



Perceived Influence Of Social Media On Academic Performance Of Students In Rivers State: Implications For Counselling

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ABSTRACT

The study examined influence of social media on academic performance of students and its implication for counseling in Rivers State. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed three (3) research questions and three hypotheses to guide the conduct of the study. The descriptive survey research design guided the study using three (3) universities in Rivers State namely; Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The population was 1,750 undergraduate students. The simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 350 students. A structured questionnaire titled: Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire (ISMAPSQ) which was rated towards a modified four point Likert scale to gather data from the respondents. The mean statistical tool was used to analyse the data gathered on research questions while inferential statistics of chi-square was used to test the research hypotheses. The findings showed that a large number of students in the universities are addicted to social media. It is on this backdrop that the researcher recommended that; social media should be used for promoting educational purposes or goals, social networking sites should be broadened and new pages created to enhance academic activities and avoid poor performance in students' academics. This would help to create a balance between social media and academic activities of students.

Keywords: Influence, Social, Media, Academic, Performance, Undergraduate, Students, Counselling

INTRODUCTION

Social media according to Andreas Kaplan refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network. It creates the opportunity to network with other members who share similar or common interest, dreams and goals. With WhatsApp messenger, communication through mobile phones has become easier, faster and cheaper. It is less expensive as compared to the normal phone messaging. An individual can chat with friends and family overseas through WhatsApp without having to incur global SMS charges.

According to Asemah & Edegoh (2012), these sites are used by most people to interact with old and new friends, physical or internet friends. The world has been changed rapidly by the evolution of internet technology; this has resulted into the use of technology as the best medium to explore the wide area of knowledge. The evolution of internet technology has led to its use as the best medium for communication. Whereby, two-third of the world's internet population visits social networking or blogging sites, thus serving as a communication and connection tool. The advancement in technology and communication leads to a considerable improvement in social networking such as Facebook used to keep in touch or share information with other individuals. According to Zuckerberg, by giving people the control over whole site, we're making the world more transparent. Making the world get connected is the ultimate goal behind Facebook. Facebook is an online directory that connects people through social networks in universities.

Social Networking Sites are online communities of internet users who want to communicate with other users about areas of mutual interest, whether from a personal, business or academic perspective (William Boyd, Densten, Chin, Diamond & Morgenthaler, 2009). So, many benefits have been obtained through distant communication through the use of social networking sites. Modern technology in communication no doubt has turned the entire world into a “Global village”. But as it is, technology like two sides of a coin, bring with it both negative and positive sides. It helps people to be better informed, enlightened, and to keep abreast with the world developments. Information Communication Technology exposes mankind to a better way of doing things. There are lots of social media sites but the three main sites to be discussed in this study include; Facebook, WhatsApp and the messenger.

Facebook was launched in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes to help students to identify other students who are residing in other residences. One month later, it was expanded by Mark and friends to any Harvard students. Later, Facebook extended to all high schools local area networks, and then eventually expanded to internet users all around the world. In 2008, Facebook reached 100 million active users, half of them are spending more than 20 minutes in Facebook site per day. As like most of other social networking sites, Facebook is a single-page application (SPA) offers a well-organized web page where users’ can store their personal info and make connections with same type of users. This functionality allows users’ to traverse from friends profile to anywhere, so that individual’s social network grows rapidly across the world. This ability or capability is the backbone of Facebook and became the only reason of its rapid growth when compared with other social networking sites. Apart from this the simplicity of Facebook is one significant reason that attracts millions of users around the world. Facebook is completely a communication tool for users’. Facebook is used by the huge number of undergraduate students and graduate students on a regular basis (Oye, 2012). There is huge amount of professional and common interest in the effects of social networking on undergraduate student development and achievement. Students use Facebook in various ways to accomplish a wide range of social responsibilities and just for fun too. In students’ perspective the widespread social media website is Facebook, anywhere between 85 and 99% of students use Facebook (Boyd, 2007).

WhatsApp Messenger has been around for a while but recent updates have improved the functionality of the application since its date of release. The main purpose behind this application is to replace SMS with a cross platform mobile messenger that works on an internet data plan. If you have unlimited text, it is still beneficial as it is a convenient way to skip international fees that carriers may charge. It is currently available for iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Nokia Symbian 60 and S40 and Blackberry. It is popular because there is no cost to message friends and family other than the internet data plan that users already have on their phones.

Academic performance gives us a view of how a student has performed in academics in the course of studying giving the number of years. It involves the assessment of students’ learning progress in task that is required of them (Anene, 2005). In universities the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is used to give a sum total of a students’ academic performance. According to Steinberger (2005) academic performance is seen as the sum total of student’s ability and performance. The CGPA is used as a parameter in grading students giving the highest point of score from 4.00 to 5.00 and the lowest from 1.0 downwards, Students who fall within the lowest categories are often times issued WAF (Withdrawal for Academic Failure). With so many social networking sites displayed on the internet, students are tempted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference for chatting online with friends.

School counsellors provide counselling programs in three domains: academic, career and personal/social. Their services and programs help students’ to resolve emotional, social or behavioral problems and help them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction (Shaterloo & Ghasem, 2011). A students’ addiction to social media can be termed a behavioral problem which falls under the personal/social counselling intervention programs organized by the school counselor. Counsellors can assist students facing social media addiction problem by organizing individual counselling program as he/she meets face to face with these students to assist them in their personal difficulty. The group counselling programs can also take place whereby all students facing a common challenge meet with the counselor to interact and be assisted. Group counselling enables a student discover that his/her problem is not peculiar to him/her alone. It also helps to build their self-confidence. However, you

can identify social media adductors by pointing out those who spent more time in their computers or phones, browsing or networking. They derived joy in chatting than any other thing. The people neglect other important responsibilities, commitments in favour of Facebook. According to Kist (2012), they spend a lot of time thinking about Facebook or planning how to use it. They feel an urge to use Facebook more and more. It is also observed that they use Facebook in order to forget about their personal problems. They always become restless or troubled if they are prohibited from using Facebook. They also use Facebook so much that it has had a negative impact on their relationships. When a student successfully goes through these counselling intervention programs, there tend to be a change in behavioral patterns which would be of great benefit to the students' academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

It is a common sight to see a student chatting in sensitive and highly organized places like church, mosque and lecture venues even on the high way. This phenomenon has become very worrisome. It is therefore of great importance to explore some of the trending issues facing students' academic performance as a result of social media. The educational system in Nigeria is faced with so many challenges which have certainly brought about a rapidly decline in the quality of education. Students' addiction towards social networks, their frequency of exposure to social network and its' influence on their academic performance has been part of discussion in recent times. Instead of students reading their books, they spend their time chatting and making friends via the social media and this might definitely have influence on their academic performance. Oye (2012) posited that most of the younger students use social networking sites mainly for socializing activities, rather than for academic purpose. Whether these opportunities promote studies is a question that needs to be answered. Thus, the problem this study investigates is the influence of social media networks on academic performance of University students in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of students in Rivers State.

The specific purposes are to:

1. To determine the difference between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp.
2. To examine the influence of WhatsApp on students' academic performance.
3. To examine the influence of Facebook on students' academic performance.

Research Questions

1. What is the difference between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp.
2. To what extent do WhatsApp influence student's academic performance?
3. To what extent do Facebook influence student's academic performance?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested by the researcher in this study:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp.

Ho₂: The use of WhatsApp does not significantly influence students' academic performance.

Ho₃: The use of Facebook does not significantly influence students' academic performance.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Social Media

Social media is that means that employs mobile and web based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and community share, co-create, discuss and modifies user-generated content (Kietzmannn, 2012). Social media is a phrase being tossed around a lot. It is a website that does not just give you information but interact with you while giving you information. It is a group of internet based application that allows the creation and exchange of users generated content. It is easy to confuse social media with social news because we often refer to members of the news as the media. Adding to it, that social news site is also social media site. Some media website includes:

- **Social Bookmarking:** interact by tagging website and searching through website book marked by others (Blink list, simple).
- **Social News:** interact by voting for articles and commenting on them (Digg, propello).

- **Social Networking:** interact by adding friends, commenting on photo and profiles, sharing groups for discussions (Facebook, 2go, BB chat)
- **Social Photo and Video Sharing:** interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on the user submission. (Youtube and Fliki).
- **Wikis:** interact by adding articles and editing existing articles. (Wikipedia, wikia).

Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment among themselves in different networks. Andreas and Michael (2010) are of the opinion that social media is a group of internet based application that builds on the ideological foundation and allows the creation and exchange of users – generated content. Social media has become one of the major channel of chatting through platforms such as 2go, BB chat, blogger and wiki a. There has been an increase in the mobile social media which has created new opportunity for browsing.

Mobile Social Media

When social media is used in combination with mobile devices, it is called mobile social media. Social media is a group of mobile marketing application that allows the creation and exchange of users generated content. Due to the fact that mobile social media runs on mobile devices, it differs from traditional social media as it incorporates new factors such as the current location of the user, time delay between sending and receiving. According to Kaplan (2002), social media can be divided into four types:

- Space-timers (location and time sensitive): exchange of message with relevance for specific location and time (Face book, 2go, BB chat)
- Quick-time (time sensitive): transfer of traditional social media application to mobile services to increase immediacy (posting twitter messages, status update [2go], and updating display picture [dp] [bbm]).
- Space-locators (location sensitive): exchange message with relevance for one specific location which are tagged to certain place (yelp, sype).
- Slow-timers (neither location nor time sensitive): transfer traditional social media application to mobile devices (reading a wikipedia entry).

Social Networking Sites

It is used to describe any website that enables users to create public profiles within that website and form relationship with other users of the same website who access their profile. It is used to describe community base website, online discussion forum, chat rooms and other social space online. Commonly, the phrase “social networking sites” is used as an umbrella term for all social media and computer-mediated communication, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Myspace, as well as the inaugural social networking sites of Byword, Bebo and Friendster.

Ellison & Boyd (2007) define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct profiles, display user connections, and search and traverse within that list of connections. A social media is an online service or platforms that focus on facilitating the building of social network among people who share interest, activities and background on real life connections. It is a website that allows users to share information within a selected group. It is a great way to stay connected and a convenient way to share photos from trips (Awake, 2012). It consists of a representation of each user (profiles), social links and a variety of additional services. For detailed analysis of social networking, the following terms will be discussed:

- Impact of Social Networking Site
- Features
- Social Networking and Education

Impacts of Social Networking Sites

Through email and instant messaging, online communities are created where a gift economy and reciprocal altruism are encouraged through co-operation. 2go and other social networking tools are increasingly the objective of scholarly research. Scholars in many fields have begun to investigate the

impact of social networking site, investigating how such site may play into issues of identity, privacy, social, youth culture and education. Several website are beginning to tap into the power of the social networking model for philanthropy. In 2011 HCL technologies conducted research that showed that 50% of British workers are banned from the use of social media during office hours. In this view, when one is chit-chatting, the content of the message reveal a lot about an individual. In chatting, comments, photos, and status should speak less of an individual. Kim in summary says: “if you are mindful of what you are doing, you can maintain a measure of privacy on a social network” (Awake, 2012); and, in reference to this, Proverbs 10:19, states that “In the abundance of words, there does not fail to be transgression, but the one keeping his in check is acting discreetly”.

Social Network and Education

The advent of social network platforms may also be impacting the way in which learners engage with technology in general. For a number of years, Prensky (2001) dichotomy between digital natives and digital immigrants has been considered a relatively accurate representative of the ease with which people of a certain age rate, in particular, those born before and after 1980, use technology.

Social networking and their educational uses are of interest to many researchers. Livingstone & Brake (2010) in their opinion said ‘social networking site, like much else on the internet representing a moving target for researchers and policy makers’. Recent trends indicate that 47% of American adults use social network. A national survey in 2009 found that 37% of online teenagers use social networking site which increased to 55% three years later (Len Hart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010). It has also, shown that it provides opportunity within professional education but however, there are constraints in such areas.

Benefits of Social Networking

Though many arguments can be made about the possible risks of adolescent social networking, it is important to point out the benefits of these websites as well. Many schools have started to use these sites to promote education, keep students up to date with assignments, and offer help to those in need (Boyd, 2007). In general, the Internet and social networking sites can be a positive influence on adolescents. Social networking sites provide an outlet for teens to express themselves in their own unique ways (Boyd, 2007). In addition, they serve both as a meeting place for teens to interact with other like-minded people and as showplaces for a teen’s artistic and musical abilities (Boyd, 2007).

Finally, high school students use these sites as tools to obtain information and resources for graduation preparation and future planning. For example, students applying for college visit profiles of that college’s students to view pictures and read blogs of past students to determine whether the college would be a good fit (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social Media in the Classroom

Having social media in the classroom has been a controversial topic for the last several years. Many parents and educators have been fearful of the repercussions of having social media in the classroom (Kist, 2012). As a result, cell phones have been banned from classroom and schools have blocked many popular social media websites. However, despite adult’s apprehensions, students are using social media. Schools have realized that they need to incorporate these tools into the classroom and rules are changing. The Peel District School Board (PDSB) in Ontario is one of many school boards that have begun to accept the use of social media in the classroom. In 2013, the PDSB introduced a “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) policy and has unblocked many social media sites. Fewkes and McCabe (2012) have researched about the benefits of using Facebook in the classroom. In early 2013, Steve Joordens, a professor at the University of Toronto, encouraged the 1,900 students enrolled in his introductory psychology course to add content to Wikipedia pages featuring content that related to the course. Like other educators, Joordens argued that the assignment would not only strengthen the site’s psychology-related content, but also provide an opportunity for students to engage in critical reflection about the negotiations involved in collaborative knowledge production. However, Wikipedia’s all volunteer editorial staff complained that the students’ contributions resulted in an overwhelming number of additions to the site, and that some of the contributions were inaccurate.

Influence of Facebook on Academic Performance

Facebook is at the leader of the social media race with more active users' worldwide. It became one of the most frequently accessed website at the moment. Facebook founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes, who are alumni of Harvard. Facebook represents a potentially useful tool in educational contexts. It allows for both an asynchronous and synchronous, open dialogue via a familiar and regularly accessed medium, and supports the integration of multimodal content such as student-created photographs and video and URLs to other texts, in a platform that many students are already familiar with. Further, it allows students to ask more minor questions that they might not otherwise feel motivated to visit a professor in person during office hours to ask (Moody, 2010). It also allows students to manage their own privacy settings, and often work with the privacy settings they have already established as registered users.

Facebook is one alternative means for shyer students to be able to voice their thoughts in and outside of the classroom. It allows students to collect their thoughts and articulate them in writing before committing to their expression. Further, the level of informality typical to Facebook can also aid students in self-expression and encourage more frequent student and -instructor and student-and-student communication.

The typical University culture loves Facebook deeply, builds the lifestyle, rather than just a hobby or a fun time passing activity. Academic success is supreme goal to any student, with the social and family responsibility they have. University students are one the major group using Facebook for fun, with the main purposes as connect with their friends, sharing day to day activities, using features such as photo sharing, publishing wall posts, and stating their status updates. Because of the social media platform's widespread adoption by college students, there is a great deal of interest in how Facebook use is related to academic performance (Junco, 2012). Like other social networking sites Facebook is severely destroying the academic life of university students. In 2008, half of the students were completely unfamiliar with Facebook, while in 2009 all our respondents were aware of it and 59% of them were also using it on a regular basis (Nicola Cavalli, Elisabetta Ida Costa, Paolo Ferri & Andrea Mangiatordi, 2011). Facebook use is nearly ubiquitous among U. S. college students with over 90% active participation among undergraduates (Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe, 2011). Even in the developed countries Facebook is widely access by students.

Facebook is completely a communication tool for users'. Facebook is used by the huge number of undergraduate students and graduate students on a regular basis. There is huge amount of professional and common interest in the effects of social networking on undergraduate student development and achievement (Abramson, 2011). Students use Facebook in various ways to accomplish a wide range of social responsibilities and just for fun too. In university students' perspective the widespread social media website is Facebook, anywhere between 85 and 99% of university students use Facebook (Jones & Fox, 2009).

We found many reasons as stated below why students always want to use Facebook.

- Always make connection with friends
- It is good for time passing
- Helps in studies, a sort of collaborative study
- Makes it very easy to distribute information and good content to batch mates
- Easily publish life events, posts any photos and videos
- Reduce the stress
- Interface of Facebook is uncluttered and clean
- Discovery and explore the interests in both academic and personal interest.

The students' performance (academic achievement) plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development (Ali *et.al.*, 2009). The undergraduates who obtain high quality and good education can contribute the country hugely. The use of internet and World Wide Web is an important factor imposing the academic performance. Somehow Facebook affects the academic performance of students. Most Universities around the world used the GPA to measure students' academic performance.

Influence of WhatsApp on Academic Performance

WhatsApp is one of the changes in technology that is commonly used on specific mobile phones and computers. Since the Smart phones became popular, many messaging services were launched but WhatsApp has become very popular among them. The service is free for one year and after that a very small amount is charged yearly. Besides all, this Application is highly addictive and can create a great impact on regular users, and apart from that it can leave a trace that becomes difficult to control and cure. Some of the most prominent technological innovations are smart phones, laptops and using the internet. They have greatly affected many aspects of our lives. Today the Internet continues to grow day by day at an incredible speed. About 32.7% of the world's population has access to the internet (Howe, 2012).

WhatsApp Messenger has been around for a while but recent updates have improved the functionality of the application since its release date. The main purpose behind this application is to replace SMS with a cross platform mobile messenger that works on an internet data plan. If you have unlimited text, it is still beneficial as it is a convenient way to skip international fees that carriers may charge. It is currently available for iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Nokia Symbian 60 and S40 and Blackberry. It is popular because there is no cost to message friends and family other than the internet data plan that users already have on their phones. It is easy to get started. Simply enter the telephone number of the device into the app. It then sorts through the contacts (with your permission) on the phone to figure out who else also has the app already installed. Users can then invite more contacts or go ahead and start sending messages to the ones that the app discovered. The WhatsApp messenger was purposely created by Brian Acton and Jan Koum (2009) to make communication and the distribution of multimedia messaging more easily and faster. Yebaoh & Ewur (2014) also posits that the use of WhatsApp increases the provisions and access to learning materials, anywhere, anytime and in various formats, and also has the potential to enhance students' capabilities. In as much as the application brings us so many benefits, it has also got it flaws that are currently causing more harm than good among the students today. In cognizance of the rate at which our youth at tertiary institutions are hooking up to social media, there is the need to educate them on its advantages and disadvantages in their academic performance accordingly.

Difference in Male and Female Usage of Social Media

When reviewing the literature related to gender and adolescents, results are mixed as to which group spends more time on the Internet as well as on social media networks (Lin & Subrahmanyam, 2007). Studies have shown that boys have been online more than girls in previous decades because of earlier forms of technology such as video or computer games (Lin & Subrahmanyam, 2007). Girls have reported that they use social media for things like chatting and downloading music (Giles & Price, 2008). Because of this, one may hypothesize that girls will be more likely to be attracted to social media networks and other online social groups (Giles & Price, 2008). According to most research done on the topic, the number of teenage girls and boys who communicate on these social media networks are equally divided (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2008).

Research has shown that though girls and boys are both likely to have a SNS account, the reasons for the accounts may vary based on gender (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2008). For girls, social networking sites are primarily placed to reinforce pre-existing friendships; for boys, the networks also provide opportunities for flirting and making new friends (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2008). Girls are also more likely than boys to post sexually explicit pictures of themselves, and to talk about sexual activity in public forums (Rafferty, 2009). However, boys are more likely to create an account simply because they are trying to meet a significant other, or because they are already in a relationship with someone who has requested them to join (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2008). Girls are also more likely than boys to share personal information about their daily lives (Merten & Williams, 2009). Results of a recent study involving Facebook, MySpace, and Xanga showed that though most teenagers aged 13-17 used these sites for fun and positive reasons, 55% of girls shared personal stories about depression, anxiety, and relationship problems (Merten & Williams, 2009). Only 15% of boys shared any personal information besides their hobbies, interests, and friendships (Merten & Williams, 2009). This study also showed that adolescents use SNS when dealing with a death of a peer, and use forums and member profiles to help their grieving process (Merten & Williams, 2009). In a recent study, it was shown that boys seem to benefit more from social media use and communication technology than

girls do (Peter & Valkenburg, 2009). This was hypothesized because boys tend to have more difficulty expressing their thoughts and emotions face-to-face with others than girls do (Peter & Valkenburg, 2009). The early stages of social networking, as mentioned earlier, included web technology such as AIM, which helped many “chat” with others on the computer rather than in person (Peter & Valkenburg, 2009). The number of teenagers, both male and female, participating on social networking sites is staggering, and this may explain why certain problems arise from these sites that have become a major problem in today’s society.

Other research suggests that there are clear risks involved when students become too consumed with the Internet and social networking websites. It was discovered that social networking sites are the most common used social media networks among students and also Wikipedia has the main resort point for students for research purposes. Students engage themselves with one activity or the other on the various social media on day to day activities. However, Undergraduates spend more time on Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media through smartphones that are now in abundance among these youths. 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. Smart phones, android phones as well as tablets were seen to be the major ways through which students gain easy access to the internet to be on the various social media network platforms.

Facebook and Academic Performance of Students

Nowadays, most of people use Facebook to make social network among people all over the world. According to Boyd (2007), students spend most of their precious time on such social media called Facebook. This social network website has created passion among college students in modern years. College students have become very interesting in online social networking. According to Kist (2008), online social network sites such as Facebook work as an important entertainment for undergraduates which affect their study negatively. Therefore, time spent on Facebook may affect academic performance of the undergraduate students. Foreexample, time spent on Facebook may directly affect and/or reasonable the students’ academic performance.

However, academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they complete different assignments given to them by their teachers. The popularity of the social networking sites has enlarged and helped the students’ performance. These social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook have become a furious craze for every student (Oye, 2013). Studies also reveal that students are paying more attention towards these social networking activities rather than utilizing this time for their studies and this surely affects academic performance.

Implications to Counselling

Counselling can play a major role in curtailing the negative influence of social media networks on students’ academic performance. Makinde (2007) (as cited in Shaterloo & Ghasem, 2011) defined guidance and counselling as an interaction process co-joining the counselee, who is vulnerable and who needs assistance and the counselor who is trained and educated to give this assistance, the goal is to help the counselee learn to deal more effectively with himself and the reality of his environment. The reality of every University students’ environment is to study hard to achieve good grades but when social media networks begin to pose distractions for them they tend to live in a lie instead of their reality. School counsellors provide counselling programs in three domains: academic, career and personal/social. Their services and programs helps students’ resolve emotional, social or behavioral problems and help them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction (Shaterloo & Ghasem, 2011). A students’ addiction to social media can be termed a behavioral problem which falls under the personal/social counselling intervention programs organized by the school counselor. Counsellors can assist students facing social media addiction problem by organizing individual counselling program as he/she meets face to face with these students to assist them in their personal difficulty. The group counselling programs can also take place whereby all students facing a common challenge meet with the counsellor to interact and be assisted. Group counselling enables a student discover that his/her problem is not peculiar to him/her alone, it also helps to build their self-confidence. When a student successfully go through these counselling intervention programs there tend to be a change in behavioral patterns which would be of great benefit to the student in his/her academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study: The study adopted the descriptive survey design which is suitable in collecting data from a large sample drawn from a large population. It is a research design that examines a situation by gathering current information about the particular situation so as to arrive at a final decision and these information can be obtained from respondents using a questionnaire.

Population of the Study: the Population of the study consists of all the final year students in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education in Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education with a total population size of one thousand, seven hundred and fifty (1,750) students.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The researcher used simple random sampling technique. In this technique, all the population of the stud were arranged in tens (10) and the researcher randomly selected from the group. However, the sample size of the study is three hundred and fifty students from the three researched higher institutions in Rivers State. The three hundred and fifty (350) is the twenty percent of the total population of the study.

Research Instrument: The instrument used for collecting data was a structured questionnaire. This instrument was divided into sections. Section A is the demographic information about the respondents while Section B seeks the respondents’ idea on the subject matter. The questionnaire is titled: Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire (ISMAPSQ). The questionnaire were rated using a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA = 4 points), Agree (A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points), Strongly Disagree (SD = 1 point).

Data Analysis Technique: Data collected from the study were analyzed, using the mean score to answer the three research questions, a mean score of 2.50 and above indicated agreement while any item with a mean score below 2.50 showed a disagreement with the item. The three hypotheses formulated were tested using the chi-square test analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean Response on the Difference between Male and Female Students’ Usage of Facebook and WhatsApp

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	N	$\Sigma \bar{X}$	Mean (\bar{X})	Remark
1.	Female students use these social networks to foster social connections more than the males.	150 (600)	109 (327)	80 (160)	11 (11)	350	1098	3.1	Agreed
2.	Male students are very effective in using these social networking sites for non-academic purposes.	112 (448)	120 (360)	100 (200)	18 (18)	350	1026	2.9	Agreed
3.	Counselling enables Male and female students’ use social networking sites beneficially.	190 (760)	120 (360)	30 (60)	10 (10)	350	1190	3.4	Agreed
4.	Gender determines the difference in the usage of social networking sites.	190 (760)	100 (300)	50 (100)	15 (15)	350	1175	3.3	Agreed
Grand mean								3.1	Agreed

The data in Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed with the listed items revealing that a difference exists between male and female students’ usage of Facebook and WhatsApp.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does WhatsApp influence student's academic performance?*

Table 2: Mean Response on the Extent to which WhatsApp Influence Academic Performance of Students in Rivers State

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	N	$\Sigma \bar{X}$	Mean (\bar{X})	Remark
5.	Chatting with friends to share ideas, information and opinions have improved the students' ability in the class.	100 (400)	200 (600)	30 (60)	20 (20)	350	1080	3.0	Agreed
6.	WhatsApp helps me in my studies as knowledge is being disseminated between me and my course mates.	198 (792)	102 (306)	39 (78)	11 (11)	350	1187	3.3	Agreed
7.	I acquire lots of information on WhatsApp pertaining my academics.	180 (720)	110 (330)	45 (90)	15 (15)	350	1155	3.3	Agreed
8.	It distracts my studies.	115 (460)	190 (570)	30 (60)	15 (15)	350	1105	3.1	Agreed
Grand mean								3.2	Agreed

Data analysis in Table 2 reveals that the respondents agreed with the above listed items, showing the extent WhatsApp would likely influence academic performance of students in Rivers State. Respondents agreed that it academic forums on WhatsApp helped to improve their grades with a mean of 3.0 while others agreed that it could also distract their studies which carried a mean of 3.1.

Research question 3: *What is the difference between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp?*

Research Question 3: *To what extent does Facebook influence student's academic performance?*

Table 3: Mean Response on the Extent to which Facebook Influence Academic Performance of Students in Rivers State

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	N	$\Sigma \bar{X}$	Mean (\bar{X})	Remark
9.	Chatting with other students through the use of Facebook has helped to improve the students' academic ability.	195 (780)	115 (345)	30 (60)	10 (10)	350	1195	3.4	Agreed
10.	Use of Facebook has helped me in sharing information, ideas and opinion with my friends.	198 (792)	102 (306)	20 (40)	12 (12)	350	1204	3.4	Agreed
11.	People, friends and students are involved now in social interaction as a result of use of Facebook application.	180 (720)	135 (405)	20 (40)	15 (15)	350	1180	3.3	Agreed
12.	It distracts my studies.	165 (660)	140 (420)	35 (70)	10 (10)	350	1160	3.3	Agreed
Grand mean								3.2	Agreed

Table 3 indicates that the respondents agreed with all the listed items as the extent Facebook would influence academic performance of students in Rivers State, with a Grand mean of 3.2 showing the high acceptance of the listed items on table 1.

Hypothesis 1

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp.

Table 4: Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of Male and Female Students' Usage of Facebook and WhatsApp (N = 350)

Variables	No.	Df	S/Level	Crit χ^2 value	Calc χ^2 value	Decision
Male and female students Usage of Facebook and WhatsApp.	350	6	0.05	7.81	10.89	Rejected

The analysis shows that the calculated (χ^2) value of 10.89 is greater than the critical value of 7.81, hence the null hypothesis which states there is no significant difference between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp is hereby rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp.

Hypothesis 2

Ho₂: The use of WhatsApp does not significantly influence students' academic performance.

Table 5: Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of the Influence of the use of WhatsApp on Students' Academic Performance (N = 350)

Variables	No.	Df	S/Level	Crit χ^2 value	Calc χ^2 value	Decision
Use of WhatsApp and students' academic performance.	350	6	0.05	7.81	19.22	Rejected

The analysis shows that the calculated (χ^2) value of 19.22 is greater than the critical value of 7.81, hence the null hypothesis which states that the use of WhatsApp do not significantly influence students' academic performance is hereby rejected. This implies that the use of WhatsApp will significantly influence students' academic performance.

Hypothesis 3

Ho₃: The use of Facebook does not significantly influence students' academic performance.

Table 6: Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of the Influence of the Use of Facebook on Students' Academic Performance (N = 350)

Variables	No.	Df	S/Level	Crit χ^2 value	Calc χ^2 value	Decision
Use of Facebook and students' academic performance	350	6	0.05	7.81	8.33	Rejected

The analysis shows that the calculated (χ^2) value of 8.33 is greater than the critical value of 7.81, hence the null hypothesis which states that the use of Facebook do not significantly influence students' academic performance is hereby rejected this implies that the use of Facebook will significantly influence students' academic performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of study indicates that a difference exists between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp. Female students tend to use these social networks to foster social connections more while the males would likely use social networks for non-academic purposes, counselling also enables students to use these sites beneficially as it unveils their reality to them. This

is in line with the findings of (Lin & Subrahmanyam, 2007) which noted Studies have shown that boys have been online more than girls in previous decades because of earlier forms of technology such as video or computer games.

The study also reveals the extent to which WhatsApp influence academic performance of students in Rivers State. It enables their effective participation in academic forums, students also acquire knowledge which helps to boost their grades some other students see it as a distraction. Yebaoh & Ewur (2014) also posits that the use of WhatsApp increases the provisions and access to learning materials, anywhere, anytime and in various formats, and also has the potential to enhance students' capabilities. The findings of the study showed the extent to which Facebook influence academic performance of students in Rivers State. The result shows that it enables students to participate in academic forums disseminate and acquire knowledge pertaining their studies while it could also be distracting to some students. Students use Facebook in various ways to accomplish a wide range of social responsibilities and just for fun too.

Further analysis on the testing of the hypotheses showed that the use of Facebook can influence academic performance of students in Rivers State, and the use of WhatsApp can influence students' academic performance also that there is a significant difference between male and female students' usage of Facebook and WhatsApp.

CONCLUSION

The result from the findings of this study showed that, though Social media have negative effects on student such as; distracting them from their academic work, they also have benefits and can be used appropriately. For instance, students can form online communities in order to plan for a project, have group discussions about class material, or use the Social networking sites(SNS) as a way to keep in contact when a student who has been absent needs to be updated on current academic information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Social Networking Sites should be expanded and new pages created to enhance academic activities and avoid setbacks in the students' academic performance
2. Through counselling intervention programs Students should be able to understand themselves better and how to manage their study time and prevent distractions from social media.
3. School counsellors should be able to educate students on the negative and positive influence of Social media on their academic performance.

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