performance which may be caused by the factor of Social Networking Sites. This factor is responsible for luring students into negative habits such as engaging in internet fraud, spending long hours chatting, exposure to pornography, lack of focus on studies, checking social media while studying, that is, attempting to multi-task, taking coffee to prevent sleep in order to focus on social sites rather than educative sites and other mal-adjusted behaviours that distract them from academic pursuit. Millions of students in today's society are engrossed in Social Sites and they create longer term friendships by being in touch online even when friends are no longer physically meeting (Patil, 2016). These unhealthy behaviours of students which in turn causes poor academic performance brings about the question "Why are University Undergraduate Social Studies students in Kwara State not concerned about the current trend of their academic performance?" Could it be that they are insensitive to the possible negative influence of social networking sites on their academic performance? It is in view of this concerns that this study was carried out to determine the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance.

This research is aimed at relieving burden in the gap of knowledge of various researchers who are trying to find out how social sites influences the academic performance of students. Researchers like Swartzfager (2007) posited that more than 80% of college students go on social sites several times a day. In 2006, Science daily news also reported that excessive usage of Social Sites amongst students increases the rate of depression. Young (2006) in his research found out that 82% of

college students reportedly log into Facebook several times in a day, prompting a conclusion that social sites are been widely embraced by majority of students and it tends to take most of their time as they are absolutely engrossed in chatting with their peers. Considering the past empirical studies, none of the researches known to the best knowledge of the researcher was carried out on the Influence of Social Networking Sites on Academic Performance of Undergraduate Social Studies Students in Kwara State. Thus prompting and making this research necessary to bridge the gap in knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance in undergraduate Social Studies.

Specifically, the study sought to;

- a) examine the types of social networking site used by students for learning;
- b) assess the level of use of social networking sites for learning by students;
- c) examine the influence of social networking site on students' academic performance.

Research Questions

1. What are the types of social networking sites used by students for learning?
2. What is the level of use of social networking sites by students for learning?
3. What are the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance?

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁. There is no significant relationship between social networking sites and academic performance of undergraduate Social Studies students in Kwara State, based on gender.

Ho₂. There is no significant relationship between social networking sites and academic performance of undergraduate Social Studies students in Kwara State, based on location.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey design to know the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance in undergraduate Social Studies. Survey research can not only provide data on what exists, but also information on relationship between variables. With this, descriptive survey was considered appropriate for this study. According to Kothari (2013), descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. The population for the study was all Social Studies undergraduate students in Kwara State, while the target population was all 300 and 400 level Social Studies students. A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. At first stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select University of Ilorin out of the four Universities in Kwara State because it is the only University that offers Social Studies Education in Kwara State. At the second stage, simple random technique was used to select 300 Social Studies students in 300 and 400 level.

The instrument used for this study was a well-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Social Networking Sites on Academic Performance of Social Studies Undergraduate Students". The questionnaire consisted of three sections from A-C. Section A elicits information on the personal data of the respondents such as: Residence. Section B contains (11) Items while section C contains (10) items which reveals the influence of social sites. A test was also conducted to determine the academic performance of Social Studies undergraduate students. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by giving it to the project supervisor for correction, clarity, appropriateness and commensuration of question with the topic of the research and other necessary criteria. Corrected version was used to obtain data from respondents. Test retest was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Reliability co-efficient of 0.64 was derived.

Copies of corrected questionnaire were distributed to male and female undergraduate Social Studies students in University of Ilorin by the researcher and afterwards filled questionnaires by respondents were retrieved by the researcher. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) were used to analyze the demographic data obtained from respondents. T-test and PPMC were used to answer the research questions and the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Analyses of Demographic Information

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents on Residence

Residence	Frequency	Percent
Off-campus	192	64.0
On-campus	108	36.0
Total	300	100.0

From table 2, result shows that the respondents staying off campus are 64% (192) while the respondents staying on campus are 36% (108) which makes the total number of respondents to be 300. The result implies that the respondents staying off campus are more than the respondents staying on campus.

Research Question One: *What are the Social Networking Sites that are used by Students for learning?*

Table 3: Mean response on the Social Networking Sites that are used by Students for learning

S/N	Social Networking Sites	Mean	Rank
1	Facebook	2.86	3 rd
2	WhatsApp	3.12	1 st
3	Twitter	2.85	4 th
4	Goodreads	2.50	10 th
5	Instagram	2.98	2 nd
6	YouTube	2.58	8 th
7	Skype	2.52	9 th
8	Imo	2.60	7 th
9	Snapchat	2.68	5 th
10	Palmchat	2.62	6 th

Table 3 shows the response on the Social Networking Sites that are used by Students for learning. It is revealed that WhatsApp is mostly used and is ranked first with the highest mean response of 3.12 and Goodreads is the least used and its ranked last (10th) with the least mean response of 2.50.

Research Question Two: *What is the level of use of social networking sites by students for learning?*

Table 4: Percentage analysis on the level of use of social networking sites by students for learning

Level of Use	Frequency	Percent
Low	96	32.0
Average	138	46.0
High	66	22.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 4 revealed the level at which students make use of social networking sites for learning. Results showed that 32% (96) of the respondents indicated a low level of use, 46% (138) indicated an average level of use and the remaining 22% (66) indicated a high level of use. This implies that majority of the respondents indicated an average level at which students make use of social networking sites for learning.

Hypotheses Testing

Two research hypotheses postulated for this study were tested using the t-test and PPMC statistical tools at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Hypothesis One: *There is no significant influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance*

Table 5: PPMC analysis on the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	Sig (2tailed)	Decision
SNS	300	27.6	3.62	0.694	98	.011	Rejected
Performance	300	24.6	4.26				

P < 0.05

Result from table 5 shows the Pearson correlation analysis value yielded .694 which is significant with P value .011 < 0.05. This shows a significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance ($r_{(98)} = .694$; $P < 0.05$).

Research Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance on the basis of students' residence*

Table 6: Mean, standard deviation and t-test analysis on the difference in the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance on the basis of students' residence

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	Sig (2tailed)	Decision
Off-campus	192	15.8	14.2	2.119	98	.059	Not Rejected
On campus	108	14.9	14.2				

P > 0.05

Result from table 6 shows the t value yielded 2.119 which is not significant with P value .059 > 0.05. This shows a non-significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance on the basis of students' residence ($t_{(98)} = 2.119$; $P > 0.05$).

Discussion

The types of social sites students use for learning were examined in research question one, while the findings of this study indicated that WhatsApp is the most used of all social networking sites, a report of Science daily news showed that majority of people used Facebook (Science daily, 2009). The findings vary because most individuals have embraced the use of WhatsApp overtime. Necessary efforts should be made on training and retraining of students to become vast and highly proficient in the use of Social Sites, resources needed for smooth diffusion and adoption should be made available.

Research question two examined the level of use of the social sites used for learning. The result showed that majority of students make use of social networking site at an average level while some indicated low level of use. Contrary to this, Red and Young (2006) posited that students make use of social networking sites at a high level as most of them log in several times a day. Adequate timing should be provided for students to allow them schedule their time and allow them to at least visit the social sites once a day.

Furthermore, the findings of the research revealed that there is a significant influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance. This finding is in accordance with Prafulla (2016) who concluded in his research that social networking sites have become a major distraction to students, causing the overall performance of students to decline.

Findings also showed that there is no significant difference in the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance on the basis of students' residence. Bowman and Partin (2013) also concluded in a study that there is no significant impact of residency location of students on their academic performance

irrespective of where the students live, either on campus or outside campus.

Conclusion

Social Networking Sites as an aspect of ICT has come to stay in higher institution to improve teaching and learning especially in the university system. This study established that 300 and 400 level Social Studies students of Kwara State were favourably disposed to social sites in an academic setting. The findings in this study showed that students accepted social networking sites to be a main platform of learning in the University and they are ready to use it as well. It is obvious that Social Networking Sites have the ability to be the preferable tool for students' interaction and communication.

However, it was evident that the students need more interactive environment that allows them to have great chances to manage and control their online social environment. It is important for University to be aware of students' current need and interest related to their learning environment for better knowledge acquisition and academic achievement.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been suggested to curb the influence of these social sites on students' academic performance in Kwara State:

1. Social Sites especially WhatsApp should be integrated into teaching and learning process which will bring about greater learning outcome.
2. University educators should enhance the latest technology and discover ways to harness students' engagement for activities that work in conjunction with and not against their pedagogical philosophies and learning goals.
3. Adequate timing should be provided for students to allow them schedule their time and allow them to at least visit the social site once a day.
4. More interactive environment should be provided for students to enable them have greater chances to manage and control their online social environment.
5. Lecturers should guide students and be the moderators and advisor throughout the learning process.

Suggestion for Further Study

1. Further research is required to specifically understand how the use of social networking sites can enhance students' learning outcome.
2. This study can be replicated among lower level students.
3. A larger sample scope could be used.

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