AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN GEOGRAPHY IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BADE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, YOBE STATE

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of social media on the academic performance of geography students in Senior Secondary Schools within Bade Local Government Area, Yobe State, Nigeria. Data were primarily obtained through a structured survey administered to a sample of 100 randomly selected geography students. The study population comprised all geography students in the Senior Secondary Schools in the area. A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection instrument. The findings revealed that students frequently use the internet, dedicating a few hours to browsing educational content. However, the time spent on academic-related activities online remains limited. Based on these findings, the study recommends that students should increase both the time spent and their engagement with educational resources on social media platforms to broaden their research capabilities and enhance academic performance. This research underscores the potential of social media as a tool for academic improvement if utilized more effectively by students.

Key words*: Academic Performance, Geography Students, Social Media, Senior Secondary Schools, Yobe State*

Introduction

Advancements in communication technology have significantly transformed how people interact and access information. Information and Communication Technology (ICT), particularly through internet data transmission and computer-based tools, has broadened the scope of communication. Social networking, which connects individuals or organizations based on shared interests, friendships, or kinship, has grown rapidly. The internet now serves as more than just an information source; it is a platform for people to connect for social, business, or personal reasons. Social Networking Sites (SNS) have further simplified these interactions by offering user-friendly platforms that require minimal technical expertise, enabling widespread participation.

Social media has become a daily necessity, especially for young adults who use it to socialize and stay connected. It is common to see young people deeply engaged with their smartphones, checking emails, texting, or updating their social media profiles on platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. This increased use of social media, enabled by smartphones and other mobile devices, has led to internet addiction among students. Many students now spend more time on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter than on their academic responsibilities, often choosing to chat online over completing homework or studying.

The rise of social media is posing significant challenges to students' academic performance, particularly in subjects like geography. In Nigeria, students are increasingly distracted by social networking, dividing their attention between online activities and their academic work. This division has a detrimental effect on their studies, as social media use often replaces valuable study time. It is not uncommon to see students using their phones to chat during religious services or while walking, highlighting the extent of social media's influence. This study aims to examine the impact of social media on the academic performance of geography students in Senior Secondary Schools within Bade Local Government Area of Yobe State.

The specific objectives of the study are to assess the level of students' addiction to social media, identify the social networking platforms they are most exposed to, and determine how their use of social media has influenced their academic performance. The research will address questions such as whether students are addicted to social networking sites, which platforms they use the most, and how social media affects their academic outcomes. This study is essential in understanding the role of social media in students' lives and how it impacts their educational achievements, particularly in the context of secondary school geography students in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

The rise of technology, particularly the internet and social media, has revolutionized communication, enabling people to connect instantly from anywhere in the world (Khan, 2009). Social media is defined by Bryer and Zavattaro (2011) as technologies that facilitate social interaction and collaboration, while Anjugu (2013) highlights its role in creating and exchanging user-generated content. Today, social media is a key tool for both personal and public communication.

Studies show that students globally, including those in Nigeria, actively use social media. Joinson (2008) identified various motivations for joining social networks, such as social connections and content sharing, while Kimberly et al. (2009) noted that students use social media to access information that can enhance academic performance. In Malaysia, Helou and Abrahim (2014) found that students use social networking for making friends, chatting, and academic interactions. Similarly, studies in Nigeria, like those by Onyeka (2013) and Eke et al. (2014), revealed that students use social media for communication, learning, and socializing.

Social media has become an integral part of students' lives, often aiding academic performance by providing informal learning opportunities and fostering communication between students and instructors (Bull et al., 2008). However, it also has drawbacks. Excessive use of social media can lead to time mismanagement, plagiarism, and reduced focus on academic tasks (Moran, Seaman, & Tinti-Kane, 2012). While it encourages broader discussions, especially among older students, off-topic conversations are common (Rowlands et al., 2011). Despite its potential, many educational institutions have not developed strategies for using social media effectively, posing challenges for integrating it into academic environments. Without clear guidelines, the educational benefits of social media may remain untapped (Kear, 2011).

Methodology

The study made a survey of only those schools offering geography in the Senior Secondary Schools in Bade Local Government Area of Yobe State in June 2024. An estimated population of 1,500 students was used out of which 100 students were randomly selected to serve as the sample for the study. Self-administered questionnaire was the instrument used in collecting the data for the research. Simple table of frequencies and percentages was used in analyzing the collected data.

Table 1: Class of the Respondents

Class	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
SS I	27	27
SS II	33	33
SS III	40	40
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 1 above shows that 27% of the respondents were drawn from SS I, 33% were drawn from SS II while 40% were drawn from SS III.

Table 2: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	48	48
Female	52	52
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 2 above indicates that 48% of the respondents are male while 52% are female. Most of the respondents are therefore female students.

Table 3: Age of the Respondents

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
14-16 years	35	35
17-19 years	55	55
20 years and above	10	10
Total	**100**	**100**

According to table 3, 35% of the respondents fall between the ages of 14-16 years, 55% fall between the ages of 17-19 years, while 10% are 20 years and above.

Table 4: Questionnaire Responses

S/N.	Question	Response/%	Response/%	Response/%	Response/%
1.	Which of the following do you own?	Android 35	B/berry 16	Computer 16	Others 33
2.	Do you access the Internet?	Yes 76	No 24		
3.	Are you always interested in accessing the Internet?	Yes 69	No 31		
4.	Do you know the various social networking sites?	Yes 72	No. 28		

No.	Question						
5.	Which of the social networking sites do you have an account with?	B/berry Chat	0	Facebook	31	WhatsApp 66	2go 3
6.	Which of them do you prefer most?	B/berry Chat	0	Facebook	34	WhatsApp 38	2go 28
7.	Why do you prefer it?	It is faster	50	Cheap/reliable 9		Many pages 29	Others 12
8.	Where do you normally go for browsing?	At home	69	At internet Café 16		At the school 5	Many places 10
9.	How many hours do you spend every day on social networking sites?	8 - 10 hours	0	5 - 7 hrs	16	2 - 4 hrs 34	<2 hrs 50
10.	What do you browse for?	Educational	67	Sports/news	16	Entertainment 17	Others 0
11.	What satisfaction do you get by surfing the net?	Information	3	Affiliation	26	Chatting 21	Educational 50
12.	Do social networking sites affect your academic performance?	Yes	26	No	74		
13.	If yes, how?	Positively	19	Negatively 10		No response 71	

According to table 4, thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents own android phones, 16% own blackberry phone and computers respectively while 33% own others devices not mentioned. Seventy-six percent (76%) answered that they access the internet while 24% answered no. Sixty-nine percent (69%) answered that they are always interested in accessing internet while 31% answered no. Seventy-two percent (72%) answered that they know the various social networking sites while 28% answered no. Thirty-one percent (31%) answered that they have an account with Facebook, 66% have their accounts with WhatsApp while 3% have their accounts with 2go. Thirty-four percent (34%) answered that they prefer Facebook than any other network, 38% answered that they prefer WhatsApp while 28% answered that they prefer 2go sites. This indicates that WhatsApp is the most preferred among the respondents.

About fifty percent (50%) answered that they prefer the network which they have an account with because it is faster than others, 9% answered that they prefer it because it is cheap and reliable, 29% answered that they prefer it because it opens multiple pages at the same time while 8% answered that they prefer it because of other reasons not mentioned here. Sixty-nine percent (69%) answered that they normally browse at home, 16% answered that they normally browse at the internet Café, 5% answered that they normally browse at the school while 10% answered that they browse everywhere once there is network. Sixteen percent (16%) answered that they usually spend 5 to 7 hours online, 34% answered that they spend 2 to 4 hours online while 50% answered that they usually spend less than 2 hours online. Sixty-seven percent (67%) answered that they browse for educational information, 16% answered that they browse for sports and news while 7% answered that they browse for entertainments.

Three percent (3%) answered that they derive satisfaction on information when they surf the internet, 26% answered that they derive affiliation satisfaction, 21% answered that they derive chatting satisfaction while 50% answered that they derive educational satisfaction. Twenty-six percent (26%) answered that visiting social networking sites

affect their academic performance while 74% answered that visiting the sites does not affect their academic performance. Nineteen percent (19%) answered that the social media affects their academic performance positively, 10% answered that it affects them negatively while 71% did not respond to the question. On what advice the respondents will give their colleagues with regards to visiting social networking sites, some of the respondents are of the view that their colleagues should pay attention to their studies, others said that they should search for news and entertainments, by visiting social networking sites while others said that the number of hours spent on the internet should be increased as they browse on educational sites.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that a significant portion of the respondents are senior secondary school students, specifically from SS II and SS III, with a notable gender imbalance favoring female students. The majority fall within the 14 to 19 age bracket, identifying them as teenagers. Importantly, a large number of these students own Android smartphones, which they use to access the internet, while a smaller proportion have Blackberry devices or personal computers. Internet usage is prevalent among the respondents, with a keen interest in social networking sites. Most have active accounts on platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, with WhatsApp being the preferred choice due to its affordability and reliability.

The preference for WhatsApp over other platforms highlights the economic and practical considerations influencing students' social media habits. WhatsApp's minimal data consumption and consistent performance provide a cost-effective means for communication and information exchange, making it particularly appealing for students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, the fact that most students access the internet from home and spend an average of 2 to 4 hours daily on educational content is noteworthy. This suggests that the internet is not just a tool for social interaction but a significant resource for academic support.

The correlation between internet usage and academic performance is evident in the respondents' feedback, as many report positive outcomes from browsing educational materials online. This engagement with digital platforms for educational purposes supports the argument that, when used effectively, social media and internet access can enhance learning. The ability to access a vast array of information instantly allows students to supplement classroom learning, review materials at their own pace, and explore topics that may not be covered comprehensively in traditional settings.

These findings challenge the common narrative that social media and internet usage primarily distract students from their studies. On the contrary, for these respondents, internet access appears to have a constructive role in their education, enabling them to bridge gaps in their learning and engage with educational resources beyond the classroom. However, the amount of time spent online suggests a need for balance, ensuring that students are using their time efficiently without allowing non-academic distractions to interfere with their studies.

Conclusion

The study examined the effect of social media on the academic performance of students in geography in Senior Secondary Schools in Bade Local Government Area of Yobe State. In conclusion, the results underscore the potential of technology and social media as tools for educational enhancement. While the proliferation of smartphones and social media accounts among students has often been viewed with concern, this study demonstrates that these platforms, when used with purpose, can have a beneficial impact on academic performance. It is essential for educators and policymakers to recognize this shift and integrate digital literacy and responsible internet usage into the curriculum to maximize these benefits. Encouraging students to focus on educational content online could further improve their academic outcomes and support more effective learning strategies in the digital age.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, it is recommended that students expand their use of social media, particularly focusing on educational resources available through these platforms. By directing more attention to academic content, students can maximize the benefits of their time online and enhance their learning experiences. Additionally, schools should consider providing better internet facilities to ensure that students have reliable access to educational materials. This will help create a more supportive learning environment where technology is effectively integrated into the educational process.

References

Anjugu, J. N. (2013). Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance (A Study of Students of University of Abuja).Unpublished Research Project Submitted to the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Caritas University, Amorji-Nike, Enugu, Nigeria.

Bryer, T. and Zavattaro, S. (2011). Social Media and Public Administration: Theoretical Dimensions and Introduction to Symposium. Administrative Theory & Practice. Volume 33 Number 3 p327.

Bull, G., Thompson, A., Searson, M., Garofalo, J., Park, J., Young, J., & Lee, J. (2008). Connecting Informal and Formal Learning Experiences in the age of Participatory Media. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, Volume 8 Number 2.*

Eke, H. N., Omekwu, C. O. and Odoh, J. N. (2011). The Use of Social Networking Sites among the Undergraduate Students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal).Paper 1195.*

Gray, K., Chang, S. and Kennedy, G. (2010). Use of Social Web Technologies by International and Domestic Undergraduate Students: Implications for Internationalizing Learning and Teaching in Australian Universities. Technology, Pedagogy and Education, Volume 19 Number 1, pp31-46.

Helou, A. M. and Abrahim, N. Z. (2014).The Influence of Social Networking Sites on Students' Academic Performance in Malaysia. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce Studies, Volume 5 Number 2, pp 247-254.*

Joinson, A. (2008). Factors that motivate Students to join Online Social Networks. http/www/sites/5-7/99.

Khan, U. (2009). Facebook Students Underachieve in Examinations. Daily Telegraph. Retrieved on July 2013 from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/education news/5145243/Facebook students-underachieve-in-exams.html.

Kimberly, B., Charles, A. B., Nicole, A. C., Sittie, N. D., Gemeile, A . L. and Ikka, U. T. (2009). Social Networking Sites affects one's Academic Performance Adversely.Retrievedfromhttp://www.scribd.com/doc/28919575/SOCIALNETWO RKING-SITES-2009.

Kear, K. (2011). Online Social Networking Communities: A Best Practice Guide for Educators. London: Routledge.

Kirkup, G. (2010). Academic blogging: Academic Practice and Academic Identity. *London Review of Education Volume 8 Number 1, pp75-84*.

Kyoshaba, D. (2009). Socialization Process, in Valy O. (Ed) African Cultural Development: Readings in African Humanities. Enugu. Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Matney, M. and Borland, K. (2009). Facebook, blogs, tweets: How Staff and units can use Social Networking to Enhance Students' Learning. Annual Meeting of the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators, Seattle, WA.

Moran, M., Seaman, J., and Tinti-Kane, H. (2012). Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and Facebook: How today's Higher Education Faculty use Social Media. (Babson Survey Research Group). Boston, MA: Pearson Learning Solutions. Mozee, S. (n.d). The Impact of Social Media Use on Academic Performance at One Urban University: A Pilot Study. OJRUR, 1-10.

Maloney, E. (2007). What Web 2.0 can teach us about learning. Chronicle of Higher Education, Volume 53 Number 18.

Onyeka, N. C. (2013). The Effect of Social Networking Sites Usage on the Studies of Nigerian Students. *The International Journal of Engineering and Science,* Volume *2 Number 7 pp39-46*.

Rithika, M.and Selvaraj, S. (2013). Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance. *International Journal of Logistics and Supply Chain Management Perspectives, Volume 2 Number 4 pp636-640.*

Rowlands, I., Nicholas, D., Russell, B. Canty, N., and Watkinson, A. (2011). Social Media use in the Research Workflow. Learned Publishing. *Volume 24 Number 3, pp183-195.*http://dx.doi.org/10.1087/20110306

Santrock, P. (2006). An Introduction to Sociology of Education. London. Routledge and Kegan Paul.