Social Media Opportunities as Factors for Enhancing Learning Experiences of Undergraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Effects of Social Media Addiction on the Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students in Ebonyi State University (EBSU), Abakaliki. It also sought how social media use affects undergraduate students' attention in lecture hall. The study was anchored on Uses and Gratification theory as propounded by Elihu Katz in 1959. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of 25,090 Students of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki who were admitted from 2016 to 2020. Out of this, a sample of 400 respondents was studied. Data for the study were gathered through the use of questionnaire instrument and were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency tables while chi-square statistical method was used for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed, among others, that the Social Media Use significantly affects undergraduate students' attention in lecture halls in Ebonyi State University (67.4%); that the Social Media Use significantly affects undergraduate students reading habits in Ebonyi State University (64.5%). Based on the findings, it was recommended that students should avoid using their phones while in the lecture halls so that they will not have divided attention; that students should focus more attention on how to use social media for academic purposes such as sourcing academic materials on Google using different search engines, writing their assignments and other academic-related activities than engaging in social media frivolities that have no direct bearing on their studies and future goals.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Addiction, Hand-held Devices, Social Media, Undergraduate Students

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the recent time, the ubiquitous nature of hand-held devices such as android phones, smart phones, blackberry, iPad, iPhones and cheaper cost of accessing the Internet, have made it possible for social media to be increasingly accessed across the globe (Bawa and Suleiman, 2017). The *Social Media*, as the name implies, refers to technology-based platforms (applications and web-based technologies) that give users opportunity to exchange ideas and share feelings in forms of audios, visuals and audio-visuals (Bawa and Suleiman, 2017). Social media can also be defined as interactive web-based media platforms that offer citizens opportunity to connect, share opinions, experiences, views, contacts, knowledge, expertise, as well as other jobs and career tips (Mayfield, 2018). According to Boyd (2010), Social Media started as a hobby for some computer literate people, but today, it has become a social norm and way of life for people from all over the world.

Globally, the commonly used social media platforms among people include Facebook, Tweeter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Instagram Google+, YouTube, Flicker, Skype, Imo, Nurse contact, MySpace, Vimeo, Inenti, Dreams Village, Blogs among others (Ogbaeja and Nwafor, 2017). The emergence of social media sites has significantly affected face-to-face social interaction among teachers as well as students (Owusu-Acheaw and Larson, 2015). Social media, as a web-based technology, permits the use of social sites and platforms for communication, collaboration, sharing pictures, videos, news and personal experiences with the users (Lusk, 2010). This gives users opportunity to send, receive, post and share information. According to Wada (2016), the emergence of social media remains the most phenomenal among various platforms of communication made available by the advancement in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The possibilities created by social media in human communication and interaction are endless and beyond bounds. Thus, just a click on the button today, one can stay in the comfort his bedroom and access information, entertainment, events and enjoy full interaction with the world seamlessly.

Students, especially undergraduates of higher institutions, have joined the use of social media sites to connect with colleagues, share information and showcase their social lives (Boyd, 2010). The benefits of Social

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media, especially among students, are enormous as it enhances their social interaction, motivates them to source for information at ease, allows them to engage in individualized learning and gives room for them to learn in a collaborative environment (Wheeler, Yeomans and Wheeler D, 2008). By implication, it is clear that, social media when used appropriately, has the potentialities to facilitate learning through active-learner participation that could lead to achieving good academic performance (Rifkin, Longnecker, Leach, Davis and Ortia, 2009).

Academic Performance of students is an invaluable concept, especially in the higher institutions of learning since it is a yardstick through which students' progress, teachers' effectiveness and over all educational standards is determined (Bawa& Suluiman, 2017). In their view, academic performance of students is a key feature in education. It is measured in different ways which include marks, grades and percentage obtained which are given as the results in an examination, tests or continues assessment in oral or written form (Bawa & Suluiman, 2017). Academic performance of student in the high institutions like university is measured using grade point average (GPA), high school graduation rate, annual standardized tests and college entrance exams. Furthermore, Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq and Behanu (2011), maintained that students' academic performance serves as bedrock for knowledge acquisition and the development of skills. This implies that achieving good academic performance is a major goal of education.

Social media has a lot of roles to play in students' academic performance. However, studies have shown that students in higher institutions who regularly stick to using social media platforms during school and reading hours tend to perform poorly in academic examinations, tests Quizes (Choney, 2010). This, on the other hand, simply means that abuse of social media platforms might have a negative effect on students' academic performance. In Nigeria, students in higher institutions who are addicted to using social media platforms during school hours seem to perform poorly in academic examinations (Choney, 2010). Undergraduate students, especially in the tertiary institutions, consider the use of handheld devices as fashionable, thus fail to take into cognizance where and when these devices are to be used and for what purpose(s) (Omachonu and Akanya, 2019). Many cases were recorded where students were caught chatting and listening to music while lectures were going on. Some cases of examination malpractice among undergraduate students also involved the use of handheld devices to access social media (Ndaku, 2013). This, conversely, indicates how addicted the undergraduate students have become to the social media.

In Ebonyi State University, it appears that the case has not been different as students massively get involved in the use of social media. However, despite the fact that the use has meaningfully contributed to social interaction, access to information and active participatory learning, its addiction seems to have led to poor academic performance. It is based on this fact that this study becomes imperative, hence the need to investigate the effects of social media addiction on the academic performance of undergraduate students in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

It is an irrefutable fact that social media commands a significant number of users worldwide. It has also transformed the way information is received and shared. Besides, it has greatly bridged the geographical gap that hitherto existed between and among the peoples of the world. The social media innovations such as virtual presence, real time and offline engagements, among others, have successfully extended to Nigerian cyber economy, especially with the proliferation of smart phones. As a result, the number of social media users has increased significantly. Drawn from a research entitled, *Digital 2022: Nigeria* by Simon Kemp, published online in February, 2022, it is reported that "There were 109.2 million internet users in Nigeria in February 2022." He adds, "Nigeria's internet penetration rate stood at 51.0 percent of the total population at the start of 2022." See (https://www.dataportalreports/digital-22-nigeria//).

Despite the above facts, social media appears to be a two-side of a coin which brings with it both negative and positive sides. Specifically, the social media addiction has its fair share of negative consequences. It appears that there is a deviation, distraction and divided attention among students between the social media and their academic work. To that effect, Mingle and Adams (2015) have examined the relationship between numerous measures of frequency of social media usage and time spent preparing for class and other school activities. Interestingly, a hierarchical linear regression analysis from the study revealed that time spent on social media was much more than academic engagements. Omachonu and Akanya (2019) lamented that despite some measures that are often taken in many institutions of learning such as seizure of phones for ringing while in the lecture halls/classes and ejection of students from exam halls (for being in possession of phones among others), it appears that students' addiction to social media has not reduced. Moreover, going by the fact that many researchers seem to focus more on the benefits of social media to students' academic excellence, many have not beamed adequate research light on the effects of its addiction to the academic performance of students. This research gap, once again, informs the basis of investigating the effects of social media addiction on the academic performance of undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study
The overall objective of the study is to investigate the effects of social media addiction on the academic performance of undergraduate students in Ebonyi State University. The study also sought to determine how social media use affects undergraduate students' attention in lecture halls in Ebonyi State University, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study
The study will be very beneficial to different people in the society. First, the study will enable government to understand the extent to which social media has affected students' academic performance, hence the need to come up with necessary policy frameworks that could help to regulate its excessive usage among students. The study will be very useful to teachers, lecturers and school administrators as it would enable them to devise necessary strategies that could make students to focus more on their studies and pay lesser attention to social media usage.

The study will serve as an eye-opener for parents to understand the extent to which their children in higher institutions of learning have neglected their academic pursuit for social media engagements. This will also enable them to seek for necessary ways to caution them. Finally, the study will be very beneficial to students and researchers as this will add to the already existing literatures on the effects of social media on students' academic performance in the higher institution of learning. It would also serve as a reference resource material to researchers and students alike.

Research Hypotheses
Ho$_1$: Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' attention in lecture halls in Ebonyi State University.

II. Literature

Musa, Isma'il & Nasir (2020), designed to find out the positive and negative effects of social media on the academic performances of undergraduate students of Bayero University, Kano (BUK). As quantitative approach was adapted to collecting the relevant data for the study, a number of 371 survey questionnaires were administered among the undergraduates in the Faculty of Education. Subsequently, SPSS software was applied to analyze the relevant data of the study. It was concluded that, in despite of public views concerning the misuse of social media among students in the society, most of the students were interested in the use social media positively for their educations. The positive impacts of social media among the undergraduates appeared to be higher as compared to negative impacts. However, results of ANOVA showed that there were no statistically significant differences between positive and negative impact of social media and students' academic achievements. Educators and students can use social media as informational and communicational tools to ease and improve learning process.

Adegboyega (2020), investigated the influence of social media on the social behaviour of students as viewed by primary school teachers in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. The survey is descriptive with two hundred primary school teachers selected as participants. A research question was raised and answered, and there were three hypotheses formulated and tested using t-test and ANOVA at a p-value of 0.05. The findings revealed that students' usage of social media had a negative influence on their social behaviour. In addition, there were no statistical differences in the view of participants on the influence of social media on the social behaviour of teachers based on gender, age, and educational level. Therefore, primary school teachers need to sensitize students on the appropriate use of social media to improve their social behaviour, among others, was recommended.

III. Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Uses and Gratification theory as propounded by Elihu Katz in 1959. This theory looks at the social and psychological need motives and expectation of audience in using social media and how these needs and goals are achieved. The assumption of theory is that the outcomes of media usage depend on why and how people decide to use the social media and the gratification they derive from using it. The theory looks at two important components – the type of media that people choose to engaged in and the gratification they derive from such a media (Ruggiero, 2000). The Uses and Gratification theory further contend that the audience actively seek out specific media and contents which certain results they tend to achieve or gratifications that would satisfy their personal needs. In this case, the audience is very selective about the sources of the media they choose, the content and exposure they gain from using such media (Blumler, 1974).

This theory is considered relevant to the study because it explains the reason why majority of undergraduate students use social media even at the detriment of their academic performance. Based on the theory, majority of undergraduate students, especially in Ebonyi State university, choose to use social media platforms because of the gratifications they derive from such media. And as such, whether they are wasting time or using it as a social tool, each medium is unique in its purpose(s) for them.

IV. Methodology

This study adopts descriptive survey design. The area of this study is Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, Nigeria. The study covers undergraduates of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki. It is located at Abakaliki, the Ebonyi State capital with four (4) campuses strategically located at Ezzamgbo(Main Campus), Ishieke Campus, Cas Campus and Presco Campus and Ugwuachara Campus, respectively. The population of this study comprised of 25,090 comprising the total number of students in Ebonyi State University Abakaliki as at 2019/2020 academic session. The researcher equally employed simple random sampling technique to ensure that each student selected in the sample size is given equal chance of being included in the study. The instruments that were used by the researcher for data collection is structured questionnaire. The primary data for this study were gathered through the use of the structured questionnaires. The researcher analyzed data with the use frequency distribution tables and simple percentages.

V. Results

The aim of this chapter is to present, analyze and discuss data gathered from questionnaire administration and also to test the stated hypotheses guiding the study.
How social media use affects undergraduate students' attention in lecture halls in Ebonyi State University. Information about the effects of social media on students' attention during lectures in Ebonyi State University.

Table 1: Respondents View on how Social Media Use Affects Undergraduate Students' Attention in Lecture Halls in Ebonyi State University.

S/N	Responses	Certify	Did not Certify
1	Social media use significantly affects undergraduate students' attention during lectures in Ebonyi State university:	260 (67.4%)	126 (32.6%)
2	Many undergraduate students of EBSU do not concentrate any more on what the lecturer is teaching them in the lecture halls because they engage themselves with chatting on social media:	215 (55.7%)	171 (44.3%)
3	Many undergraduate students of EBSU cannt ask nor answer questions on a topic they are being taught in the lecture because they engage themselves with updating their profiles on social media:	199 (51.6%)	187 (48.4%)
4	Many undergraduate students of EBSU hardly copy notes while in lecture halls because they engage in reading and commenting on social media posts while receiving lectures:	218 (56.5%)	168 (43.5%)
5	Many undergraduate students of EBSU often get angry whenever a lecturer comes to teach in the class while they are chatting on social media:	200 (51.8%)	186 (48.2%)

Source: Field work survey 2021

From table 1, data in item 1 which want to know if Social media use significantly affects undergraduate students' attention during lectures in Ebonyi State University show that 260 respondents, representing 67.4% agreed while 126 respondents, representing 32.6% did not agree. This indicates that Social media use significantly affects undergraduate students' attention during lectures in Ebonyi State University.

Data in item 2 on whether many undergraduate students of EBSU do not concentrate any more on what a lecturer is teaching them in the lecture halls because they engage themselves with chatting on social media show that 215 respondents, representing 55.7%, agreed while 171respondents, representing 44.3% did not agree. This indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that many undergraduate students of EBSU do not concentrate any more on what a lecturer is teaching them in the lecture halls because they engage themselves with chatting on social media.

Data in item 3 on whether many undergraduate students of EBSU cannot ask nor answer questions on a topic they are being taught in the lecture because they engage themselves with updating their profiles on social media show that 199 respondents, representing 51.6% agreed while 187 respondents, representing 48.4% did not agree. This indicates that many undergraduate students of EBSU cannot ask nor answer questions on a topic they are being taught in the lecture because they engage themselves with updating their profiles on social media.

Data in item 4 on whether many undergraduate students of EBSU hardly copy notes while in lecture halls because they engage in reading and commenting on social media posts while receiving lectures show that 218 respondents, representing 56.5%, did not agree. This indicates that many undergraduate students of EBSU hardly copy notes while in lecture hall because they engage in reading and commenting on social media posts while receiving lectures.

Data in item 5 on whether many undergraduate students of EBSU often get angry whenever a lecturer comes to teach in the class while they are chatting on social media show that 200 respondents, representing 51.8%, agreed while 186 respondents, representing 48.2%, did not agree. This indicates that many undergraduate students of EBSU often get angry whenever a lecturer comes to teach in the class while they are chatting on social media.

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho$_1$: Social media use does not significantly affect undergraduate students' attention in lecture halls in Ebonyi State University.

This hypothesis is tested according table 1

S/N	Responses	Certified	Did not certify
1	Social media use significantly affects undergraduate students' attention during lectures in Ebonyi State university:	260 (67.4%)	126 (32.6%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

The formula for chi-square is

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(OF-EF)^2}{E}$$

Where: X^2 = chi-square

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

$\sum$ = Summation of the contingency table.

E = degree of freedom or level of significance.

Expected Frequency $= \dfrac{386}{4} = 96.5$

Table 10: Chi-square Calculation according to Table 7, item 7

Responses	OF	EF	OF-EF	$(OF-EF)^2$	$\sum \dfrac{(OF-E)^2}{EF}$
Strongly agree	155	96.5	58.5	3,422.25	35.46
Agreed	105	96.5	8.5	72.25	0.74
Disagreed	74	96.5	-22.5	506.25	5.24
Strongly Disagreed	52	96.5	-44.5	1,980.25	20.52
$\sum$					**62**

Source: Field work Survey, 2021.

Calculation of Critical Value

Degree of freedom (v) = (r-1) (c-1)

Where: r = number of rows = 4

c = number of columns = 2

$\therefore$ V = (4-1) (2-1)

= (3) (1)

= 3

The critical value under (0.05) level of significance at degree of freedom 3 = 7.81

Thus, calculated chi-square (X^2) = **62**

Critical value = 9.49.

Decision Rule

If the value of the calculated chi-square is greater than the critical value, accept the alternate hypothesis (HA) otherwise reject the null hypothesis (HO) and vice versa.

Since the value of the calculated chi-square is greater than the critical value, we therefore, accept the alternate hypothesis and concluded that social media use significantly affects undergraduate students' attention during lectures in Ebonyi State University.

V.   Conclusion

The primary goal of every research is to investigate the problems of a given phenomenon and proffer solution to them. However, the extent to which the goal is achieved depends on the availability and reliability of data gathered for the study. From the foregoing, it can be established that social media addiction has serious effects on academic performance of undergraduate students. In this regard, evidence from this study has shown that many undergraduate students, especially those from Ebonyi State University, do not pay full concentration

any more whenever a lecturer is teaching in the lecture hall because they engage themselves with chatting on social media.It is found that many undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University spend more time chatting with friends than reading their books; that many undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University would rather prefer to read some of the topics they were taught on the internet than reading their text books recommended for them by their lecturers, and that many undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University perform poorly in their exams and quizzes because they were more interested in social media chats among others. Based on these realities, it can be concluded that, through the strict adherence and proper application of the recommendations made by the researcher, social media addiction can be minimized among undergraduate students.

VI. Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings made from the data analyzed, the study recommends, among others, the following:
1. That students should avoid using their phones while in the lecture halls so that they will not have divided attention in any given lecture they are being taught in the class;
2. Students should learn to use social media more for academic purposes such as writing their assignments and researches than chatting, uploading and viewing pictures;
3. That students should be conscious of the kind of social media sites they visit to avoid being preys to unsuspecting online frauds.

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